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As Mind Narrates Body:

Virginia Woolf's Aesthetic Presentation of Being in Time

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of
the requirements for the award of the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

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2008

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DURHAM

To My Grandparents

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Abstract

For decades, Virginia Woolf's narrative experiments in the service of a more 'realistic' presentation of life and being, along with her engagement with the Bloomsbury group, produced an extensive body of scholarly work expressing fascination with the issues of individual (especially female) 'subjectivity' and 'sexuality.' Woolf was searching for an aesthetic form that might express the peculiar contingencies of living in a rapidly developing modern world, but also in order to develop her own more truthful and fundamental understanding of Being. The present thesis contends that the forms of life-narrative which Woolf developed and which have largely been understood through feminist and psychoanalytic conceptualisations of androgyny, may also be approached through the work of second generation cognitive scientists, such as Antonio Damasio. His work presents a model of an 'embodied mind' which offers a scientific understanding of consciousness as rooted in the physical and affective body. This contemporary research provides a very suggestive and fruitful way of approaching Woolf's understanding of and experiments with consciousness and time. So, in emphasising 'Moments of Being,' Woolf can be seen to address the transient nature of the 'self.' Or perhaps 'selves.' For what Damasio's work has most emphatically demonstrated is that the core self is but a conglomeration of momentary feelings of being in existence.

Incorporating analysis of her familial and social background, this thesis suggests that Woolf, who was much influenced by the philosophical discourses of Cambridge epistemology and British empiricism, launched her aesthetic pursuit of a true life-narrative from a re-configuration of the mind/body dualism by 'embodying' the mind and suggesting, as in the words of Damasio, "no body never mind." The thesis further ventures to propose that it is out of such a fundamental understanding of the co-relation and interaction of sense and sensibility in Being, that Woolf built her temporal narrative of being-in-the-world and her feminist conception of self and society. Furthermore, it is arguable that her poetic experiments prefigured later post-structuralist scepticism about the ontological status of the Logos and the inauthentic closures of teleological histories and narratives.

Abbreviations

The Voyage Out	VO
Night and Day	ND
Jacob's Room	JR
Mrs. Dalloway	MD
To the Lighthouse	TL
Orlando	O
The Waves	W
The Years	Y
Between the Acts	BA
A Room of One's Own	ARO
Collected Essays	CE
Common Reader	CR
The Diary of Virginia Woolf	D
Granite and Rainbow	GR
The Moment and Other Essays	M
Moments of Being	MB
The Letters of Virginia Woolf	L
A Writer's Diary	WD

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A Modernist Prospect of Subject Writing: The Creating of Real Characters

The problems of the subject and subjective identity in Virginia Woolf's works have been explored and discussed from various theoretical positions: feminism, structuralism, post-structuralism and, of course, psychoanalytic theory. Still, the problem remains elusive, almost as though what has been captured within Woolf's narrative resists further re-presentation. Presumably, the failure to address the problem fully results from a mis-recognition of Woolf's fundamental aspiration to depict a translucent consciousness which partakes of both being and existence: partakes, therefore, of the metaphysical and the existential, as well as including her feminist polemic concerning the constraints on women's intellectual capacities within a gendered society. There is no doubt that Woolf was concerned with the social status of women, the fluidity of subjectivity and, most of all, the uncanny sense of what it feels like to live a life, and the capacity of literary representation to capture this. Yet, these are issues that arise out of her quintessential enterprise: to portray the nature of being and the subjective knowing of being in the becoming of the 'I,' and to depict the struggle of subjective beings to achieve conscious existence within a particular socio-cultural context.

The problem of the subject—the 'I' and the subjective apprehension of the self and its existence (namely Being as being-in-the-world in the terms of Martin Heidegger)[1]—was one of Virginia Woolf's primary concerns in writing: "I should like to write a very subtle work on the proper writing of lives. What it is that you can write—and what writing is," as Woolf wrote to her brother-in-law, Clive Bell, in 1908 (L 1: 325).[2] Musing on how to represent and write, truthfully, about lives (lives of

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[1] Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Malden: Blackwell, 1962).

[2] Date 15 April 1908. See also Julia Briggs "'The Proper Writing of Lives': Biography versus Fiction in Woolf's Early Work," Reading Virginia Woolf (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2006) 25-41.

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others, lives of women, lives hidden and unknown and, most important of all, lives as they are lived in contrast to lives as they seem to be), Woolf entangled herself in the mid-stream of one of the most fundamental problems in philosophy: the mind-body relation and, with it, the ongoing subject/object debate. For how to convey the subjective apprehension of 'being' in an objective language so that it is possible to arouse, in the terms of T. S. Eliot, an appropriate or "objective correlative" response from each recipient of the words in and out of the story?[3] Even before Wittgenstein's deliberations on the public nature of language, Friedrich Nietzsche famously pondered how even something as factual as a 'leaf' is a construction of human culture and not just more obviously value-laden notions such as that of 'honesty'? He wrote: "We obtain the concept, as we do the form, by overlooking what is individual and actual; whereas nature is acquainted with no forms and no concepts and likewise with no species, but only with an X which remains inaccessible and [in]definable for us" (117).[4] In other words, how far will the adoption of the language and concepts of a particular society lead to a betrayal of the experiences and perceptions of the individual subject? Language communicates, but seems also to insinuate the demarcation into subject and object. To write means to adopt the rationality of the objective language—the abstraction of symbolism—yet to write about the subject and its subjective existence is also to assimilate into something more general the individual qualities of the subjective body and mind (the X) that seem to defy objective representation or objectified analysis.[5] Do the qualities of the sense-object perceived by the subject exist in themselves? Or, are they always and simply the result of the recipient's subjective apprehension? How could one possibly write about and

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[3] T. S. Eliot "Hamlet," Elizabethan Essays (1920; New York: Haskell House, 1964): "The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative'" (61).

[4] Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense" (1873).

[5] As written by A. N. Whitehead in Science and the Modern World (1933): "The occurrences of nature are in some way apprehended by minds, which are associated with living bodies. Primarily, the mental apprehension is aroused by the occurrences in certain parts of the correlated body, the occurrences in the brain, for instance. But the mind in apprehending also experiences sensations which, properly speaking, are qualities of the mind alone. These sensations are projected by the mind so as to clothe appropriate bodies in external nature" (68).

transmit this feeling and emotion of the subjective body in its relation with the external world?

In close contact with most of the eminent figures of her day (in diverse fields, from scientific philosophers like Bertrand Russell, G. E. Moore, to novelists such as Henry James and E.M. Forster, and modernist painters and art critics like Clive Bell and Roger Fry), Woolf's modernist claim to epistemological insight exposes her close acquaintance with many of the scientific as well as aesthetic discourse of her time. Although academic disciplines became increasingly self-contained and specialised, with a greater emphasis on professionalism from the late nineteenth century, the so-called Bloomsbury group, on the other hand, brought the enclosed male world of Cambridge intellectual and specialist discussion into a more general London public and domestic realm. The Bloomsbury group, as Carolyn G. Heilbrun has suggested, embodied the most androgynous spirit of the age, with its free discussion and expression of thoughts and ideas: nothing was forbidden, even discourses around sexuality.[6] "The fusion within the Bloomsbury group, perhaps for the first time, of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' made possible the ascendancy of reason which excludes violence but not passion" (Heilbrun 126).[7] Artists, scientists, many of the most eminent Cambridge intellectuals, all came together to debate their different approaches to the 'Real' and 'Truth'— either by objective reasoning and scientific analysis or through instinctual and subjective apprehension. By relating arts that deal with feelings and emotions to sciences that demand a complete abolition of the personal and subjective, the Bloomsbury group's androgyny was not just a reflection of their ambiguous, indeterminate, sexual orientation. Instead, the formation of

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[6] Carolyn G. Heilburn, Toward a Recognition of Androgyny (1973; New York: Harper & Row, 1974).

[7] The term, 'The Bloomsbury group,' is said to have been coined by Molly MacCarthy in 1910. It is a group of friends, originally formed by the Stephen siblings and Thoby Stephen's Cambridge friends such as Leonard Woolf, Lytton Strachey, Saxon Sydney Turner, and Clive Bell. Herminone Lee has noted in her Woolf's biography: "Leonard Woolf, in the 1960s, listed 'Old Bloomsbury' as Vanessa and Clive Bell, Virginia and Leonard Woolf, Adrian and Karin Stephen, Lytton Strachey, Maynard Keynes, Duncan Grant, Morgan Forster, Saxon Sydney Turner, Roger Fry, Desmond and Molly MacCarthy..."(263). And as several of them, such as Leonard Woolf and Lytton Strachey were also members of the Cambridge Apostles, they became acquainted with G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell who were also later introduced to the group. See also L 5:36.

Bloomsbury facilitated a potential reconciliation of the severed notions of the so-called 'objective' masculine and 'subjective' feminine qualities.

When academic discourse started to split axiomatically into diverse paths between the sciences and the humanities with the increasing professionalising of science from the mid-nineteenth century, the Bloomsbury group, contrarily, nurtured an intermediate ground where art might closely interact with science. Truth and reality are not only sought through logic and science, but more importantly through the 'insight' of feelings and emotions. As on the canvas of Roger Fry, they sought an amalgamation of vision with design. Within the Bloomsbury group, aesthetic ideals were measured and explored through logic and mathematical means, while logical prospective was mediated and substantiated through the aesthetic forms of literary and visual arts. The Bloomsbury group brought into practice the ideal of putting oneself into a physical world capable of being examined objectively, but without negating one's subjective position. (It is an ideal later made explicit in the contemporary American philosopher Thomas Nagel's influential work The View from Nowhere (1986), as we shall see). Fascinated by scientific advances (the new Cambridge realist epistemology and the new development in physics, biology and psychology) Woolf's interest in nature incorporated rather than resisted a scientific understanding. But still, in her works, and as her imagination was expanded by the scientific rhetoric of her day, she clearly endeavoured to display the perplexing nature of life as in the end unavailable to and finally beyond the pure expression of science.

As Woolf pondered the possible future direction for modern fiction and how novelists of the twentieth century might possibly distinguish themselves from their realist or 'materialist' predecessors, she saw that, in creating 'real' characters, it is more important to capture and regenerate that flow of life from within rather than mirroring the solid material world without.[8] For her, it is the inner subjective sensations and perceptions that might plausibly capture a life as it is lived and

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[8] Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction," The Common Reader, vol.1 (1925; London: Vintage, 1984) 146.

accordingly engender the sense of being which (notwithstanding its inexpressibility) is shared communally among all human beings. Although life appears to be solidly grounded (as in the image of an oak tree in Orlando), its inner subjective reality, subject to temporality, is as evasive and transient as the fleeting kingfisher that resists human grasp at the end of this novel. The 'materialist' writers, such as Mr. Wells, Mr. Bennett, and Mr. Galsworthy, by their strenuous effort to paint and construct the most detailed and clear-cut portrait of the material reality within which life is supposed to be lived, seem to have actually missed the target.[9] These 'materialist' novelists, by emphasising the objective aspect of life, construct the frame of life as it seems to be, rather than life itself as it is lived, felt, and known. As Woolf expounded in her essay "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" (1924), these Edwardian novelists may be sitting in a train compartment opposite Mrs. Brown, who represents "the thing in itself" and is a prototype of all characters, without shedding eyes on her: "They have looked very powerfully, searchingly, and sympathetically out of the window; at factories, at Utopias, even at the decoration and upholstery of the carriage; but never at her [Mrs. Brown], never at life, never at human nature" (CE 1: 330).

Ironically, Mr. Arnold Bennett also asserted that "the foundation of good fiction is character-creating, and nothing else" and, in his opinion, novelists of the younger generation fail to create "real," "true" and "convincing" characters (CE 1:319). But what exactly endows one's characters with the breath of life, inquired Woolf? How to create a full rounded and 'real' character? Did Mr. Bennett provide his readers with a 'real' character who they can believe to be pulsing with life by giving all the details of their dwelling, the social contexts around them, but never the voice of the characters themselves? Has he finally captured that spirit who continues to whisper into novelists' ears, "catch me if you can" (CE 1: 319)? The 'Edwardian Materialist' might have constructed a concrete habitat, but as often as not "this, the essential thing

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[9] Woolf used the term 'materialist' to describe novelists such as H. G. Wells (1866-1946), Arnold Bennett (1867-1931), and John Galsworthy (1867-1933) in her essay, "Modern Fiction" (1919).

[whether we call it life or spirit, truth or reality], has moved off, or on, and refuses to be contained any longer in such ill-fitting vestments as we provide" (CR 1:149). Is it the solid presentation of material reality, or, rather, the trivialities, flitting and tingling in one's mind as one interacts with the world, that provides a more pertinent manifestation of 'life' as 'the thing itself' and of the semi-translucent knowing of 'being-there'(*Dasein*)?[10] To depict this life, this being within the subjective consciousness of being in its transient yet persistent nature, prompted Woolf towards her life long experiment with narrative techniques.

Life is a continuous process of feeling and interacting with the world around one. Life could not possibly be possessed in one all-encompassing grasp. Its totality could only be inferred since it is a process of living and feeling continuously through minute changes, moment by moment. Yet, in parallel with her recognition of the ephemeral nature of life, Woolf retains a constant belief, as she put it in "Sketch of the Past," that "behind the cotton wool is hidden a pattern; that we—I mean all human beings—are connected with this…Hamlet or a Beethoven quartet is the truth about this vast mass that we call the world" (MB 85). However, what exactly does Hamlet or a Beethoven quartet reflect? Is it not the ticking of life one carries within, for "we are the words; we are the music; we are the thing itself" (MB 85). If Shakespeare stands out as a master in presenting to his audiences vital characters, then one must wonder how little one knows about the material reality that surrounds Hamlet in comparison to the knowledge of his mental condition as revealed through the soliloquies, his questionings and his inner reflections on the external world. However, one becomes so acquainted with Hamlet that one feels his inner turmoil, his anger and remorse. Beginning with the question: "Who is there?", this tragedy of Shakespeare plays out the inner quest for the unknown hidden drive that propels the narrative of life into being.[11]

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[10] Heidegger: "Understanding of Being is itself a definite characteristic of *Dasein*'s Being. *Dasein* is ontically distinctive in that it is ontological" (Being 32).

[11] Antonio Damasio, Looking for Spinoza (London: Vintage, 2003) 224-5.

Rachel Bowlby takes Woolf's essay "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" as "a kind of literary Clapham Junction for the crossing and potential collision of questions of representation, history and sexual difference" (2). By placing Mrs. Brown as a character met in a train compartment, Woolf liberated her from a hypothetical material background and the constraints of materialist conventions. What Mrs. Brown would represent is a trans-historical and trans-social character with whom readers from differing socio-cultural backgrounds might associate. She would be first seen and treated as an individual and appreciated subjectively. It is through her eyes, expressions, or gestures that one construes the untold stories behind her tears and worried countenance. In this essay, Woolf declares her intention of stepping out of the English novel convention which "is inclined … to scrutiny of society rather than understanding of individuals themselves," and which is much suffocated by the pressure to conform to order (CR 1: 180).[12] Not that Woolf entirely deserted the English fictional conventions designated in the essay for, as she wrote in her diary, stating a provisional goal for her new novel The Hours, (renamed later as Mrs. Dalloway(1925)): "I want to criticise the social system, and to show it at work, at its most intense" (WD 56).[13] Instead, she sought to forge similar soul-like characters (who are capable of transmitting their sensations, perceptions and apperceptions to their readers) as those of Russian writers, but within the framework of the English novel. It is through the subjective struggle within the soul that the narrative comes to address the larger world which has compelled, crippled and moulded the soul. As if, in reflecting what Heidegger wrote (approximately around the same time that Woolf commenced her experimental writing of life), "*Dasein* has already been disclosed to itself as Being-in-the world, and the entities within-the-world have been discovered along with it" (Being 461).[14] By mocking the materialists' novels as a literary 'British

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[12] "The Russian Point of View".
[13] Diary entry 19 June 1923.
[14] Jacob's Room is published in 1922, followed by Mrs. Dalloway (1925), To the Lighthouse (1927), Orlando (1928), while Being and Time is composed through out the years of early 20s and first published in 1927.

Museum,' crammed with magnificent collections of cultural relics and fossils that are so removed from real life, Woolf had the cultural-historical heritage carried into real-life living.[15] It is in the characters, in life, that the cultural-historical backgrounds are disclosed.

To endow her characters with soul and autonomy does not necessarily mean a total rejection of material reality, but rather, as she looked at life and human nature, it became possible for her to depict a persistent nature of being and its elastic ability to take up protean forms and guises in accordance with varying external circumstances. Woolf shifted the focus to the characters' feelings, emotions and thoughts and through them, the reader catches a glimpse of both the temporary social context as well as a universal sense of life. The social framework is never thoroughly abandoned by Woolf; instead her narrative portrays lives that struggle between being constrained by, and seeking transcendence of, the social framework. Woolf's novels, with their emphasis placed on consciousness and mental phenomena, are also embedded solidly within a bodily social-historical context, since a mind could hardly survive apart from bodily matter and the public sphere.

Mrs. Brown's past, as much as her future, is a mystery to anyone who happens to come across her in the train compartment. She is a character without social profile or at least unknown to those she encounters. She is supposed to transcend temporal and spatial contexts. She is both a distinct individual as well as a represented prototype of human beings, representing both the intra- and the inter-subjectivity of life. Mrs. Brown, without much material reference, is the character Woolf believed that the novelist of the future must try to catch, "for she is, of course, the spirit we live by, life itself" (CE 1: 337). In other words, no matter how differently Mrs. Brown would be treated by various novelists, she should be able to suggest a sense of life to her readers no matter what their backgrounds. The subjective 'I' might then be conglomerated into a communal 'they' or the 'we' of the common sitting room. For Woolf, then, the

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[15] Diary entry 4 July 1926. D 3: 94.

solidity painted by the realists or the materialists inhibits the actual flow of life. Instead of engendering life, it might have accidentally driven life out by its fixities and concreteness and therefore missed out life completely. As the 'materialists' try to build up concrete walls, they never actually touch the fringe of life itself: "There is not so much as a draught between the frames of the windows, or a crack in the boards. And yet–if life should refuse to live there?" (CR 1: 147). What are the constituents of real life? How could a novelist en-capture and substantiate Mrs. Brown, someone, who the narrator knows no better than does the reader? This must be the task of the novelist in the modern world.

Personal Aspiration to Mind/Body Correlations

However, writing and creating were not activities that women might take up unproblematically, even in the 1920s. The power to beget life and breathe the spirit into a subject is a supreme power originally belonging to a patriarchal God. The power of the word in designating meaning and spirit, in Lacanian terms, is the masculine power of the Father. Therefore, as a woman writer, self-conscious of her own 'otherness,' and attempting to break into what was still a predominantly male world of literary publication, Woolf brought forth the idea of a creative androgyny that would justify herself as a female writer legitimated to enter the symbolic order so as to narrate her life-experience as a woman born and brought up in a Victorian patriarchal family. She would tell the stories of women's lives which seemed to her almost completely absent from biographical literature. But she also sought to sketch that subtle interrelation between body and mind; between, as traditionally demarcated, the 'feminine' emotional body and the 'masculine' rational mind; between feelings and logical thinking. Throughout her writings, she continued to fight against the conventional notion of women as 'the weaker vessel': submissive to primal sensations

such as bodily desire; prone to hysteria.[16] For she saw that while men are traditionally perceived as more rational and more advanced in evolution, women are generally perceived as explicable entirely in terms of the body and emotions and incapable of abstract reasoning. But what is the relation between the mind and its body, Woolf continued to ask?[17]

All her life, Woolf struggled to accommodate the rapid and often volatile changes of her mental and bodily condition. Indeed, the myriad impressions that the mind received, the innumerable atoms that shower incessantly, these feelings would have been even more intense for Woolf owing to what is now recognised as the bipolar disorder from which she suffered. Anyone experiencing so intensively such recurrent and minute changes in body temperature and emotion would be hypersensitive to the shifting stream of feeling and bodily sensation within, in contrast to what might appear externally as physical immobility. In "On Being Ill" (1930), she reflects extensively on how one's mental vision is often shaped by one's bodily condition. The traditional notion that "the body is a sheet of plain glass through which the soul looks straight and clear, and, save for one of two passions such as desire and greed, is null, and negligible and non-existent. On the contrary, the very opposite is true. All day, all night the body intervenes … The creature within can only gaze through the pane—smudged or rosy" (M 9-10). It is always through the tainted glass of the body, as Woolf had experienced, that one apprehends the world. How she resents that the mind could merely take in what has been placed before it so that only when "the body smashes itself to smithereens" could the soul finally escape (M 10). Swinging constantly between two extreme emotions, mania and depression, Woolf must have experienced the nature of life with an unsettling and flickering intensity; yet being unable to escape from this perpetual torment of bodily discomfort, she must

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[16] Elaine Showalter, The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture 1830-1980 (1985; London: Virago-Random House, 1987).

[17] Virginia Woolf, "On Being Ill," The Moment and Other Essays (San Diego: A Harvest-HBJ Book, 1948) 9-24.

also have felt strongly the helplessness and dependency of the self trapped within and shaped and expressed by the soma. Throughout her works, Woolf explores continuously a technique, a method, a structure, that might convey a sense of being simultaneously momentary and transitory, yet being pressed and nailed down eternally: "Now is life very solid or very shifting? I am haunted by the two contradictions. This has gone on for ever; will last for ever; goes down to the bottom of the world—this moment I stand on. Also it is transitory, flying, diaphanous. I shall pass like a cloud on the waves" (WD 138).[18]

Woolf's works are a continual experimental struggle to transcribe subjective experiences as an objective understanding of the natural order of a life. Recent studies of consciousness have shown that the stream of thought is carried out, not only by words, or linguistic system, but that core consciousness is grounded in a flow of images and feelings associated with those shadowy forms from which verbal articulation emerges (and, even more fundamentally, core consciousness as a series of nonverbal narratives carries on simply as a 'background' sense of feelings and emotions—an elemental form of knowing in existence).[19] Similarly, Heidegger stated: "knowing is grounded beforehand in a Being-already-alongside-the-world, which is essentially constitutive for *Dasein*'s Being" (Being 88). The mind thinks by and through its body first and foremost. Reason and rationality are fully underpinned by feelings and emotion as the registration of sensation and the ongoing adjustment of the body to changing circumstances and flows. In the words of Damasio, "the neurological evidence simply suggests that selective absence of emotion is a problem. Well-targeted and well-deployed emotion seems to be a support system without which the edifice of reason cannot operate properly" (Feeling 42). Emotions and feelings are elemental factors in rational behaviour and thinking. William James first raised this view of the relation between mind and body, writing in The Principles of Psychology

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[18] Diary entry 4 January 1929.
[19] Antonio Damasio, The Feeling of What Happens (London: Random, 1999).

(1890) that "Mental phenomena are not only conditioned *a parte ante* by bodily processes; but they lead to them *a parte post*" (1:5). Already, at the end of the nineteenth century, James had come to recognise that "a certain amount of brain-physiology must be presupposed or included in Psychology" (1:5). Henri Bergson (who was also a reader of William James and later became a good friend) also proposed in Matter and Memory (1896) that it is through the memory of the body that the working of the mind and the matter/mind dichotomy could possibly be further elucidated. Mind and body are correlative. No mental conception is thoroughly free from the interposing of the body.

The role of feelings and emotions in mental processes had been largely neglected in the past century and almost eliminated from the discourse of the matter of mind, and this despite the profound influence of Charles Darwin, William James and Freud, each of whom had attempted to stress the importance of bodily emotions and feelings for mental development and mental status.[20] Nevertheless, Woolf's novels adhere closely to her belief that "the 'book itself' is not form which you see, but emotion which you feel" (M 160).[21] Woolf's narrative is traditionally deemed a narrative of stream of consciousness, yet the consciousness shown through her words flows along with what G. H. Lewes terms a "general stream of Sensation which constitutes [one's] feeling of existence—the consciousness of himself as a sensitive being" (qtd. in Rylance 11).[22] Symbolising the nonverbal murky feelings of the mental stream, Woolf had come to show not only the process of consciousness that emerges from the nonverbal narrative of the mind and works toward abstract reasoning undertaken by language, but also how reflexive ideas are founded on direct emotional responses and obscure feelings, as subjectivity is shaped and reshaped through "an incessant shower

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[20] Damasio, Feeling 38.

[21] "On Re-reading Novels". See also Harvena Richter, Virginia Woolf: The Inward Voyage (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970) 203.

[22] G. H. Lewes, The Physiology of Common Life. Rick Rylance also noted that in addition to William James, Lewes also used the images of stream and the coinage is introduced before James or Lewes. The metaphor was commonly applied in psychological circle at the turn of the century.

of innumerable atoms" of external stimuli (CR 1: 150). Taking advantage of the freedom of a creative writer, Woolf, with her incisive reflection on perceptual phenomena, came to depict the "facticity" of life as it is lived, and to provide a more rounded portrait of human psychology (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology vii).[23] In creative writing, Woolf explored the possibilities of life as what Martha Nussbaum has termed 'the narrative play' that provides a 'potential space' to contextualise and symbolise the subjective, emotional, life.[24] Unlike Freudian fictions or even the works of Freud himself (that offer the reader actual case studies), Woolf provided her readers with the feel of life in the experienced of represented flows of bodily feeling. As Patricia Ondek Laurence puts it, "In exploring interiority, Woolf, as a novelist, is not interested in presenting clinical mental states but in finding narrative methods to represent thought and feeling, both conscious and unconscious. But the unconscious, by definition, is devoid of language" (19). Thus, Woolf continued to challenge the propriety of public language and to use poetic and narrative resources to gesture towards the inexpressible.

Darwin, Freud, and the Blooming of 'Soul Discourses'

The conspicuous deployment of Darwinian discourses and an interest in a primal pre-historical link between human and animal, can be observed in Woolf's fiction from The Voyage Out (1915) to Between the Acts (1941). As Gillian Beer has stated: "The idea of origins and the idea of development are problematically connected in that of prehistory. And in the twentieth century the unconscious has often been presented in the guise of the primeval" (6). According to Freud in a 1917 essay, Charles Darwin's ground-breaking evolutionary theory in the mid nineteenth century had for a second time de-centred humans from their presupposed central position in the world

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[23] Maurice Merleau-Ponty's own preface to Phenomenology of Perception.
[24] Martha C Nussbaum, Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001) 236-48.

after Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) who had struck the first blow to the human ego. Sigmund Freud went on to state: "But human megalomania will have suffered its third and most wounding blow from the psychological research of the present time which seeks to prove to the ego that it is not even master in its own house, but must content itself with scanty information of what is going on unconsciously in its mind" (1: 326).[25] The aftermath of the discovery of the origin of the species had led to a series of investigations into the connections as well as the differences between men and animals and therefore to the problem of mind and consciousness where differences are usually regarded to be man's departure from the primates. The ongoing debate on the spirituality of the mind or the soul and the materiality of the brain and the body thus became even more urgent and incandescent. Reassurance was desperately sought that there is a clear distinction between human and animal.

"The word psychology is derived from the Greek for 'soul discourse'" (Rylance 22). Within the long Christian doctrine (which has been much influenced by the Grecian idea of soul/body distinction), the soul is what distinguishes humans from animals, and the soul is pure spiritual being that is free from any material bondage. However, with the advance in physiology and then neurology, the nature of soul and mental processes seem to be inseparable from the material substances of the body. Such discoveries have therefore thrust the original distinction into question. Nevertheless, the traditional discourse of the soul even now continues to occupy a pre-eminent position within both academic disciplines and popular discourses. With the split between the science and the humanities, the further development of and

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[25] Sigmund Freud, "Fixation to Traumas—The Unconscious" (1917) Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, trans James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1973): "In the course of centuries the *naïve* self-love of men has had to submit to two major blows at the hands of science. The first was when they learnt that our earth was not the centre of the universe but only a tiny fragment of a cosmic system of scarcely imaginable vastness. This is associated in our minds with the name of Copernicus, though something similar had already been asserted by Alexandrian science. The second blow fell when biological research destroyed man's supposedly privileged place in creation and proved his descent from the animal kingdom and his ineradicable animal nature. This revaluation has been accomplished in our own days by Darwin, Wallace and their predecessors, though not without the most violent contemporary opposition" (1: 326). Freud restated again in "The Resistances to Psychoanalysis" (1925).

approach towards soul discourses comes to take quite diverse courses (much regretted by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz).[26] In science, psychological researches have focussed for much of the twentieth century (from behaviourism to cognitive sciences such as connectionism and neural networks) on the organic and physiological sources of human functioning and flourishing, while psychoanalytical research in the humanities has effectively found ways to perpetuate a discourse of the soul (albeit often under the guise of a materialist approach). Either way, the influential legacy of Descartes, Locke and Kant (as the American pragmatist Richard Rorty has concluded) underlies the problems which modern philosophy and psychology have encountered in dealing with an orthodox western tradition of thought (going back to Plato) with its insistence on dualism. However, contemporary evolutionary theories in neurology and physiology have now come to question that very conception of dualism.[27] And as the mind becomes approachable through the investigation (with modern instruments) into various parts of the brain and its specific functions, the separate integrity of the soul and the totality of the mind is no longer *a priori*.

Rick Rylance's insightful study of Victorian psychology (from 1850 to 1880) in its multiplicity, examines how, in the Victorian era, faculty psychology, by distinguishing mental faculties into higher (reason, faith, love, spiritual apprehension) and lower faculties (sensations, feelings, appetite, desire, etc.), attached a sense of hierarchical value to these faculties. Faculty psychology displayed a clear notion of mind-body separation and moreover discriminated the higher mind from the lower mind, men from women, civilised from primitive. Imitating the great Christian doctrine that distinctly separated God, angel, human, and animal on a hierarchical scale, faculty psychology exposed the fundamental fear of human animalisation and species-digression that had been aroused by Darwin's theory of evolution and was confronted in the work of Freud. Lower faculties were not overlooked, but they were

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[26] Rylance, Rick, Victorian Psychology and British Culture 1850-1880 (Oxford: OUP, 2000) 8-9.
[27] Lyons, William. Matters of the Mind (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2001) 238.

generally regarded as the cause of mental disturbance in the study of mind and consciousness. Even in Freud's famous exploration of the unconscious, human behaviours were seen to be dominated by these lower faculties of feelings and emotions—the primitive id. It is only by the rational strength of the 'ego' and the surveillance of the socio-cultural constructed 'superego' that the primitive 'id' is checked and subdued. Yet, even in recognising the emotional ground of human behaviours, Freud, in tune with Plato, is simply restating rationality as an achievable ideal through a human effort to constrain its emotional drives and the capacity to exercise good. The stream of thought is seen to be made possible by language and, insofar as language is viewed as an embodiment of reason and rationality, so the acquisition of linguistic ability and the entry into the symbolic order is assumed to initiate a passage beyond the maternal, Dionysian, domain of feelings and emotions, and an entry into and assumption of Apollonian rationality with its emphasis on structures and forms and the capacity for abstract reasoning. Yet, modern cognitive science and philosophy have now begun a reconfiguration of "the intelligence of emotions"—an idea which is already embedded within Charles S. Sherrington's The Integrative Action of the Nervous System(1906).

Modern neuroscientists such as Antonio Damasio, with recent advances in technology, have set out to explore the mind/body relation in terms of a more reciprocal and mutual response. Instead of seeing lower faculties thoroughly as a mere disturbance to the rational mind, Damasio proclaims that higher faculties are firmly grounded on the well-functioning of lower faculties. Although an over-abundance of emotion and feeling might hinder rational thought and result in irrational behaviour, the lack of emotions and feelings (as observed by Damasio through cases of neural disorders) may have equally disruptive consequences. The body provides a ground from which the brain might operate and on which the mind might speculate. With the advance of modern medical science, many cases of mental disorders such as schizophrenia or exceptional behaviours such as autism are now being

re-conceptualised not as resulting from the patient's initial interaction with his/her parents and the world, or forgotten traumatic experience of the past or repressed anxiety (as a Freudian psychiatrist would suggest), but rather from an original defect or subsequent impairment of the brain, or the body's chemical or hormonal messengers interacting with complex feedback mechanisms in a specific environment.

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, waves of diverse 'soul discourses' swayed by different beliefs in the mind/body relation, entered medical as well as public discourses. However, instead of following Spinoza's idea of one substance but two qualities, the problem of the soul remained deeply imbricated within Cartesian dualism. Freud and Josef Breuer published their first work on psychoanalysis, Studies On Hysteria (1895) five years later than James's The Principles of Psychology (1890), and one year later than C. Lloyd Morgan's An Introduction to Comparative Psychology(1894) which, as it introduces the idea of 'trial and error learning,' greatly influenced the development of experimental psychology and Behaviourism. Although Woolf's attitude towards Freudian psychoanalysis had always been ambivalent and she had resisted psychoanalytic treatments, she would have long been acquainted with his ideas through her husband, Leonard Woolf, and other members of the Bloomsbury group.[28] Yet for the most part psychoanalysis shied away from the philosophical problems of the mind-body problem. Although there were a number of other 'soul discourses' flourishing simultaneously at the time, they were gradually being eclipsed by psychoanalysis. In close contact with Henry James, and through Leonard Woolf and Bertrand Russell, the ideas of William James and Henri Bergson would not be totally unknown to Woolf, although Woolf professed that she had never read Bergson.[29] In fact, her presentation of the characters' psychological states shows great

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[28] "Woolf's aversion to writing about psychoanalysis is matched by her resistance to reading about it. She claims to have avoided reading Freud until 1939, a deferral that must have acquired some effort, since from 1924," the Hogarth Press took over and started publishing every English translation of Freud (Abel 14). See also George M. Johnson, Dynamic Psychology in Modernist British Fiction (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

[29] Letter to Harmon H. Goldstone, a Harvard Student, dated 16 August 1932. L 5:91

affinity with James's ideas in The Principles of Psychology. It may be advisable to take these other soul discourses into consideration when approaching Woolf's narrative of stream of consciousness, among them, especially, the work of William James, interestingly now being revived and re-justified by modern investigation in neuro-psychology because of his interest in the role of the body and of emotion in rational thought.

While Freud was more concerned about dreams and the mechanism of the unconscious (which perhaps one could say is fully of the realm of the extended consciousness contextualised within a cultural as well as personal history),[30] James delineated the individual's experience of consciousness and the constitution of conscious experience by means of perceptions and sensations but without neglecting socio-cultural influences. Similar to the modern neurological investigation into the nervous system and the organic brain, James also launched his argument about psychological phenomenon via a discussion of brain activity and the basic function of the brain. And therefore, what James tried to explain is not just the contriving of the personal, perceptive, messages in the extended consciousness, but his psychology covered the entire dimension of the mind (in terms of Damasio's speculation) from the nascent consciousness, the birth of the subject, to cognitive creativity. In answer to what James also indicated with "the assumption that our mental states are composite in structure, made up of smaller states conjoined," modern neurology also suggests that consciousness is a multi-layered mapping conjoining different neural intakes (1:145).

Just as Freudian psychoanalysis largely ignored the relations between the material brain and nervous system and mind and mental process, behaviourism, with its over-emphasis on scientific and objective research (third person observation and the denial of the validity of introspection) has thoroughly denied the subjective aspects

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[30] Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920; London: Hogarth, 1922): "Consciousness arises in the place of the memory-trace" (28).

of the mind. Yet, as specified by James, the baffling problem in the understanding of consciousness is this discontinuity between a common law of the molecular motions and the feelings it comes to generate (an idea taken up by Bertrand Russell who also proposed that it is a matter of conceptualisation rather than a wholly disjoined constitution that had set the mind inaccessibly beyond scientific inquest). In the words of James, "'A motion (of atomistic mental transactions) became a feeling!'–no phrase that our lips can frame is so devoid of apprehensible meaning" (1: 146). Thus, by retracing the existence of the sub-conscious mental state in search of an underlying continuity of nature, James attempted to ratify the link from the primordial form of life in the body to advanced mental intelligence. On tackling the problem of the soul, James also professed that the mind is nevertheless evolved from matter, namely the body and the brain. In what turns out to be compatible with the spirit of Damasio's propositions in Descartes' Error, James had also surmised that only by rejecting 'the mind' (or 'soul') as a form of unitary wholeness and only by breaking the mental-stuff into its elementary components, could the relativity and continuity between matter and the mind be conceivable.

The relation between mind and matter not only fascinated psychologists like William James, but also philosophical thinkers like Henri Bergson and Bertrand Russell. One evident similarity observable in their separate discussions is that they simultaneously started from an epistemological inquiry into knowledge and the nature of reality. All approach the problem of mind from their intention to resolve the binary opposition between idealism and realism. And they all placed their emphasis on the depiction of 'time' and the perception of 'time' in delineating mental processes. Recent critics such as Ann Banfield have demonstrated Woolf's close friendships and interactions within the Bloomsbury group and suggested that Woolf was as much concerned with Russell's infinite sequence of still points as with Henri Bergson's time theory of durée (itself also derived from a concern with the mind, especially of how time is experienced by the mind and how the experience of time shapes one's

perceptions of the world).[31] The close affinity between Woolf's aesthetic approach and Cambridge epistemology is self-evident as both try to reach beyond and reflect upon subjective experiences, but logically and scientifically.

In Analysis of Mind (1921), Bertrand Russell brings forth his idea of neutral monism that proposes a neutral yet primal substance which is neither mental nor physical but capable of both aspects (resembling Spinoza's idea). To know what and how one comes to know as in the quest of epistemology, one inevitably needs to resort to the fundamental question of the mind-body problem (as V. S. Ramachandran, a contemporary neuroscientist, has more recently asserted with his proposal of a concept of 'experimental epistemology'). For the body always interposes itself when it comes to the subject's cognition of an objective world. Bergson's argument of the confusion between quantity and quality, multiplicity and intensity, spatiality and temporality, exposes the fundamental phenomenon that the mind conceives the world and pursues abstract reasoning via the sensations and feelings of its body. Bergson's Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness (1889) and Matter and Memory(1896) as well as Russell's The Analysis of Mind (which seeks "to reconcile James' neutral monism and Watson's behaviourism" and almost comes close to suggesting that there is no consciousness at all) are all attempts at interpreting and mapping the working of mind in relation to its bodily presence through a logical, scientific, discourse (Baldwin ix).[32]

In the early twentieth century, in spite of the effort of philosophers such as James and Bergson, psychology, leaving behind its foundation in mind-body philosophy, becomes rigidly mapped out into diverse schools, with each retaining its own presuppositions in regard of mind-body relations without providing further inquest or definition (whether it is a Cartesian dualism that sees mind and body as distinct

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[31]Ann Banfield, The Phantom Table: Woolf, Fry, Russell and the Epistemology of Modernism (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000) 119; see also, Jean Guiguet, Virginia Woolf and Her Works, trans. Jean Stewart (1965; New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976) 31-34.

[32] Thomas Baldwin, introduction, The Analysis of Mind, by Bertrand Russell (London: Routledge, 1995) vii-xvii.

separate substances or a reductive functionalism that argues there is no mind at all but simply reflective behaviours, or the Freudian psychoanalysis of subjective introspection into the unconscious). Woolf, on the other hand, as the daughter of Leslie Stephen (editor of the Dictionary of National Biography and author of History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century) and sister, friend and wife to various members of the Cambridge Apostles, followed up the tradition of philosophy in quest of the mind-body problem through literary forms and presentations. Instead of numbers, tables, equations of mathematical logics, Woolf provided us with imagery, metaphors, narratives and narrative structures that not only tell the stories of the characters, but also depict the philosophical quest to understand the mind-body relation. As personal sensations, feelings and emotions are structured and embodied through the text, Woolf, through the textuality of her novels, delineates a vivid image of the nature of consciousness and of how consciousness works toward a unified subjectivity intermediating between its objective and subjective property. In response to Roger Fry's aesthetic ideal of an integral presentation of objective and subjective reality, Woolf sought for 'design,' 'rhythm' and 'texture' that give form and structure to an apprehension of being-in-the-world through her narrative. The misty dimness of 'English literariness' is now being given a solid form like the 'phantom kitchen table' that upholds the 'impalpable' and 'intangible' nature and reality of 'Being.'[33] Literature, as many neuroscientists have come to acknowledge (and Freud too in his time), has always been capable of revealing the subtlety of mental phenomena and psychological states that are now being explained with the help of modern technical instruments. "[T]he histories of psychology and literature," as Rylance noted, "can sometimes be as close as a hallway apart" (13).

Woolf's texts have been much explored from the perspective of Freudian

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[33] See Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry 164 and also Julia Briggs, "The Search for Form (i): Fry, Formalism and Fiction," Reading Virginia Woolf 96: "It was the English passion for morality, he supposed, and also the English climate. The light, he pointed out, was full of vapour. Nothing was clear. There was no structure in the hills, no meaning in the lines of the landscape; all was smug, pretty and small. Of course the English were incurably literary. They liked the associations of things, not things in themselves."

psychoanalytic theory. All introspective psychologies in fact seek to objectify and theorise subjective feelings in order to form a systematic scientific explanation of personal psychological states as they delve into the inner world of the individual. Yet the objectivity of science still fails to transcribe the subjectivity of life, of what it feels like to be this person living at this particular moment. Freud, nevertheless, launched his psychoanalytic studies from the science of neurology. Yet, psychoanalysis, though never thoroughly overlooking the effect of bodily sensations, whether conscious or unconscious, is almost entirely preoccupied with repressed primal desires (namely sexual desires and sexual obsessions) or historical traumas.[34] It depicts an inner psychical state which is subject to continuous conflict within itself between the unconscious id, the conscious ego, and the conscientious of a socio-culturally instituted superego. Freud, though he saw himself as a 'doctor of the nerves,' did not sufficiently credit that what is in the mind is often located in and triggered by the body, especially the present state of brain and its associative nervous system. Freud's argument is entirely based upon an interpretation of the mechanism of the autobiographical memory and self. Freud had constantly neglected the physiological and neurological mechanism of the mind and how psychological states depend on the integrity of the material substances of the brain. As a result, Freudian psychoanalytic theory turns away from its psychological and medical bases and towards a foundation in cultural inheritance, social taboos and the wilful power of the mind in deceiving itself about the factual state of its body and bodily feelings. Ramachandran, although acknowledging that Freud did shed light on the nature of the mind in its capacity for shutting out contradictory information that threatens its integrity (as in neurosis and psychosis), constantly ridicules interpretations given by Freudian psychiatrists for phenomena such as phantom limbs, learned paralysis, and the imagined visual images of Charles Bonnet syndrome which are deeply linked to the functions of the organic

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[34] A thematic narration of psychological trauma in Woolf's novel is fully examined in a currently published collection—Virginia Woolf and Trauma: Embodied Texts ed. Suzette Henke and David Eberly (New York: Pace UP, 2007).

brain and our mental capacity in manipulating deceptive imagery by a default of the sensory nerves.[35]

Despite the cultural root of psychoanalysis, the anthropologist Clifford Geertz still criticised the psychoanalytic approach for its over-emphasis on private personal feelings and for overlooking the impact of the cultural and social context in shaping minds.[36] One might argue from this, as Geertz has, that the main shortcoming of modernist writers is their narrative turn inward into characters' psychical states—a state encapsulated by a primal emotion of fear, desire, or hatred, engendered from the despondency of an insecure subjective state. Geertz laments that the split between experimental psychology and introspective psychoanalysis has served to widen the gap between the two cultures of the sciences and the humanities, while Ramachandran, with his investigation into the nerve systems and the function of the brain, suggests in his 2003 Reith Lecture, that a study of 'neuroaesthetics' would come to bridge the gulf between the two cultures.[37] For now perhaps, there might be a means to account for subjective aspirations toward beauty and aesthetics. Modernist writers clearly probed into characters' inner lives, assuming that society and culture are always represented as the most important contributory factors to the formation of the characters' mental states. The derangement of Septimus Smith in Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway is more of a social and cultural consequence than the rebound of a repressed primitive sexual drive. The subjective conflict and struggle of Rachel Vinrace in The Voyage Out is a literary

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[35] In Phantoms in the Brain, Ramachandran ventures to suggest that the foot fetish is highly plausible as a result of the way that nerves are mapped in the brain, rather than phallus worship as the Freudian psychiatrist would have suggested.

[36] Freud writes in a postscript (1935) to An Autobiographical Study: "My interest, after making a lifelong *détour* through the natural sciences, medicine and psychotherapy, returned to the cultural problems which had fascinated me long before, when I was a youth scarcely old enough for thinking…I perceived ever more clearly that the events of human history, the interactions between human nature, cultural development and the precipitates of primeval experiences are no more than a reflection of the dynamic conflict between the ego, the id and the super-ego, which psycho-analysis studies in the individual—are the very same processes repeated upon a wider stage" (15: 257).

[37] The Emerging Mind (a book publication of the Reith lecture): "The solution to the problem of aesthetics, I believe, lies in a more thorough understanding of the connections between the thirty visual centres in the brain and the emotional limbic structures (and of the internal logic and evolutionary rationale that drives them). Once we have achieved a clear understanding of these connections, we will come closer to bridging the huge gulf that separates C. P. Snow's two cultures—science on the one hand, and arts, philosophy and humanities on the other" (68-9).

outcry against the socio-cultural bondage of women and her final self-abjection and desire to be carried further away in her delirium can also be read as refusal of the prevailing patriarchal ordering of women's bodies and subjectivities.

Freud inaugurated a mainstream interest in and discussion of the phenomena of the unconscious in the late nineteenth century, depicting a soul entangled with an internal conflict between its instinctual tendencies and social institutions. Damasio reinterprets the Freudian unconscious at the level of extended consciousness as it is fully bound up with memory—the memory of the body and its feelings and emotions which are generally suppressed by the ego in its attempt to defend the integrity of the mind. Psychoanalysis, in Damasio words, is an attempt to untangle the web of psychological connections and restore the materials and records of the autobiographical memories that have withdrawn into the background, distorted, stored away, eventually to become, though nonconscious, still effective in shaping the behaviour of the organism.[38] Woolf's writing career has often been depicted as an inward voyage into the subjective self. Her narrative swarms with sensational imagery of both past and present. Based upon these vague feelings, hazy reveries and half-memorised images, the reality of her subjects are embodied. In conjoining the memories of the past with the bodily present (by restoring the body to its central position among mental perceptions), she has incorporated the non-substantial, subjective 'soul' in a 'bodily' text.

Modern Depiction of Consciousness and Subject Formation

Antonio Damasio is a contemporary neuroscientist who pursues a scientific understanding of consciousness and the forming of self by means of emotions and feelings; of the mechanism behind consciousness that generates the subject's knowing and feeling of these emotions and feelings; and of the integral role of emotions and

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[38]Damasio, Feeling 228.

feelings in supporting rational decisions and constructing subjectivity.[39] Damasio presupposes that consciousness is a development which helps to secure the well-being of the organism: a monitory system of the living condition of the organism is firmly "rooted in the representation of the body," and therefore grounded on the bioregulatory device of emotions and feelings that controls and modifies the homeostasis of the organism's internal milieu (Feeling 36-7). Basically, emotions and feelings are the fundamental guidance before the emergence of consciousness and ensure the survival of the organism as it tries to avoid certain emotions such as fear and sadness while pursuing others such as joy and happiness. Yet, to place a full reliance on emotions and feelings might not be sufficient, as involuntary preferences and automatic regulation systems could actually be fatal under certain circumstances.[40] Therefore, the ability of an organism to 'know' its own present status and its relation to the objects and the surroundings with which it interacts in comparison to its past experiences, helps to provide an overall judgement and a scrutinised decision.[41]

According to Damasio, a state of emotion and a state of feeling are not necessarily experienced consciously by the organism. Beyond such a non-conscious state of the bodily emotions and feelings is a state of feeling being made conscious to the organism. Before an organism is capable of knowing its emotions and feelings, there must be a sense of self and the sense of self is grounded on the integrity and stability of the organism's biological state which is delineated by a definite boundary that separates the organism from things other than itself. However, even as a conscious being, not every perception and sensation of the organism is passed into

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[39] The affinity between Woolf's narration of the mechanism of memory and the construction of identity and Antonio Damasio's depiction of consciousness is also recognised by Patricia Moran in her notes to the article, "Gunpowder Plots: Sexuality and Censorship in Woolf's Later Works," collected in Virginia Woolf and Trauma: Embodied Text.

[40] See also C. S. Sherrington, The Integrative Action of the Nervous System (New Haven: Yale UP, 1906).

[41] "complex organisms placed in complex environments require large repertoires of knowledge...,the ability to construct novel combinations of response, and the ability to plan ahead so as to avoid disadvantageous situations and instead propitiate favourable ones" (Damasio, Feeling 139).

'self-aware' consciousness. "The brain [and perhaps the body on the whole] knows more than the conscious mind," claims Damasio (Feeling 42). Nevertheless, the non-conscious background knowledge of the organism's being-in-the-world—formed out of the continual process of the brain in receiving external stimuli and generating new drafts and interpretations on account of these inputs—is crucial in sustaining a fundamental core consciousness. A great deal of human behaviour is steered by unconscious or non-conscious feelings and emotions (or, as suggested by Damasio, emotions and feelings which might not necessarily be consciously experienced by the organism).

With the idea that "consciousness is not a monolith," Damasio comes to distinguish various levels of consciousness (different levels of knowing) and through such distinctions, consciousness and the problem of self and subjectivity have become much more approachable (Feeling 16).[42] At the base of the diagram drawn by Damasio there is a prevailing proto-self of which one is not conscious, but which is crucial in forming one's core consciousness and core self. "The proto-self is a coherent collection of neural patterns which map, moment by moment, the state of the physical structure of the organism in its many dimensions" (Damasio, Feeling 154). A step beyond the proto-self, as the mind regenerates a second layer of mapping (re-representing the neural patterns of the proto-self and its relation to the object that provides the initial stimuli), comes the sense of knowing. A sense of core consciousness thus becomes available. With the registration of the sensory input and the feelings it engendered, the subject becomes conscious of itself and its relation to the world around it. However, core self or core consciousness lives, moment by moment, without any reference to its past or anticipated future unless aided by memory devices. As suggested by Damasio, however, given intact and diverse

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[42] Henri Bergson also construed there are different planes of consciousness. See Matter and Memory 239. Whilst William James also writes: "The 'entire brain-process' is not a physical fact at all. It is the appearance to an onlooking mind of a multitude of physical facts...Their[the molecules'] aggregation into a 'brain; is a fiction of popular speech" (1: 178).

memory devices (some to register new input information, some to retrieve old stored information), an autobiographical self is capable of restoring experiences and information about its history more efficiently. Through this process, an extended consciousness is formed.

The sense of extended consciousness provides a more complete compass of the organism and the knowledge it needs to secure its survival. Yet, even at this stage no linguistic ability is needed. Damasio insists throughout his argument that though it is presumed that the mind, along with its incoming stimuli, is forever weaving a narrative that sustains the subject and its sense of self, just as the self is also woven into and sustained by the narrative itself. Yet the narrative of the mind is not necessarily a verbal or linguistic narrative of signifiers—it is rather an endless process of "wordless storytelling" (Feeling 188). Verbal meditation comes much later in the construction of consciousness. The neurological foregrounding of a nonverbal consciousness does not, however, dismiss the importance of language and linguistic ability. It only asserts that before abstract signification, there must come, first, something to be signified. Language, though important in translating nonverbal images, feelings, and emotions ('qualia') into abstract ideas capable of being transferred and communicated in a more objective manner, is not the most basic element of consciousness. A loss of consciousness, in fact, seems most closely to correspond to an absence of emotions (as observed through various cases of brain lesion and nervous impairment).[43]

A sense of self must be present before the application of the word 'I,' and such a sense of self is grounded on an endless process of numerous and synchronous neural patterns that generate emotions, feelings, perceptions and sensations of the organism. As a mind thinking confers the presence of an 'I,' it also confirms bodily being. For the 'I' could only carry out its task of thinking and reasoning on the basis of a

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[43] "when consciousness is suspended, from core consciousness on up, emotion is usually suspended as well, suggesting that although emotion and consciousness are different phenomena, their underpinnings may be connected" (Feeling 37-8).

persistent flow of emotions and feelings that denotes bodily presence.

At the bottom of consciousness is the organism's ability to feel what happens, suggests Damasio. As summed up by Nussbaum, "Damasio's research confirms the work of Lazarus, Ortony, and Oatley: emotions provide the animal (in this case human) with a sense of how the world relates to its own set of goals and projects. Without that sense, decision making and action are derailed" (117). In contrast to Damasio, Nussbaum argues that feelings and emotions are not solely biological and related to the organic functioning of the brain alone, but they are also socio-culturally constructed and susceptible to the influence of the institution of cultural languages. Feelings and emotions are refined and labelled through the subject's interaction with the objective world and constituted in verbal languages which give shape to what is felt and how it is felt. Critics have long insisted on the importance of the body and emotion in Woolf's representation of her characters' psychological state that is beyond the articulation of literal language, but neuroscience now seems to be developing similar insights justified by scientific and technological modes of exploration and verification.

Androgynous Mind: Feelings, Language, and the project of 'I'

As a female writer in search of a language, or rather, a form of representation, that is capable of communicating what she had felt, perceived, and thought, Woolf set off on her life-long experiment with language, words and syntax, hoping to achieve the ideal of "[writing] as a woman, but as a woman who has forgotten that she is a woman" (ARO 92). She aimed at writing life in its very essence. Yet, writing a life that is fully bound up with feelings and emotions, especially the heretofore private qualia of a female body, Woolf was more than conscious of being regarded as 'sentimental.' However, a distinction must be made between 'female' sentimental writing (that indulges in surplus emotional surges of love, anger and sorrow) and

Woolf's narration of the body. Woolf's writing is rather a narrative and effectively philosophical examination of the feelings and emotions in their relation to mental properties. The writing process is intended to capture or perhaps forge the elusive soul within in a state of flux as she sketches the subtle interrelations between the mind and the body as "an ordinary mind on an ordinary day" in which material stimuli contribute to the consciousness of her characters: "The mind receives a myriad impressions— trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel" (CR 1: 149; 150). While she writes to transmit subjective perceptions and experiences, she also embodies through the text a structure that enables an objective examination of these subjective views.

As Woolf had fought for a domain for women artists and writers, she had envisioned a fundamental resolution between the masculine and feminine forces which Lily Briscoe metaphorically achieves at the end of To the Lighthouse. Presumably, the vision that Lily has finally achieved is the recognition of the individual condition of androgyny, the quality of woman-manly and man-womanly within one person. The stroke down the middle is the abstract presentation of a nonverbal intuitive feeling—a thorough integration of emotion and reason, of the subjective and the objective. Thus, one could assume the vision which Lily has achieved is a vision of "the unity of the mind" which could "think back through its fathers or through its mothers" alternately—a unity of the mind which does not seek to reason 'over' its emotions but rather to reason 'with' its emotions (ARO 87-8).

Woolf's idea of androgyny, as Makiko Minow-Pinkney has noted, spurs critics onto diverse interpretations of her modernist and feminist standpoint.[44] The idea of androgyny does free Woolf from the conventional segregation of the feminine and masculine qualities and upholds her position as a female writer capable of presenting objectively the subjective quality of life. Only a skewed feminist opinion could surely read the idea of androgyny against Woolf's own beliefs. In contrast to Elaine

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[44] Makiko Minow-Pinkney, Virginia Woolf and the Problem of the Subject (Brighton: Harvester, 1987).

Showalter's contestation, androgyny is Woolf's acknowledgement and embrace of her femininity; it is certainly not its denial.[45] Androgyny is not a betrayal of feminism but, on the contrary, it is a most powerful and sustainable buttress for it. For with the idea of androgyny, Woolf subverted the traditional distinction and values placed on the qualities of masculinity and femininity. In so doing, she also conceived of and approached consciousness and subjectivity through an understanding of mind-body interactions fascinatingly similar to those of modern neuroscientists who may never have read a word of her.

Taking a poststructuralist point of view, Toril Moi argues in Sexual/Textual Politics (1985) that Woolf's evasiveness and her intentional avoidance of a definite, fixed, meaning might be the authentic representation of a feminine writing. By adopting the idea of the French feminist philosopher Julia Kristeva, Toril Moi suggests that Woolf's narrative could also be taken as a "'revolutionary' form of writing" that "with its abrupt shifts, ellipses, breaks and apparent lack of logical construction is a kind of writing in which the rhythms of the body and the unconscious have managed to break through the strict rational defences of conventional social meaning" (11). Minow-Pinkney also remarks that "For Woolf, … aesthetic innovation and feminist conviction are deeply interlinked, and her notion of androgyny mediates between the two" (8). Woolf's modernist revolt against the realism (or maybe social realism) of her Victorian and Edwardian literary forebears is taken by Minow-Pinkney as a challenge to phallocentricism. In talking about women and writing, Minow-Pinkney has argued, Woolf never attempted to answer the essentialist question of what is a woman. "Woman is a project, not a given; femininity is a representation and cultural construction, not an eternal essence" (Minow-Pinkney 11). And yet, one might further venture that neither women nor the question of 'what a woman is' is Woolf's sole project, but the very essence of being and of being in a process of creation. How does

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[45] Elaine Showalter, A Literature of Their Own: From Charlotte Brontë to Doris Lessing (London: Virgo-Time Warner. 1999).

one, the 'I,' and the 'self,' come to be? What makes me 'me'? For the sense of self formed out of continual environmental inputs is subject to a series of reformulations, and though coherent and even persisting, the self is never definite or absolute.[46]

Probing into the 'narrativity' of subject-formation as well as self-creation, a series of unfinished narratives or biographical works occur in Woolf's various writings: Mrs. Hilbery's biography of her distinguished father in Night and Day(1919), Bernard's life stories in The Waves (1931), or Terence Hewet's novel of silence in The Voyage Out. A number of characters evade the narrative expression and fade out in the course of narration: Rachel Vinrace of The Voyage Out, Jacob Flanders in Jacob's Room(1922), Mrs. Ramsay in To the Lighthouse (1927) and Rhoda in The Waves. Woolf even wrote in response to the public commentaries on The Waves: "odd, that they (*The Times*) should praise my characters when I meant to have none" (WD 170).[47] As Woolf wrote about lives, she was conscious of the temporal elusiveness of the present and of the present apprehension of a subjective state. As the sense of self and personal meaning is subject to time, the characters or the personified ideas are therefore bound to become evasive and partial from the perspective of a narrative present. Just as consciousness, the sense of self and self-knowing, is, by nature, forever late in time. What one comes to see and know consciously is never the exact synchronised present but a present-past regenerated as past-present.

The stream of consciousness (a phrase adopted to describe a major technical characteristic of modernist writings) is a record and reflection of the conscious self's interaction with its environment in its social and cultural context. In 'The Narrow Bridge of Art' (1927), Woolf envisioned a departure of the novel from its realist and 'materialist' predecessors. Although "it [the novel to come] will express the feelings

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[46] Even for multiple personality disorder (or as it is termed recently, dissociate personality disorder), as its name suggests, there are diverse personalities or senses of self within one body, so the self alters in turns. However, with the mind's tendency to manipulate incongruous information into a coherent context, it is only possible for one self to be consciously present at one time. See Ian Hacking, Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Sciences of Memory (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1995).

[47] Diary entry 5 October 1931.

and ideas of the characters closely and vividly" it will not be "limit[ed] … to the psychology of personal intercourse," it will provide us something more impersonal (GR 18-9). The novel of the future should be able to satisfy what one has longed for in ideas, dreams, imaginations, and poetry: a communal tie between each individual. "The poet is always able to transcend the particularity … and to give us his questioning not of his own personal lot alone but of the state and being of all human life" (GR 19). That is the stance that Woolf tried to attain through her works—to generalise through classification, to characterise through abstract symbols and to design what is personal and subjective (reflecting the two main concepts and means of scientific inquest into the hidden order of nature).[48]

The consciousness drawn by Woolf through her narrative does not limit itself to the extended consciousness of personal biographical memory, but it also shows the general phenomena of consciousness experienced and shared by all conscious human beings. For Woolf, the novel is the most flexible literary form, capable of distilling the most intense subjective feelings as well as the most detached critical point of view. "It is the gift of style, arrangement, construction, to put us at a distance from the special life and to obliterate its features; while it is the gift of the novel to bring us into close touch with life. The two powers fight if they are brought into combination. The most complete novelist must be the novelist who can balance the two powers so that the one enhances the other" (GR 143-4). Woolf's experimental narrative is her effort to resolve the eternal conflict between the subjective experience of sense-data and the objective existence of sensibilia, a conflict that has troubled scientists and philosophers for centuries. Throughout her works, Woolf strived to balance a subjective penetration into the feelings engendered by the living body and an objective reflection of each individual emotion. She attempted to bring together an internal and external view of life and the world, one that might both reflect and alleviate the

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[48] A. N. Whitehead, Science and the Modern World: "Accordingly, Aristotle by his Logic throws the emphasis on classification…Classification is a half-way house between the immediate concreteness of the individual thing and the complete abstraction of mathematical notions" (37).

anxiety and discomfort resulting from the incalculable quality of life.

Thomas Nagel whose book title for his inquiry into the problem of integration between subjective and objective perspectives, The View from Nowhere, echoes Bernard's question, "but how describe the world seen without a self' (W 221)? Nagel, with his argument of "What it is like to be a Bat?", situates the problem of consciousness right at the centre of the mind-body contention.[49] Along with his idea of the unique consciousness of an organism as it feels and senses what it is like to be itself in its body, Nagel contends that "it is this very subjectivity of the qualia of consciousness that creates all the problems" among the mind-body relation (Lyons 185). The very subjective qualia of consciousness affirm the significance of the body to its subjective mind. How to employ an objective, scientific study of such intrinsic qualities (to extract the confluent body image from mental apprehension and achieve pure perception), as Nagel concludes, is the insoluble dilemma of the modern sciences of the brain and consciousness. Nevertheless, despite the fundamental subjective aspect of the mind, Nagel still holds onto the prospect that a more objective understanding of the phenomena of the mind is possible. This has been borne out in modern neurology studies, and as Ramachandran asserts, what we lack is simply the right medium in which to transpose and communicate these scientific discoveries.[50] Perhaps Woolf, with her experimental writing, has stumbled across a possible aesthetic resolution of the problem of how to reconcile the private subjective sphere of the mind and the public, objective world of matter.

Within the opposition between subject and object, a multi-layered consciousness is drawn by Woolf throughout her narratives. As one more objective apprehension reflects upon another more subjective qualia, the narrative reflects the nerve system in the brain that provides different levels of remapping and that always weave into its

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[49] "What is it like to be a Bat?" is the title of an essay by Thomas Nagel published in 1974.

[50] Ramachandran: "I submit that we are dealing here with two mutually unintelligible languages. One is the language of nerve impulses—the spatial and temporal patterns of neuronal activity…The second language, the one that allows us to communicate what we are seeing to others, is a natural spoken tongue like English" (Phantom 231).

pattern the previous self and subjective feelings. Woolf's narrative of consciousness has a close similarity to the diagram of consciousness drawn by Damasio as proto-self, core self, and autobiographical self, building upon one another and generating, one beyond another, core consciousness, extended consciousness, and on the eminent top—conscience (empathy with others feelings and emotions) which enables one to surpass one's personal boundary and sympathise with others, attaining a communal unity. Under Woolf's description, there is a primal sense of the self which could not be fully apprehended through consciousness, residing alongside a vague sense of an integral 'I.' The self within one, as seen by Bernard in The Waves, is most 'disparate,' yet most 'integrated' as well. Although the self is forever mixing itself with other qualities surrounding it, a distinct notion of the 'I' or 'me' or the ego is still perceivable. Being greatly influenced by Russell's distinction between sense-data and sensibilia, Woolf depicts a consciousness that not only looks both outward into the world and inward into itself, but also attempts to detach itself from itself in order to envision and contemplate those that are insensible to the subject and to reason how the self comes to be what it is.

Woolf's narrative is the mind's narrative of the bodily emotions and feelings and, through such narrative, she aimed to substantiate a sense of the elusive, protean, 'self' which lurks consistently beneath one's consciousness, but always seeming to escape verbal comprehension. It is a narrative that would objectify her subjective feelings as the mind feels the body and reflects upon such feelings—a narrative of the "logic of sensation" that attempts to structuralise the personal experience as well as to impersonalise private experience (Fry 72).[51] It is the narrative of the self speaking to the self, an interlocution between the self as subject and as object, and in juxtaposing these separated voices within, it captures a more integrated mind which one might call

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[51] Roger Fry, Vision and Design: "From the merest rudiments of pure sensation up to the highest efforts of design each point in the process of art is inevitably accompanied by pleasure; it cannot proceed without it. If we describe the process of art as a logic of sensation, we must remember that the premises are sensations, and that the conclusion can only be drawn from them by one who is in an emotional state with regard to them" (72).

a 'self.' Woolf had adopted a scientific approach to subjective experience as it deals with the particulars that "mark 'the sharp point, in language, of the essential privacy of each individual's experience'" (qtd. in Banfield 296). Beneath the apparent narration of the transient nature of the rainbow-like personality, the protean self, there is always a granite-hard truth that would uphold the narrative and grounded the self.[52] The matter of 'subject and object and the nature of reality' is not just the epistemological quest of Mr. Ramsay, but also the fundamental matter with which Woolf had been experimenting throughout her narratives.[53]

Contemplating the difference between intellectual activity in the arts and the sciences, Roger Fry asserts in "Art and Science" (1919) that the involvement of the emotional state in the process of art creation and appreciating. In contrast to 'seeing,' 'feeling' constitutes a major catalyst for aesthetic achievement and appreciation: "an aesthetic harmony simply does not exist without the emotional state. The harmony is not true unless it is felt with emotion" (Fry 73).[54] And as Bertrand Russell noted in Our Knowledge of the External World (1914), a diverse emphasis on the scientific (Ionians) and the mystic (Sicilians) could be perceived among Ancient Greek philosophy. In a mathematician like Pythagoras, there is a curious combination of both scientific attitude and mystic insights.[55] Scientific 'insights' and aesthetic 'aspiration' are often achieved through the sponsoring of an undercurrent of feeling which is usually beyond intelligibility.

Woolf's novels are not just in themselves works of art, they also explore the very process of the creation of aesthetic works—how they are conceived, reflected upon and formulated either through a musical scale or on a canvas or even through a much more dynamic form (as manifest by Mrs. Dalloway) of parties and occasions. Woolf's protagonists are always artists of some sort in pursuit of an artistic end in life—to

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[52] Virginia Woolf, "The New Biography," Granite and Rainbow (London: Hogarth, 1958).
[53] TL 28
[54] Roger Fry, Vision and Design (London: Pelican, 1937) 69-74.
[55] Bertrand Russell, Our Knowledge of the External World 1914 (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1922) 29.

mould the essence of life in its rhythm. As if only by moulding the minute triviality of life into a substantial artistic form could life be held and protected from being washed out by time. Both creative processes and aesthetic apprehensions are inter-related to consciousness. The creative process is a process of translating what is subjective and personal into an objective experience as the self feels its senses, detaches itself from its senses to reflect on them, and finally achieves an apparently impersonalised objective understanding. Thus, it is a process of both the self finding itself and then losing itself (to be able to negate oneself, or in other words, to endow oneself with all the flexibility of fluid identity) or what John Keats has termed 'negative capability.'[56]

It is well-recognised that Woolf's narrative is always an inquest into the Real. The theme of individuality and communal mergence strains through all of her works as she continues to pursuit a 'reality' that is sustainable through both subjective and objective points of view. This thesis will argue that the concern with 'subject and object and the nature of reality' in life is the core foundation of all her writings and ideas. Woolf's life-long experiment with narrative forms (to bring forth a more truthful illustration of lives and of realities) has turned out to be an advanced depiction of the nature of consciousness. If as it is said that "British philosophy is always turning into psychology, and psychology into physiology" (Russo 90), Woolf, in the early decades of the twentieth century, with her engagement in an environment overfilled with discourses of epistemology, philosophy, and psychoanalysis, has come to picture a relation between the mind and the body that is now affirmed by neuroscientists.

Chapter Divisions

In this thesis, I will approach Woolf's writing as an exploration and illustration of the subjective consciousness of 'being' and the process of subject-formation. Instead of taking the more traditional stance of psychoanalytic theory and criticism

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[56] John Keats, letter to his brother, 28 December 1817.

(though I still reflect constantly upon them and using a variety of established psychoanalytic concept to support my argument), I will examine her works in relation to the mind/body problem that has preoccupied scientists and philosophers for centuries. By resorting to recent accounts of brain scientists and neurologists on consciousness, my aim is to describe how Woolf, under the influence of the diverse 'soul' discourses of her time, had drawn out a consciousness that is now gradually being reasserted by new scientific evidence. Woolf's narrative is fundamentally a narrative of life, of being-in-the-world.

The thesis will be divided into two main parts as the focus of my argument shifts slightly from discussing Woolf's depiction of the natural state of being and how that knowing of being is grounded upon a bodily and emotional base, to addressing her representation of the temporality of 'being' and, through the conception of time, the continual changing and swerving between 'objective' and 'subjective' consciousness in life. Following Martin Heidegger's proclaimed argument in Being and Time(1927), in talking about 'being,' it would be difficult to exclude temporal elements of being as all being is temporal.[57] And as argued by A. N. Whitehead in Science and the Modern World (1933), "In being aware of the bodily experience, we must thereby be aware of aspects of the whole spatio-temporal world as mirrored within the bodily life" (113). The body lives in the temporality of time, while the timing apparatus of the brain contributes to the integral experience of the subject. Through time, a subject learns and embroiders its subjectivity and in time, it wedges itself, forming a continuous self-identity. As the problem of the subject and subject-formation is fundamentally linked with the building and retrieving of memory, one could not exempt the problem of time from Woolf's concern with life-writing and subject-creation. The shifting, adjusting, recounting of the past and present, are crucial to the interpretation of life in

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[57] David Farrell Krell has noted the possible influence of Henri Bergson on Heidegger in his introduction to Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings: "Not only Nietzsche but other sources as well brought together for Heidegger the issues of Being and time. Henri Bergson had been lecturing on time the past several years in Paris"(8).

the process of being. 'Being' is only carried out in time. Without time and its temporality, there is only the permanent stasis of death.

Thus, I begin by talking about how 'being' must assume a unification of mind and body. The forming of the subject and the making of personal meaning is fundamentally based upon the feelings and emotions felt by the subjective, organic, body. Moreover, with the suggestion claimed by modern neuroscientists, rationality is not achieved by obliterating emotional elements. Instead, only with an intact sensorial system can logical reasoning and rational social behaviour be made possible. In the first chapter, "The Waves as a Narrative of Consciousness," I will focus on The Waves and argue that as Woolf's experimental writings culminate in The Waves, it becomes an explicit example of Woolf's aesthetic ideal—a truthful presentation of lives and the nature and process of life through the narrative. As the novel opens with a dawning similar to the emergence of a conscious self that starts to delineate its boundary and reflect on its experience, the life journey of its characters is also embarked upon.

I will argue that The Waves, as a narrative of consciousness, is not simply about the stream of consciousness of its characters. As a dramatised soliloquy of life stories delivered by six different characters, the narrative design, account, or acts, all seem to reflect the emergence of consciousness and the contriving of subjective identity. In a style of poetic prose and a fictional dramatisation of consciousness, The Waves portrays the surges and continuous flows of feelings and emotions as they are experienced from infancy onwards. In narrative, The Waves plays out the configuration of a self from the initial state of feeling the feelings and knowing the others to adopting verbal language in order to narrate and analyse feelings in an attempt to reach a summation of one self among various narratives. And with the help of the theory formulated by Jacques Lacan and other, object-relation, theorists, I venture to suggest that the insecurity and uncertainty of the subject arises from the fundamental fact that as life is a continual ongoing process, the personal meaning of the subject remains in an indeterminate editorial state, though the initial contact with

the world in infancy largely shapes one's view of the world, self and life.

In chapter two, I will explore the first two novels of Woolf, The Voyage Out and Night and Day, which in their traditional melodramatic forms and conventional themes of love and marriage, demonstrated early on Woolf's preoccupation with the mind/body relation and how this relation shapes socio-cultural gender differences. These two novels are Woolf's first attempt to expose traditional biases in the representation of the problem of mind/body: the rational masculine mind in contrast to the emotional feminine body. And by subverting the divided mind/body distinction and undermining the hierarchy between the higher and lower mental faculties (as set out in faculty psychology), Woolf founded her feminist claims. In both novels, the heroines are situated in a world that values rationality (with its utmost concern in abstract yet logical correct thinking) and denounces sentiments (of its 'abstract' confusions and disorientations). Ironically, whether it is reason or unreason, their 'abstractness' from the actual material world results in a dreamily, unsubstantial, frame of mind. As Rachel Vinrace is torn between the music of sincere feelings and emotions and the unbending yet disingenuous social codes of patriarchal English society, Katharine Hilbery also struggles against the social conventions of a London drawing-room, trying to attain her own self-fulfilment. Katharine deliberately renounces any interest in literature because of its ambiguity and uncertainty; instead, she secretly pursuits an 'unwomanly' interest in mathematics which is solid and definite. Whether it is mathematics or music (of which two A. N. Whitehead saw a close affinity in their abstractness), both Rachel and Katharine, by means of abstract presentation, are searching for a fundamental 'reality' which underlies the artificial world of the respective societies.[58] The conventional division between night and day, dream and reality, seems to crumble, reflecting a world of belief in substance shattered as well as liberated by the ideas of Einstein's relativity and wave-particle dualism. Although in Gillian Beer's opinion that, with the advances of modern physics, "the

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[58] Science and the Modern World.

ego is etherialised, snatched away from a single base," Woolf is still seeking the basic notes that compose and play the music of who one is (117). With both novels Woolf spells out the modern contradiction between striving "to get outside [the] body, beyond [the] house by means of thought, Einstein, speculation, mathematics, the Mendelian theory" and a desire to go beyond one's self-conscious ego by relinquishing consciousness in resonance with the body (MD 30). And yet, as Woolf shows through both novels, bodily feelings and emotions could not be denied or suppressed. Only a healthy coordination between the body and the mind sustains one's sanity. Woolf, writing within the conventions of her time, launched her life long inquiry into truth and fact, real and unreal, but above all for a true means of communications as words and verbal language fail. Thus, from the beginning, Woolf started to search for a more suitable means to represent a reality of 'being' which is not altogether substantial, but is instead "ondes fictives" as described by de Broglie, a French physicist (qtd. in Beer 115).

With Chapter 3, I try to support and sum up my previous arguments with an exploration of the idea of androgyny which Woolf expounds fully in A Room of One's Own (1929) and characterised by Orlando (1928). In both works, Woolf sought to state the absurdity and the fictive nature of the patriarchal discourse on 'rational facts' and gender properties. The light-heartedness of these works satirises not only the male anger against his gender counterpart, but also the esteemed sobriety of masculine 'rationality' that seems to be obscured by men's own aggressiveness in claiming its superiority. With the idea of androgyny, Woolf illustrated that a rational mind is fully bound up with its organic source—the body. The deficiency of materiality, especially in the nurturing of the body, eventually leads towards an insufficiency of creative mind. Presumably, one could not deny the fact that body and mind display quite different qualities, yet it would be wrong to dissociate them. Here, I would also venture to defend Woolf from Elaine Showalter's infamous argument concerning Woolf's so-called evasive feminist stand, and state that it is with androgyny that Woolf

strikes unswervingly at the matrix of gender bias and its inequalities.

Starting from Chapter 4, I take a detour to expound the time-scheme adopted by Woolf in illustrating the impact of time upon objective knowing and subjective being. Here, with a discussion of Mrs. Dalloway and its time element, I try to delineate the influence on Woolf of the idea of time depicted by both Bergson and Russell. Mrs. Dalloway, an epitome of a traumatic text, illustrates, with its multilayering of time, the subjective struggle to form and enter combat with a formless centre and the seeming meaninglessness of life. Whilst asserting an effort to live, there is a secret understanding that it is in nothingness that the self might fully embrace itself. In Mrs. Dalloway, time is perceived differently from the perspective of sanity and insanity. Disorientation is derived from a failure to perceive and sense the coordination between the social time without and the mental time within. By discussing Mrs. Dalloway, I will deal with the contrast between Russell's moment of being and Bergson's durée in terms of Damasio's core consciousness and extended consciousness. With the speculation on temporal deployment in memory and its contribution to shaping and sustaining a biographical self that might engender subjectivity, this chapter also attempts to examine that ultimate dilemma between subjective and objective points of view resolved perhaps through sympathy and conscience. These two represented the most evolved mechanism of consciousness as it is made capable of speculation which assimilates and recognises other's experiences and feelings—and therefore attains a communal integration which transcends personal temporality.

In Chapter 5, I focus on To the Lighthouse which exemplifies the idea that aesthetic achievement is only plausible by resolving the culturally constructed opposition of the masculine and feminine qualities. With its structure, the novel also brings forth a perceived time that consists of continuous flow and of moments of stasis. Reaching out to the memory of her parents, Woolf, like Lily Briscoe, seeks to break through into their subjective world—to learn their thoughts and feel their feelings. A

fine integration of 'sense and sensibility' makes the envisioning of the final stroke possible as it completes the painting by bestowing on it a form and eventually a meaning. With a close examine of "Time Passes" which forms as the central unifier of the novel that gives form through delineation, the chapter tries to argue that with "Time Passes" the ambiguity of objective and subjective temporal being is revealed. As The Waves pursues its theme of (and through) the art of words, writing and theatrical effects, To the Lighthouse, with Lily as a painter, employs visual art as the motif through which to transmit subjective vision through objectified detachment, to explore that fundamental question: "how describe the world seen without a self" (W 221). With its narrative structure and its account of narrative, To the Lighthouse shows how final vision is achieved through an endless shuffling between a first-hand subjective experience and a more detached objective apprehension.

With Chapter Six, I continue to examine the depiction of the deployment of time in relation to subject formation in The Years. The Years is an artistic presentation of 'being' in a social-historical world. History, biographical as well as socio-cultural, is an essential theme for Woolf. As if reflecting the advance of modern technology and the impact of a modern war, in The Years, time is chopped into segments of reflection, memory, and sudden apprehensions, and history is learnt and represented, not by facts, but rather through a reflection on personal feelings and emotions. Thus, with The Years, a family saga is painted to characterise a history not of the facts recorded in newspapers, but of 'real' living in time that conveys both the sense of durée experienced within consciousness and of separated individual moments as a higher consciousness stands outside or without, contemplating the passage of time. And through this embodiment of private sensations, history is enlivened. To en-capture life, Woolf had to defy time and its corruption, yet to depict a life in living would be impossible if temporal elements were eliminated. Thus, by resorting to ideas of art which Martin Heidegger had explored in "The Origin of the Work of Art" and also with the help of Roger Fry's interpretation of French impressionist aesthetics, I

attempt to expound Woolf's experimental deployment of literary forms which adhere closely to modernist aesthetics where "the visual meets the invisible and abstract" (qtd. in Banfield, Phantom 26). With literary cubism, both the subjective duration and the objectified passage of time could be suggested and made known to the reader.

With a discussion of Woolf's last novel, Between the Acts, I conclude my thesis, claiming that Woolf's experimental writing has been an enterprise in transcribing 'being' in time through the minute interactions between feelings and thought. Instead of plot, her aim is to sketch the life, the soul, and the thing in itself which is porous, formless and intangible. The twofold quality of granite and rainbow that thread throughout her works reflects a subjectivity, a personal meaning, which is woven out of a narrative of bodily senses and feelings. However, in Between the Acts and as in any other writings of Woolf, personal subjectivity and objectified, impersonal, human nature go hand in hand. In one day of life, an entire history of the British Isles is presented. The past is always carried along into the present through memory and through the body. By such juxtaposition, Woolf is writing the perennial nature of life as well as depicting individual lives in their special temporal-spatial positions. The common nature of the generation of consciousness, and also the subjective reality of the most private qualia are therefore appreciated and portrayed. By resorting to Nature, Woolf thereby achieves the objective of a depiction of lives in relation to other lives as well as a depiction of life in relation to the reality of 'being.'[59]

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[59] ARO 102

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The Waves as the Narrative of Consciousness

> A mind thinking. They might be islands of light—islands in the stream that I am trying to convey; life itself going on. A Writer's Diary, 28 May 1929

The Waves opens with the description of an obscure early dawn when things are dimly perceived as if it is also the dawning of consciousness—a stage of amniotic fluidity before the self knows of its own existence. The opening line of the novel, "The sun had not yet risen. The sea was indistinguishable from the sky," descriptively presents a self-sufficient world, a Golden Age before the birth of any self and where no boundary has yet been drawn separating subject and object (W 3).[1] A pre-consciousness simply exists without being aware of its own existence. Yet, as the subject is gradually torn out of the maternal womb, it enters a world where its central and omnipotent mastery is no longer effective and where a system of surveillance must develop to ensure survival—animal consciousness.[2]

Coming into consciousness, "as if the arm of a woman couched beneath the horizon had raised a lamp and flat bars of white, green and yellow spread across the sky like the blades of a fan," there comes a flamboyant display of lights that blazes without lucidity (W 3). The blazing light seems to exemplify that sudden thrust "into the shore of light" from darkness, as the self, ripped from the self-enclosure of a world of being one with the mother, comes to feel and know subconsciously its own being and existence apart from the world (qtd. in Nussbaum 189). Instead of a traditional Apollonian image of sun, a female figure stands as a substitute and as the bearer of

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[1] Martha Nussbaum, Upheavals of Thought: "The people of the Golden Age were, as Hesiod puts it, *nêpioi*—infantile, lacking speech and reason...It was all right for the people of the Golden Age to be emotionless, since that condition was suited to the world in which they lived. But in our world emotions are needed to provide the developing child with a map of the world. The child's emotions are recognitions of where important good and bad things are to be found" (206).

[2] Freud, 12: 254.

light, hinting that, in this world at least, the essence of consciousness is associated with the more (conventionally deemed) 'feminine' qualities of feeling and fluidity.[3] This is the dawning of a sense of self as waves of bodily feelings and emotions come to be registered unconsciously (that is to say pre-reflectively) by the organism. For the proto-self becomes conscious of its own existence by distinguishing and separating itself from the world around it as it becomes "clothed in this changing, this feeling garment of flesh" (W 93). The dawning of consciousness prompts the primal differentiation between 'being' and 'non-being' as well as between a proto-self and other, still the 'Self' is "not yet quite born" (James 1:148). The glaring light of the daybreak serves as an analogy for the bewilderment and perplexed sensational experience of early infancy.

The crumpled sea beneath and the light blue sky become separated by "an arc of fire burnt on the rim of the horizon" as the lamp of light is raised higher, signifying an internal enlightenment as the organism comes to feel its satisfaction and frustration as the "sources [of life, namely the breast of the mother] evade him from time to time" (W 3; Freud, 12: 254). Prompted by this newly inflicted sense of unpleasantness, the incipient subject, in securing its own welfare and survival state, starts to formulate an internal world of self and begins also to differentiate this from an outward world of the other.[4] Thus, immediately, readers are introduced to the characters through their own self-description of their sensations. Each image or sound described is a direct narration of self-feeling and perceptions that, in delineating the special subjective relationship with the world, becomes a pronouncement of a subjective entity. The subject, now forming a self-reflexive consciousness, not only perceives the mother as an other but also, like the sun shining upon the rippling sea, objectifies its own body

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[3] Gillian Beer, Virginia Woolf: The Common Ground (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1996) 86.

[4] In psychoanalytic terms, the child perceives itself, at first, being fully unified with the mother. Being born into the world and torn away from the secure womb, the child does not come to realise his/her separation from the maternal body until his/her desire is frustrated and unattended to. Furthermore, the separation provokes anxiety about losing the mother. Therefore, as one becomes a separated being, one is eternally shuffling between a desire to substantiate oneself (from which arise the fears of castration and devouring) and a desire to re-unify with the mother through the dissolution of oneself.

and bodily conditions which, though sponsoring its sense of selfhood, are not under its full command. With the awareness of differentiation between self and others, the proto-self acquires emotions (before it could understand them intelligibly) in regarding the fulfilment of its need for survival in a world which is beyond its control. Such feelings and emotions, deriving from the instinct for survival, are the biological mechanism that maps out the subject's survival interest.

As the organism comes to feel its being through the vibrancy of its bodily needs and satisfactions, it is set up as an independent organic body separated from others. However, such knowledge of the self as an independent being in the world is an internal knowing (in contrast to an objective reflection that recognises the self-object relationship which comes later) of a present subjective state. Accordingly, the characters need endlessly to re-state their subjective perceptions not only as identifications of their own subjectivity, but as a means to further sharpen their boundaries and attain self-definition through reflexive self-understanding. The subtlety of different levels of consciousness has long been ignored because of its conventional presentation as a compacted unity.[5] In its totality, the subjective aspect of consciousness had been dismissed by philosophers such as Bertrand Russell and the Behaviourists. For, as shown in The Analysis of Mind, the 'consciousness' which Russell attempted to explain through scientific inquiry is limited to the higher level of self-reflexive consciousness, or what Damasio calls the 'autobiographical consciousness.' Woolf's novel begins with an emergent consciousness rooted in the body, sensation, and dim feelings of parturition and partition. The invocation of selfhood always corresponds to stimuli received in the body. Thus, the shock of the kiss for Louis or the showering waters for Bernard is, in truth, the shock of the self finding and recognising its existence and separation through the sensations aroused in the body. Thus, 'Rhoda bangs her hand against some hard door to recall herself back

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[5] Angela Richards notes the difference of passive and active connotation between the German words, '*bewusst*' and '*unbewusst*,' and the English translation of 'conscious' and 'unconscious.' See Freud 11: 165.

to the body.'[6] Her intangible selfhood is rather presented through an unsubstantial body. It is in the body that, with a smell, a threat, a gaze received, "It steals in through some crack in the structure—one's identity" (W 86).

The images of the sun and the waves in each preceding interlude seem to function as an analogy of the correlativity of as well as of the separateness between bodily feeling and consciousness. Each subjective consciousness of the dramatised soliloquies cannot do without the continuous waves of inner feeling, "moving, one after another, beneath the surface, following each other, pursuing each other, perpetually" (W 3). As a narrative of consciousness, The Waves is in fact fully grounded on bodily images of blood and veins and rhythms of the heart and breath. It is a narrative that seeks how "membranes, webs of nerve that lay white and limp, have filled and spread themselves and float round us like filaments, making air tangible and catching in them far-away sounds un-heard before" (W 101). Through the body, "Rich and heavy sensations form on the roof of [the reader's] mind" (W 18).

Consciousness dawns upon the self (like the lamp that rises and enlightens the fringes and frames of all objects) as one comes to 'feel' the interminable flux of feelings and emotions and "[bring] the system of life regulation…to bear on the processing of the images which represent the things and events which exist inside and outside the organism" (Damasio, Feeling 24). Thereby, a sense of knowing forms out of a conjecture of information communicated through various, parallel, pathways of the nervous system. From such mapping and remapping of the organism's state of being springs forth a pre-verbal consciousness of the proto-self's being in existence which produces the ground from which a self-reflexive awareness of its own subjectivity emerges.[7] In the voice of a chorus, a voice without a self, the interlude of The Waves sings out the subjective common ground of coming to feel and know one's being—the emergence of consciousness and the forming of subjectivity. Whilst the

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[6] W 31.
[7] Damasio, Feeling 25-6.

dramatised 'playpoem,' with its six distinct voices that gradually merge into one, enacts a multi-faceted and multidimensional consciousness that is continually integrating the past into the present and weaving out new narratives of the self through the body.

In their early childhood, the characters are bemused by not just the world around them, but also by their own inability to know how to interpret their perceptions or assimilate their sensations. Initially the characters address feelings that seem to rise for no reason. Stimuli that come from without are also internalised as if they outgrow from within. Therefore, Susan who sees "a slab of pale yellow" also bears "the yellow warmth" inside herself (W 3; 9). And all the while the stamping of the chained beast is simultaneously alluded to as a sound assimilated and internalised from the external world of the waves thudding at the beach. Feelings and emotions pour into them before they can comprehend their meanings and significances. They seem to be one with the world as they flow along with its flux as each description of the external world is as much a narration of the internal state. The children are blended into the natural and 'semi-protective' world of the nursery as they crouch beneath the current hedges, 'inhabiting the underworld.'[8] But, seemingly, they are also separated from the 'outside' world with their own distinct intrinsic nature (which is in turn projected back onto the world) as one sees through their unique description of their own perspectival world. In the nursery, the characters are overwhelmed by the internal fluctuation of emotions that respond to external stimulations, spontaneously swayed and submerged by unknown forces. The world is very much carried along within them as it is without. With the internalisation of the outer world, the waves continue to sound and surge within them throughout their lives. As it is said, "It is widely acknowledged that young infants have a less distinct sense of their own separateness, and that their relationship to the surrounding world may even verge at times on a sense of union, a quasi-mystical feeling that what exists is a single unified flux" (Sass 59). Whilst the

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[8] W 15.

ending of the nursery years and the starting of grammar school is, as termed by Bernard, "A second severance from the body of our mother" (W 93).

At this primal stage of the nursery years, with a blurred distinction between the subject and object, the impelling force that seems to coerce the movement or fluctuation of the subject remains unclear. It is not even determined as being either intrinsic or external. As soon as the characters are brought into being in The Waves, they display distinctive and characteristic perspectives as they start to employ words to symbolise and articulate their relations to their internal and external world. With their own self-narratives, their own identities as selves and their subjective inner realities are thereby being formulated. Although each of their perceptions is peculiarly owned by him/her alone, it is nevertheless an undeniable reality to its percipient in spite of its being unavailable to the others. As the inner reality is only real to the recipient alone, it is by symbolising these internal realities in the communal language of the social world that enables the characters to begin to embody their own differences by stating the reality of their own unique subjectivity. Subjective perceptions and apprehensions can only become an objective real through the employment of the social symbolic order. However, the feebleness of the signifiers often subtracts from the sense of the real that resists being retained in ordinary words, speech, or any so-called objective means of communication. Therefore in dramatising the working of consciousness, The Waves also fully enfolds the intriguing paradox of a subjectivity that is deeply entangled yet never fully contained within the socio-historical context of the community—an intrinsic, 'unnameable' core always evading symbolic representation and betraying any possible definition or meaning that might threaten the subject itself. For this is how Bernard perceives Louis and Rhoda, who are forever outside the definition of the socio-symbolic order, as "the authentics," as though in their 'nothingness' within this social world, they achieve themselves most fully (W 87). The subject is continually building a fortress of definition, through bodily sensations, around the inner void, for fear of losing grip of the self. With its six

characters, The Waves provides a prismatic degree of inner anxiety about the ontological nature of being which is founded upon a void of fluidity. Each of them continues to attach themselves to the initial symbol that is to become an emblem of their intrinsic self, functioning like the mask of Commedia Dell'Arte which, on the one hand, captures the essentiality of the character that has been further internalised and revivified by the body, and on the other hand, ironically 'covers,' 'explicitly,' the absence of the Real.

Woolf's arrangement of her opening prologue for the life-drama of The Waves not only reflects Damasio's metaphor of "stepping into the light" for the dawning of consciousness, but also clearly illustrates the object-relations involved in the birth of the self (Feeling 3). As it is put by Damasio, either as an audience sitting in the dark waiting for the performers to step onto the lighted stage, or as a performer who is about to enter upon the stage, the crossing of the threshold that separates a secure and limited shelter from a capricious world beyond, full of others and unexpectedness, is similar to the birth of consciousness. Both signify an initial encounter with the other. Through such confrontation between the world of one's own and the world of others, individual consciousness and subjectivity are therefore made possible. According to Damasio, consciousness first emerges from a flow of continual neural transmission of the information of the organism's condition that provides a ground reference for the mind of its bodily status and therefore forms the proto-self. Then, a reflection that forms a "second order map of organism-object relationship" of this internal flux engenders a core consciousness, so that the self becomes conscious of itself feeling the feelings and its subjective relation with the objective world (Damasio, Feeling 310). Consciousness, sustained by the unceasing incoming stimuli, enables the organism to know its emotions and feelings as it feels, and possibly to speculate on what has provoked the internal flux: "Consciousness…is the unified mental pattern that brings together the object and the self," mapping out their mutual relations (Damasio, Feeling 11). The waves of feelings and emotions provide a ground reference in sustaining

consciousness, though the ground reference for the most part passes unconsciously as an unheard inner melody of the body. With the coming into existence of a core consciousness, it becomes possible for the self to acquire new knowledge (forming a contextual and referential whole as it weaves and registers together the past, the present and the future). Based upon a core consciousness, the subject begins to adopt language, articulating and affirming its subjective reality; and with articulation the subject sustains itself by making itself known by others. For, as it is put by Jacques Lacan in Écrits, "Only a subject can understand a meaning; conversely, every meaning phenomenon implies a subject" (83). Thus, in words, one's own intrinsic subjective reality is substantiated through inter-subjectivity—subjective property is appropriated as a recognised objective data. Words do form as an essential ground for the self to locate and define what it comes to feel and know—to refine the self's boundary. Yet, in spite of this, language and words seem not to be the key necessities to the forming of a core consciousness.

In the beginning, there were no words, but merely a dimly perceived sense of feeling, unintelligible but indispensable to the forming of self. The self is crystallised through compositing various feelings and knitting out a consistent interpretation. Furthermore, appropriate feelings and emotions (as illuminated through the cases of Capgras syndrome[9]) are indispensable for a correct cognisance and recognition of the external world. Cognitive intelligences are nevertheless deeply connected with feelings and emotions. By the registration of the history of the proto-self's feelings and emotions, the subject is defined by wedging a consciousness of its feelings within its own temporary position among the narratives of autobiographical memory. Self-identity, though it cannot do without social language, is mainly moulded by the reminiscence of the feelings and emotions which forms "a chain whirling round,

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[9] Capgras delusion is resulted from a lesion in the fusiform gyrus where the process of identification takes place. As it is shown through the examples provided by Vilayanur Ramachandran in the Reith Lectures 2003, The lesion might have caused a disconnection between vision and emotion. For without the generation of the appropriate feelings and emotions toward the behold object, the patient fails to recognise the object.

round, in a steel-blue circle beneath" (W 103). The feelings and emotions that constitute a pivotal ground around which personal meanings spin and grow bear both the qualities of passive and unconscious evaluation as well active and conscious appraisal. Therefore, feelings and emotions, though arising primarily from the subject as an organic being in a world over which it lacks personal control, are not excluded from the influence of socio-cultural institutions. In fact, the understanding of feelings and emotions are greatly subjected to socio-cultural symbolism and context (as Nussbaum has expounded in Upheavals of Thought). The social symbolic orders of words help to formulate and cultivate the unnameable emotions and feelings in all their complexity. In words, one concretises one's subjective feelings and emotions into objective symbolism.

Although, with the insight of modern neurology, the innate dispositions as inherited through genes and the organic functions of the brain in conducting and sorting feelings and emotions should not be denied, the interaction with the environment also plays a crucial role in determining one's habitual beliefs and personality and shaping one's identity as Bernard asserts us that "We are creators. We too have made something that will join the innumerable congregations of past time" (W 110).[10] Therefore, the nature/nurture debate continues. In The Waves, Woolf provides a subtle depiction of the intricate processes of the interaction between nature and culture in the forming of the self in poetic terms which seem remarkably to embody Damasio's scientific vision and explanation of the emergence of consciousness. As soon as the six characters come to voice their feelings and perceptions, the depiction of the world perceived by each illuminates their individual being in revealing their intrinsic qualities. Still, each continues on to define and 'characterise' themselves, until they have woven around themselves a more solid frame by which they can identify themselves but nonetheless can never encompass

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[10] One of the main objections which Nussbaum holds against Damasio is his failure to take the socio-cultural context and therefore language into account in his depiction of the role of feelings and emotions as intrinsic judgments of the organism.

wholly who they are. Although their lives are gradually fixed and pinned down, 'like reeds held within a glass cover,' or like pieces being 'wedged into its place in the puzzle,' the question of "what am I?" still persists.[11] The concrete outward forms of social identity could not possibly give meanings to the intrinsic void. The 'I' still remains fluid and unnameable. Thus, to sum up who one is, there is no other alternative but through a re-narration of how one comes to be what one is now. The meaning of life is only momentarily and intrinsically felt by the subject as its meaning is drawn not simply by the moment itself but through the entire context of its own subjective history. No moment could be perceived and apprehended individually apart from its contextualisation within autobiographical memory. For each like and dislike, each perception, the meaning of each moment is deeply involved with personal memories, especially the body's memory of its feelings and sensations:

> The illusion is upon me that something adheres for a moment, has roundness, weight, depth, is completed. This, for the moment, seems to be my life. If it were possible, I would hand it you entire. I would break it off as one breaks off a bunch of grapes. I would say, "Take it. This is my life."
> But unfortunately, what I see (this globe, full of figures) you do not see. …
> But in order to make you understand, to give you my life, I must tell you a story. (W 183)

Either from the point of view of Darwinian biology or from the enlightened perspective of modern neuro-science, the subject, though born into the world with a predisposed neuro-biological state, is also endowed with an adaptability toward the environment and the condition to which it is subjected.[12] The recursive narrative of The Waves is seemingly in accordance with the modern neuro-scientific

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[11] W 147; 166.

[12] With the cases of Phantom limbs, Ramachandran specifies how the sensorial input could become 'crosswiring' as new connections are formed after changes in physical circumstances. In contrast to what had previously been suggested, that "connections in the brain are laid down in the foetus or in early infancy, and that once they are laid down, there is nothing much that can be done to change these connections in an adult," Ramachandran sees and suggests that "there is a tremendous amount of plasticity or malleability even in the adult brain" (Emerging 16).

comprehension of the working of consciousness as a continual mapping and remapping of the organism's temporal position in relation to its own history as well as in relation to the world around itself. Daniel Dennett, a professor of philosophy who has written extensively on the mind-body problem, sees consciousness as a series of multi-layered ongoing editorial processes that interpret and re-interpret continually the bodily status of the organism—the multiple drafts model.[13] As an editorial process, consciousness, instead of being concurrent with the factual present, is always temporally behind the actual instance as the present moment "fled ere we could touch it, gone in the instant of becoming" (James 1: 608). The body always moves ahead and beyond the mapping of the mind. What is consciously apprehended is already a past position in time. Therefore the mind's narrative, like any other verbal narrative, encapsulates a time that is anything but the present moment.

Bernard, like Woolf, a novelist, is also fascinated by "the moment" and engrossed with the possibility of seizing it through words. Yet, as time flows, there are things "that for ever interrupt the process upon which I am eternally engaged of finding some perfect phrase that fits this very moment exactly" (W 51). Nevertheless, the mind's narrative generates a fictionalised present by fabricating and conceptualising a past and a future—the present is apprehended through its embeddedness within the stream of time. As expounded by William James, "it is only as entering into the living and moving organisation of a much wider tract of time that the strict present is apprehended at all…[And therefore] [r]eflection leads us to the conclusion that [the present] must exist, but that it does exist can never be a fact of our immediate experience" (1: 608). As the present has fled before it could be experienced in its immediacy, the 'I' formed out of an ongoing editorial narrating is not only elusive, but moreover could only come to a comprehension of itself through an

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[13] "According to the Multiple Drafts model, all varieties of perception—indeed, all varieties of thought or mental activity—are accomplished in the brain by parallel, multitrack processes of interpretation and elaboration of sensory inputs. Information entering the nervous system is under continuous 'editorial revision'" (Dennett 111).

entwined narrative of past and future.

In rejecting the idea of a homunculus, a central manipulator (or a Cartesian theatre), modern neurology now suggests that different senses are processed by different parts of the brain. Stimuli to different senses are processed and interpreted through different passages with different agents taking different temporal durations. "[T]here is no single brain centre for processing emotions but rather discrete systems related to separate emotional patterns" (Damasio, Feeling 62). How these various sensations orchestrate the continual incoming stimuli into a unified experience represented through a central selfhood is still much under debate. The music of the mind, like the songs of the birds in the interlude, "Now and again…[runs] together in swift scales like the interlacings of a mountain stream whose waters, meeting, foam and then mix, and hasten quicker and quicker down the same channel, brushing the same broad leaves. But there is a rock; they sever" (W 82). The logical and consistent picture that one experiences consciously stands only for a limited portion of the stimuli received as the mind automatically avoids and rules out conflicting messages in sorting out the incoming information. The mind tends to rationalise consciously as well as unconsciously the incoming information of what it sees, hears, so the authenticity of one's perceptual experience is always controversial and reality becomes impossible to reconstruct as each narrative (from nonverbal to verbal, from neural transmission to linguistic apprehension) takes a further detour from the factual and supposed 'real' through innumerable translations.

The Waves appears to be a close mimesis of such a process with each soliloquy bouncing off another, questioning the authenticity of each narrative in an attempt to work out the controversial, to determine what has actually happened or been felt, and finally seeking to integrate the various points of view into a perceptual whole. As each soliloquy (representing a specific stream of thought strained by the peculiar qualities of each character) converges into the general narrative of Bernard which 'overcomes' all the differentiations and identities they so 'feverishly cherish,' to end the novel, it

fully recapitulates what the narrative tries to address and achieve, namely: "what am I?".[14] One often fails to understand, as perceived by Bernard, that "I (emphasis added) have to effect different transitions; have to cover the entrances and exits of several different men who alternately act their parts as Bernard" (W 56). Instead of being 'one and simple,' 'I' is a sum of 'complex and many.'[15] It is composed out of numerous grains which cannot be counted out, as Neville apprehended.[16] The 'I,' which is constantly forced to contract through the encounter of another body and the gazes of others and be simply what those others assume one to be, is merely one among numerous possibilities: "I am Bernard; I am Byron; I am this, that and the other…For I am more selves than Neville thinks. We are not simple as our friends would have us to meet their needs" (W 66).

The Waves is a story of Genesis: the Genesis of consciousness and subjectivity. It is a story fabricated through individual soliloquy where each character metareflectively assumes its own third person perspective within the confessional first person in order to reason with their own feelings and emotions as they struggle to understand themselves and each other. Each of them responds to life differently, yet each is nevertheless struggling to fortify an inner self (or in Lacanian terms an 'I' that occupies the *Innenwelt*) as well as a social-identity. Therefore, each one of them displays a different degree of comfort and anxiety over the elusive 'I,' as they struggle with fortitude to consolidate themselves. With an effort to substantiate a subjective 'I,' the subjective point of view of a character always seeks to counteract the 'objective' gazes of others (which continuously peck, like the birds, mercilessly, through the self-protective shells of the snails), asserting its intrinsic differences as well as resisting being thoroughly engulfed within a mass identity.[17]

As each character continuously returns to the symbolic feelings of their early

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[14] W 222.
[15] W 56.
[16] "I do not know myself sometimes, or how to measure and name and count out the grains that make me what I am" (W 61).
[17] W 55.

childhood, readdressing their subjective meaning, the repetitive narrative structure articulates a cyclical rather than linear passage of time. The Waves, by the structure of its narrative form, portrays the repetitive nature of the human psyche, as Sigmund Freud unfolds in Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920). Here the psyche is driven by a desire toward understanding and controlling the fortuitous life—a desire to bring the dynamic forces of life into permanent stasis. Although the narrative wanders in cyclical repetition, it is nevertheless threaded through with an aim to fabricate, striving to signify, a sustainable conceptualised selfhood—the idealised *imago* (in Lacanian terms) which is conceived by the mind but frustrated by the bodily experience. Under such a pre-text, the six characters thrive and develop from being to non-being, balanced paradoxically between a death-drive towards the stasis of self-dissolution and an egoistic life-drive forging a resolute 'I.' Although in seeking for a sustainable selfhood, "None had the courage to be one thing rather than another" (W 156). And yet, "What dissolution of the soul [life] demanded in order to get through one day, what lies, bowings, scrapings, fluency and servility" (W 156). Rhoda recognises that to fix onto one moment of being that might define oneself is also a betrayal as well as a denial of all those "white spaces that lie between hour and hour" which is mostly one's life (W 156).

As J. Hillis Miller has expounded the affinity between narrative and history, the narrative of The Waves is also one which attempts to realise a personal history and aims to formalise a self-identity through constantly weaving and reweaving what one comes to know and what one comes to believe.[18] The narrative, whether it is the mind's narrative of the brain's neuro-transmission, or the verbal narrative of the character in depicting its experience, is, by nature, a creative act, fabricating a context, in search of a unity and totality which are otherwise non-existent. Yet, this act of construction is constantly frustrated by the internal dynamic fluidity of what Lacan calls the semiotic, so that "The system tends magically to weave itself in a new form

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[18] J Hillis Miller, "Narrative and History," ELH 41.3 (1974):455-473.

even when it has been deliberately abolished...like Penelope's web spun anew each morning after its nightly destruction" (Miller, "Narrative" 461-2).[19] As the narrative of The Waves struggles forward against the two forces of construction and negation, it reflects what Julia Kristeva regards as "an impossible dialectic [between the symbolic and the semiotic]: a permanent alternation: never one without the other" (qtd. in Minow-Pinkney 121).

The subversion of the linear-temporal history is not itself the first and foremost purpose of The Waves, as Makiko Minow-Pinkney has suggested, but rather its aim is to transcribe that perpetual struggle against the fluidity of the nature of the human subject in the building of a personal history as well as the solidification of one's subjective identity through the larger social-historic context.[20] It is thus that linear patriarchal history is naturally subverted. The Waves addresses the modernist paradox where the self vacillates between attuning itself to a social identity defined by social position, while at the same time rejecting the full authority of the impulse to pin the self down and purportedly close down its possibilities. With Bernard winding up the narrative, one could almost presume that the entire narrative of The Waves is in fact a life story in the form of the numerous bubbles which Bernard attempts to collect and tell, though the bubbles always evaporate and the narrative always tails off unfinished. "There is no stability in this world," but then "there is...a world immune from change" (W 88; 80). Just as the waves collect and fall repeatedly underneath the definite passage of the sun above, or, as Woolf has noted in her diary, "the moths flying along; the flower upright in the centre; a perpetual crumbling and renewing of the plant," the narrative continues in its persisting process of forming and renewing

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[19] Miller: "The assumptions about history which have been transferred to the traditional conception of the form of fiction may be identified. They include the notions of origin and end ('archeology' and 'teleology'); of unity and totality or 'totalisation'; of underlying 'reason' or 'ground'; of selfhood, consciousness, or 'human nature'; of the homogeneity, linearity, and continuity of time; of necessary progress; of 'fate,' 'destiny,' or 'Providence'; of causality; of gradually emerging 'meaning'; of representation and truth" ("Narrative" 459).

[20] Minow-Pinkney 164.

selfness from birth to death (WD 140).[21] It is the possibility of conveying the very nature of "this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit" of life, "whatever aberration or complexity it may display," that Woolf and her novelist character, Bernard, seek through their narrative (CR 1:150).[22] Thus, one might suggest that it is rather with the aim of pursuing 'humane life' (for Woolf two words which pinpoint all that a writer looks at) in its very nature that Woolf's modernist ideas and feminist proclamations are founded.[23] As Sue Roe has also recognised:

> Woolf used the process of writing as a way of shaping meaning: language did not immediately express but rather gave her access to the insights her work reflects. … Because she worked in this way, her definitions of gender—which were always in flux, never static—function as an integral part of, and element within, the development of her aesthetic. *It thus becomes possible to identify her feminism as issuing from her writing practice: forged by writing, rather than consolidated within it* (emphasis added). (13)

With the characters speaking into their own existence in The Waves, Kate Flint has claimed that "It is through such verbal accretion, Woolf suggests, that identity establishes itself" (xi). Minow-Pinkney, regarding The Waves as a depiction of "the emergence of subjectivity and the process of its consolidation," also states from a Lacanian perspective that "Absorbing lexical and syntactic organisation, namely entry into the symbolic order, is also the beginning of subjectivity" (156; 157). Although both accounts rightly justify the theme of The Waves as subject-formation, they neglect the existence of an 'unnameable' 'I' felt by the subject before its entering into the symbolic and social world. The configuration of subjectivity and consciousness, as it is portrayed in The Waves, emerges firstly out of a 'narrative' accretion of the wordless, nonverbal, narrative of the mind, reflecting the account of modern neurology. However, as a social being involved within a socio-cultural context, the

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[21] Diary entry 28 May 1929.
[22] "Modern Fiction".
[23] "The Leaning Tower," Collected Essays 2:162-181.

self-image of the subject is continually moulded through the words and gazes of the socio-cultural background: one is often forced into being 'oneself' as Bernard and Neville both realise. While verbal narrative sustains a social identity and a social self, the non-verbal narrative bolsters the bio-psychological sense of a self already in existence. Linguistic narrative is only possible with the existence of a core self and a core consciousness formed through continuing incoming stimuli and with them the formation of various feelings and emotions that informs the subject of its existence.[24] This is what would be inferred from the Lacanian concept that before speech signifies anything, it first signifies the existence of the subject.[25]

The subject's knowing of its existence should come before any adaptation of symbolic speech. Though not to deny the influential role of languages in subject-formation, still, even when linguistic narration is possible, the internal flux of the "inmates, those old half-articulate ghosts who keep up their hauntings by day and night; who turn over in their sleep, who utter their confused cries, who put out their phantom fingers and clutch at me as I try to escape—shadows of people one might have been; unborn selves" still resides (W 222). Language fails to relieve these inner ghosts as "words can never encompass" the nonverbal images and feelings that the mind perceived (Cohn 54). Therefore in writing life and depicting the essential state of being, writers, and perhaps female writers especially, are compelled to transcend the socio-symbolic order of the Logos and attend to the pure and intrinsic semiotic fluidity of the poetic in order to transcribe the "luminous halo," the "semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end" (CR 1:150). As it is envisioned by Woolf in A Room of One's Own, it is an experimental search for the woman's sentence that would relieve her from the male gaze and men's 'sentencing.'[26]

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[24] "The continuity of consciousness comes from the abundant flow of nonverbal narratives of core consciousness" (Damasio, Feeling 176).

[25] Mikkel Borch-Jcobsen, Lacan: The Absolute Master (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991).

[26] Sandra M Gilbert, "Woman's Sentence, Man's Sentencing: Linguistic Fantasies in Woolf and Joyce," Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury: A Centenary Celebration, ed. Jane Marcus (London: Macmillan, 1987)

In words and speeches, the characters weave their being. The adaptation of language marks both the longing to be part of the social context as well as the desire to differentiate oneself from others. Language is an indispensable cognitive faculty. As it is said by Louis, "I know my cases and my genders; I could know everything in the world if I wished" (W 13). But with speech, Louis is driven from his dark, but protective, hidden place of the 'underworld' and forced against his wish "to come to the top and live in the light of this great clock, yellow-faced, which ticks and ticks" (W 13). Louis has always been trying to hide himself within a collective genealogical context of the human race in order to avoid the necessary inter-subjective confrontations of society. Even then, camouflaged amid the trees and bushes, he is still sought by Jinny. Unlike the stalks he pretends to be, Jinny's kiss awakes in him the sensations of his body: "I am struck on the nape of the neck" (W 8). The kiss on the neck presses onto him with a subjective sensation that shatters the wholeness and differentiates himself from the world with which he seeks to merge. However, with the entry into the symbolic order, there could be no hiding in speech. Each pronouncement is a projection of the subject. With his Australian accent, Louis holds back from initial verbal articulation. He will wait and copy others, but driven to imitation, he feels further diminished in his individual subjectivity: "I will not conjugate the verb…until Bernard has said it…I will wait and copy Bernard. He is English" (W 13). Louis's over-consciousness of his own differences prompts him to resort constantly to images of a collective unconscious through mythological imagery. He, who is excluded from the ebb and flow of the present life, continuously perceives along with the present, an ancestral past in a time of Pharaohs, by the Nile, with "women passing with red pitchers to the river" (W 7). Seeing himself as a past Arab prince, an Elizabethan poet, a Duke of Louis the Fourteenth, Louis contrives his identity from a collective memory of the past.[27]

208-224.
[27] W 95.

As articulation is meant to be heard and recognised, so the characters, in speaking their thoughts and emotions, struggle for a recognition which is only possible through differences that defy assimilation, since to recognise means both the acknowledgement of similarity as well as the identification of difference. Being unable to assimilate and conform, Louis and Rhoda both feel the threat of being excluded from the social circle. The foreign accent of Louis makes him stand out from the rest of his company. Rhoda, who is without all forms, can barely relate to herself within the language system and therefore remains eternally outside the loop. So Rhoda also seeks to assimilate by imitation. Although she has felt "some check in the flow of [her] being," without the capacity to embody it through the abstract means of Logos as "some knot in the centre resists," she gives herself to the full flood of her inner sensations: "Now my body thaws; I am unsealed, I am incandescent. Now the stream pours in a deep tide fertilising, opening the shut, forcing the tight-folded, flooding free" (W 41-2). As a consequence, she remains within a poetic fluidity that resists the conventional forms of the symbolic order.

In contrast to Rhoda and to Louis's discomfort over the designation of socio-cultural context, the gazes of others and their inability to substantiate a social-identifiable selfhood, the subjective reality of Bernard and especially Percival (who does not even need a voice to sustain his subjectivity) is self-contained and self-sustainable. Buttressed by their capacity to be recognised by others, they enjoy flexibility in their sense of self without the fear of plunging into the depths of nothingness. Thus, Percival, without a protruding selfhood, has become an enormous mirror that reflects each character's self-projection.[28] Yet, in the eyes of others, his subjectivity is impenetrable. Resembling Mrs. Ramsay in To the Lighthouse, Percival, without seeking identification with and recognition from others, is fully 'in-himself' and 'for-himself.' His reserved subjectivity enables him to absorb and reflect all projections of others without being negated nor altered by external gazes. Bernard, in

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[28] Harvena Richter, Virginia Woolf: The Inward Voyage (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970) 110.

pursuit of a genuine apprehension of life in itself, yields himself altogether to the flux of life. He seeks to merge with the entire stream of all life and to achieve a communal unity. Like Mrs. Ramsay, he "ha[s] been traversing the sunless territory of non-identity" (W 87). And, as he himself observes, he needs "eyes on [him] to draw out…frills and furbelows," to attain any possible identity (W 87). For without the continuing impetus to sustain self-identity, Bernard has passed beyond the symbolic order and reached towards a poetic appreciation of life. He continues to make little phrases "in which [he will] run together whatever happens, so that instead of incoherence there is perceived a wandering thread, lightly joining one thing to another" (W 36). But he gives up striving for plot.

While Louis and Rhoda are constantly clutching onto something external that might stabilise and substantiate themselves, Bernard and Percival move towards a position free of restrictions and orders. They sip and taste whatever life offers. Whether it is the triumph of death or dangling in triviality, formlessness or forever mixing one with the other, no one can threaten their substantiality, though they remain in a 'semi-transparent' state where the "who am I?" is left undefined. Words, for them, are merely words that neither subjugate nor elevate their sense of self. Bernard and Percival embody their own evasiveness rather than denying it. In contrast, Louis and Rhoda, who reside always on the edge of or even outside the symbolic order, represent the conflict between self-dissemination and self-consolidation *in extremis*. Percival and Bernard are both safe-guarded from total dissolution by their well recognised identity within the society, yet neither of them can be intrinsically fully captured.

Although Percival is presented nearly as a phantom figure devoid of substantial existence in the novel, without him, "there is no solidity. [The rest of the characters] are silhouettes, hollow phantoms moving mistily without a background" (W 91). By passing into death, Percival is therefore established as that central void which upholds unification despite its being beyond the signification of verbal language. Percival strings together the six voices, six different facets of life, forming "A single flower…a

seven-sided flower, many-petalled, red, puce, purple-shaded, stiff with silver-tinted leaves—a whole flower to which every eye brings its own contribution" (W 95).

As Bernard is fascinated by the fluidity and playfulness of the language, Neville perceives and admires its precision and the order it creates.[29] In phrases, Bernard seeks fluctuation as the truth of life, while Neville attempts through language 'a completion' of the moment that would 'triumph over chaos,' bestowing upon the absurdity of life a sense of sublimity.[30] Therefore, in the stream of life, he would pick out one person, one moment, and abstract it into a permanent stance of life.[31] By adopting various kinds of linguistic ability, the characters organise their senses and project, in turn, their own subjective reality into the external world. Initially, linguistic cognition and adaptation are already involved with personal disposition. Susan is always definitive and substantial with her clear-cut love and hate and she thus reflects the belief in an innate disposition of the human race towards family and civilisation.[32] Susan appreciates words through a concrete, earthly-grounded, association of white stones and yellow soil. Jinny, though not fluid like the watery nymph Rhoda, flutters like a butterfly in all her passions. Bound into her body and the texture of sensation, she is always searching for her own distinctive imagery. She sees that both Susan's set face and Rhoda's vacant expression possess a sense of wholeness. Yet, located in bodily sensations, she needs a full picture of head and body to provide her with a sense of completion. For Jinny, who learns the words through the vibration of the body, "Those are yellow words, those are fiery words" (W 14). Neville, with the tautness and decisiveness of an epic poet, in some way reflects Susan's vehemence in her relation to the passions of definitive love and hate. Bernard, who is loose and dangling, indulgently follows his feelings and emotions on the spur of the moment. He shudders at the fixation of life as "time taper[s] to a point" and life turns into a mere habit (W

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[29] W 14.
[30] W 37.
[31] W 210.
[32] Freud 12: 288-302.

141). Like Jinny, Bernard is also forever dancing to and leaping with the present moment.[33]

Parallel with the chorus of the interlude, the children start to draw the boundary and identify differentiations just as the sunlight sheds itself upon objects and brings forth into focus the fringe and edge of objects, distinguishing them from one another. Each of the six main characters starts off from 'I,' from the very word that seeks to claim their subjectivity—to distinguish one from other. 'I' is a word that seems to designate in its speaker a sense of existence as well as a sense of subjectivity. Each of these six characters, unlike Percival, is introduced not through narrative description (of a third-personal observation), but rather through direct discourses of their own self-expression. They appear to have been granted the autonomy to create and present themselves from the beginning. Paradoxically, though, 'I' is an indexical shifter, awaiting situated embodiment, not a name that addresses and defines the uniqueness of one's subjectivity. It is a common pronoun that could be adopted by anyone and could refer to anyone. Therefore, the fundamental grammatical designation that promises one a solid and robust sense of self is simply an empty form. As all discourses are presented in direct first personal narration, though they display six distinct characteristics, they are nevertheless fully merged into one. They are indeed, as Bernard has suggested, one and plural. They "melt into each other with phrases" (W 10). And years later, as Bernard tries to sum up his life, he describes all these childhood experiences and even personal sensations of each character as if he has experienced all of them subjectively. As physical beings, they drift apart, yet from dawn to dawn as Bernard has come to realise, fundamentally they have fused into one: "I do not altogether know who I am—Jinny, Susan, Neville, Rhoda, or Louis: or how to distinguish my life from theirs" (W 212).

Living in communion, they seem to experience not just their own sensations and perceptions, but also those of others. As these six characters grow and learn their way

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[33] W 30.

together in the world, each of their own unique perceptions and subjective appreciations is intermixed and assimilated with those of others. For without a definite 'self,' a different facet of the self could be triggered and come to rise through a reception of different external stimuli. When entering into a larger social order of the university, Bernard observes that "The complexity of things becomes more close...Every hour something new is unburied in the great bran pie" (W 56). Bewildered by the complexity and fluidity of himself, Bernard continues to question "what am I?". Yet, as he has confided, there is a "you, my self, who always comes at a call (that would be a harrowing experience to call and for no one to come; that would make the midnight hollow)," acknowledging an existence of a core self who substantiates him, a kernel upon whose ground he is able to flow, to change and mix up with the outer world (W 57). And all the while, the kernel continues to elude the grasp of language. Therefore, only through the poetic tropes of waves falling and collecting, of the fluid waters, of 'unfurling' oneself to the world and of 'rooting' down into the earth, that appeal to substantial bodily rhythms, senses and actions, could the narrative of the subject be possibly 'embodied.'

Through verbal narrative, the self voices its desire to be recognised by expressing itself, but is continuously frustrated by the final impossibility of communicating a core self. For Melanie Klein, such frustration gives rise to the "epistemophilic impulse" which is a strong drive to acquire language and knowledge in order to know the world and therefore make the self known by the world (69). However, in the course of time, one still questions, like Bernard: "Who is to say what meaning there is in anything? Who is to foretell the flight of a word? It is a balloon that sails over tree-tops. To speak of knowledge is futile" (W 88). In the beginning there is not the word, but the shadowy feeling of what happens. The modern neuro-psychological understanding of the self rectifies the Lacanian psychoanalytic idea that there is no natural unitary subject, no cogito, since the self is an on-going biological process that is constantly revising and reforming. The Lacanian concept is

also undermined by the affirmation (in modern neurological evidence) of a sustainable proto-self and core self, with no history or identity (a pure existence of an undefined, unintelligible and yet inexhaustible 'I') but on which the autobiographical self is founded. Bernard's statement that "Underneath, and, at the moment when I am most disparate, I am most integrated" perfectly sums up the paradox (W 57). Adopting a Lacanian perspective, on the other hand, Minow-Pinkney asserts that "subjectivity is achieved with the acceptance of the third term (the Name-of-the-Father), namely, the comprehension of mediation, the separation of word from the thing itself" (158). Yet, from a neuroscientific perspective, the self that comes before the adaptation of linguistic ability cannot in fact ever be comprehended through verbal descriptions.

The Waves, in demonstrating the architecture of human consciousness at work, portrays both the nonverbal narrative of the mind that continues to map its bodily state as well as the articulated narrative of the subject, attempting to pin down the slippery 'selfness' which s/he feels but is unable to grasp. Alluding to the words of Bernard, the narrative of The Waves manifests "a double capacity to feel, to reason," a full incorporation of both 'lower' and 'higher' psychological faculties (57). In its totality, (from the more basic level of a proto-self to the elaborate social image of an autobiographical self), The Waves depicts the subtle interchange (or an interlocution) between an inner consciousness of the subject's own selfness and a consciousness that reflects as well as projects the gaze of the other. The self, as both Neville and Bernard observed through their interaction, is forever mixing and changing, consolidating and dissolving, through social interaction with the other: "How curiously one is changed by the addition, even at a distance, of a friend....Yet, how painful to be recalled, to be mitigated, to have one's self adulterated, mixed up, become part of another" (W 61). Though through the mirror, the subject is first acquainted with a unified self image. the mirror reflection also brings threats to the substantiality of the subject. For a self-awareness of the other accompanies the mirror reflection and as a consequence, one is prompted to question whether the unified 'I' is an intrinsic value or a given

attribute.

With a deep understanding of the nature of subjectivity, The Waves questions the integrity of the 'I' and the autonomy of selfhood. The image of a woman writing within that forbidden garden in which Bernard and Susan accidentally trespass, haunts Bernard:

> Down below, through the depths of the leaves, the gardeners swept the lawns with great brooms. The lady sat writing. Transfixed, stopped dead, I thought, "I cannot interfere with a single stroke of those brooms. They sweep and they sweep. Nor with the fixity of that woman writing." (185)

Is she the procreator—the unknown narrator in whose words the characters spring into being? Have the characters been deceived into believing that they are exercising autonomy in the act of their soliloquies, while, in fact, they are merely scripted characters, voicing the words of a supreme author? In its ambiguity, the narrative of The Waves seems to question likewise "Who's there?", a question that is posed at the very beginning of Hamlet. Who's there behind the scene? Who's there manipulating life, pulling the strings of the puppet? Who is that ghost of the father; the procreator of one's being? From where comes that inevitable, unquenchable, yet unintelligible force forging one's life?[34] The Waves disproves the Lacanian view of the sole authority of language in constituting self and subjectivity; the arbitrary supremacy of the Logos in Lacan is a misrecognition as a non-self of a constantly transforming and renewing pre-verbal self, since it eludes representation in language. On the surface, one constructs an integrated 'I' through the accumulation of verbal narrative, yet down beneath is a continuous flow, pulsing, an 'I' which is so intimately felt, but nevertheless eludes the intelligence of verbal narrative. (Indeed, the French Nouveau Roman writer Nathalie Sarraute would later borrow Woolf's understanding of consciousness as the source of her experiments with producing novels which capture

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[34] Damasio, Looking 224.

the pulsations of an embodied consciousness.).

The question of the state of being and the autonomy of being is constantly reinforced throughout The Waves. As a story of creation, it questions 'who creates who'? Seeing the preoccupation with ontology among twentieth century novels, Doris Shoukri remarks that "being is the process of creating as well as the status of being created" (321). Damasio, working from the neurological point of view, quotes T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets: "you are the music while the music lasts" to illustrate that continuous mutually dependent process of consciousness between feeling and being.[35] The 'I' is the symphony constructed out of a variety of instruments in play. The 'I' is itself the ongoing music which it comes to hear within it. Yet, the music seems to play on by itself as if no conscious intervention is applicable. As there are levels of consciousness and multiple ongoing narratives that constitute what one comes to know, inevitably the self, though seeming to enjoy every possibility of free will, still feels itself drifting along a mysterious path that either guides or dominates and eventually coerces it into whatever being it has come to be. For the music must exist and be in advance before the self is aware of its tune, whilst the melody is only recognised through a retrospective glance into the time traversed. Bernard is constantly reminded of the lady who he and Susan have accidentally come across, writing in Elvedon (perhaps symbolising that psychological underworld which Freud saw as undermining our assertions of mastery over our own selves). Who is this lady? Is she Woolf herself, the ultimate creator and author of The Waves?

Bernard, as an apprentice novelist, is conscious of the process of creation, but has he been a creation or is he a creator? Is he to be like the lady writing who has come to create himself, or is he simply a character under her pen? The characters seem to speak into their own being, yet perhaps they are merely the actors of a scripted play. Critics have often stressed the close resemblance between The Waves and Luigi Pirandello's Six Characters in Search of An Author in which the subject's autonomy is

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[35] Damasio, Feeling 172. Eliot, Poems 136.

portrayed through a muti-layered creative process (of author, director, actors and finally the characters themselves) that bounces from one to another.[36] The Waves, with its six characters struggling, with a sense of imperfect autonomy, toward their own existence, does bear a close resemblance to Pirandello's play. Both have six characters, though strictly constrained by the profile given to them, and they assume a life of their own re-presenting themselves. But, where could 'the real thing' be sought? As the characters enact themselves, however, the question of self-autonomous creation becomes even more intriguing: have they finally escaped the author's God-like authority and attained a free will in self-creation or have they simply performed their designated part in a play and a given profile? 'One is the music while the music lasts,' yet from whence and by whom does the music of self arise?

As the novel expands itself through recounting the impressions of early childhood, it demonstrates a life that is bound up with a primordial disposition, but more importantly, it is also wrapped up in the emotions and feelings of the early stage of life. Damasio takes an evolutionary view of this process: "autobiographical memory develops and matures under the looming shadow of an inherited biology" (Feeling 229). Since core consciousness and the core self seem to be under strong gene control, "the genome puts in place the appropriate body-brain linkages, both neural and humoral; lays down the requisite circuits, and, with help from the environment, allows the machinery to perform in reliable fashion for an entire lifetime" (Feeling 229). As the title The Waves suggests, the fluidity of life continues on. But still the characters seem unable to fill the inner void and make plenitudinous a substantial sense of self. Though the possibility of life might be closing down within a concrete social identity, still the 'I' is vaguely known. The socially known 'I' is but "the cinders and refuse of something once splendid" and complete (W 95). The self felt by the subject remains elusive, incapable of being transfigured in linguistic terms

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[36] Julia Briggs, Virginia Woolf: An Inner Life (London: Penguin, 2006) 496; Also Woolf's letter to Janet Case dated 23 June 1925, L 3:191.

nor literal images: "I am merely 'Neville' to you...But to myself I am immeasurable; a net whose fibres pass imperceptibly beneath the world" (W 164). As Lacan has observed, "the I formation is symbolised in dreams by a fortified camp, or even a stadium," but nonetheless within this there is a remote and self-enclosed inner castle (78). This perhaps symbolises the Freudian id or the unaccountable consciousness of the proto-self to which the self-conscious subject endeavours to obtain further access. It is an inner castle that buttresses one's sense of the 'I' and is therefore beyond the comprehension of the 'I.'

As the self desires certainties, it is also afraid of fixations. And The Waves cleverly brings forth such existential anxiety about the eternal fluctuation between these two polarised yearnings towards life and death. The Waves is as much about one's life in the physical world as it is about the inner life of the forming and growing of that self.[37] It is a story of how the self comes to be through the interaction with the world around it, depicting both aspects of interpersonal and intrapersonal confrontation. As Julie Vandivere has said, subject-formation has always been one of the main themes in Woolf's writings.[38] And in fact The Waves enquires not just into the question "what am I," but also how I come to be who I am. From each character's narration of his/her sensation, each character displays right from the very beginning a trace of the characteristic out of which his or her self will form latter in life. Despite this fact, impressions of early infancy and childhood spun around its innate disposition gradually form as a pivot by which personal meaning and self-identity establish themselves.

Childhood impressions and memories are imprinted on the mind and are that upon which the life-narrative anchors itself. Thus, for each character there are unforgettable fragmented memories which are impassable. Startling sensations that the

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[37] Minow-Pinkney: as a subject, the characters "undergo a permanent alternation between the formation and dissemination of the self" (186).

[38] In her article "Waves and Fragments: Linguistic Construction as Subject Formation in Virginia Woolf," Julie Vandivere identifies Woolf's use of the image, the waves, to indicate the flux of subject construction.

character experiences as a child leave their eternal mark upon that character and "From those close-unfurled balls of string [they] draw now every filament" (W 93).[39] The piercing sensational shock that shoots through Bernard's body as the water is poured down his spine leaves its eternal mark in his life. The vision of death that deprives the continuity of the life-flow and freezes it into a sudden stillness forms an eternal obstacle for Neville. Although these impressions are vaguely understood, the characters continue to return to them as fundamental reference points from which to define and understand life whenever they come across similar sensations which they are unable to interpret. The sensations of the past are also revisited when the characters are about to start off onto another stage of life. In a scene when they have finished their secondary school and are travelling on a train returning home for the holiday, Louis feels that he is hung suspended without attachments. He has no firm ground to which he will return. Standing at the crossroad of life, he reaches back into the past, both cultural and personal. As he says, this is the meeting point of past and present. Within the moment he senses not only the ancestral past of mankind that started on the banks of the Nile, but also his own childhood past. "I dash and sprinkle myself with the bright waters of childhood. Its thin veil quivers. But the chained beast stamps and stamps on the shore" (49).

These sensations are never simply approached or understood individually and directly; contrarily, they are explained, like signifiers in the language, through their relations and similarity with each other. The news of Percival's death brings back to Neville all the horror of the "immitigable tree" which he cannot pass when he first came across the shock of death alone in the nursery (W 17). Standing among the busy streets with women shuffling past with shopping bags, he has returned to that boy who could not lift his foot to climb the stair. As Neville "revisit[s] [his] past life, scene by

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[39] Jacqueline Rose, The Case of Peter Pan or The Impossibility of Children Fiction: "childhood is something in which we continue to be implicated and which is never simply left behind. Childhood persists... It persists as something which we endlessly rework in our attempt to build an image of our own history" (12).

scene[,] there is an elm tree, and there lies Percival" (W 136). Images stored within one are evoked by a remembered sensation again and again throughout one's life. With the feelings of the body, images leave their indelible mark. They continue to return either "by some flick of a scent or a sound on a nerve," as Bernard experiences while he sits, as an old man, along the bank, waiting for his train. There returns the old image of the gardener sweeping as the lady sits writing in Elvedon (W 206).

As one incomprehensible sensation is built upon another unapproachable one, it is questionable whether one could ever achieve an understanding of them and how they make up one's life. May it be possible for one to reach the essential core—the pivot around which one's personal meaning is spun? Or, in truth, such a core might never be a substantial one. Thus, one attempts to form it, to embody its hollowness, through narrative. Besides, if it is through such kernel imagery that one conceptualises who one is, then the stability of one's identity is greatly in question. The childhood section forms the core around which the narrative weaves and flourishes and yet ironically the core takes its form (and could only be understood) through the narrative it generates. The core, childhood, remains as the most incomprehensible and unapproachable void, but nevertheless it is what grounds the most intrinsic self in its inborn nature. However, as this self could never be expressed and understood unless through language, one's knowledge of the self is therefore bound by the language which paradoxically could not fully depict the nature of the self.

Each character continues to return to early impressions to describe and approach the later experiences that they encounter as time passes. As if in these impressions alone lies the fundamental truth of the unnameable essence within each of them. Childhood impressions which are dimly perceived and understood will eventually become the recurring theme throughout the lifetime of each character and in the end they come to realise that these impressions form the very core of their *selfness*. It is through these early childhood impressions that one comes to learn how to define one's self. Towards the end, Bernard has come to apprehend an inner hollowness that has

been concealed under a conjectural of personal identity and perspective without which one is left in the full darkness of unconsciousness "like the eclipse when the sun went out and left the earth, flourishing in full summer foliage, withered, brittle, false" (W 218). "A man without a self, I said…A dead man. With dispassionate despair, with entire disillusionment" (W 219).

The Waves, as it tries to tell the story of the beginning, is a conjectural retrospective narrative that attempts to recount and recapture the past as well as the present that constantly passes into the past before one can fully apprehend it. It is a past upon which the forever shaping of a present 'I' is grounded, and yet a past that the 'I' can never be conscious enough of to account for when living within that moment. In spite of all, the self is hardly free from the historical context of time, as Woolf has reflected in "The Moment: Summer's Night"; past and future are like pieces of thin glass through which the present is apprehended.[40] Not only the ancestral heritage seems to have been inscribed into the private moment of the present, but also one's own biological and psychological memory of the past. Each moment seems to be a nutshell of a full history. The moment, now and here, has its origin and background as Louis brings out: that by this moment, he "seem(s) to have lived many thousand years" (W 48). Time is precarious and deceptive and "human history is defrauded of a moment's vision" (W 49). Carried within a moment is the immense record of the entirety of human history. Like the forever wavering waves that collect and break recurrently, one could hardly discern where exactly is the starting point of a self and the history by which it ends.

The narrative becomes a continuous circle that repeats itself endlessly without distinct beginning and end, though Neville designates the beginning by the adoption of language and the learning of order. For it is through language that one first comes to define the world as well as one's self. And one's self-definition is fully bound up with the terminology that shapes one's world. The circular narrative of The Waves

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[40] M 3.

expands its narrative from the very starting point of its characters life-course—infancy and early childhood. In contrast to most of Woolf's novels that begin *in medias res* from adulthood or adolescent, The Waves stretches from a metaphorical birth to a suggestive death. In Frank Kermode's terms, men are born into the state of *in medias res*. However, driven by a sense of totality, men contrive to make sense of the meaning of life and of their own being by wedging that self along a historic line, between a past and a future.[41] Thus, both the beginning and the end are merely envisioned, as Woolf cleverly placed a descriptive dawn and dusk to signify what could have been the beginning and the end of her life narrative, although another day of living continues to break into any possible end.

A clear distinction is made as the novel is dramatised in the form of soliloquies with narrated intervals that serve as stage directions or chorus. As the soliloquy implies a direct report that is not mediated by any narrator, it therefore assumes a rather peculiar effect as if it is not a narration of an intermediate narrator, but rather a confluence of speech acts in the act of their immediacy. Each character is addressing and communicating by means of first personal reports as opposed to narrated monologues that presume an intermediate narrator.[42] And therefore each voice is representing a personal point of view self-enclosed within the particular character. Each character is enacting its conscious thoughts rhetorically as the reader reads along. Before The Waves was fully conceived, Woolf was pondering a form of writing which would be a dramatic novel, yet not a play. "It would be read, not acted" (GR 18). It would be poetic, yet written in prose.[43] As a result, The Waves turns out to be a fully dramatised novel: the plot develops through a series of soliloquies that tend to respond

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[41] Frank Kermode, The Sense of An Ending: Studies in The Theory of Fiction (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1966).

[42] Seymour Chatman defines in Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film: "soliloquy is perhaps best used as a term to refer to nonnaturalistic or 'expressionistic' narratives in which the only informational source is that of characters formally presenting, explaining, and commenting upon things. These are formal declamations—not speech or thought in the ordinary sense but a stylised merging of the two. As with dramatic monologue and dialogue, the convention is that they have been 'heard' by someone and transformed into a written text" (181).

[43] Virginia Woolf, "The Narrow Bridge of Art" (1927) Granite and Rainbow 11-23.

to each other as if in dialogue. The narrator has withdrawn behind the scene and its voice can merely be discerned through the interludes that function as stage directions.

Instead of free indirect discourse which seamlessly combines the narrator's voice and those of the characters, interlinking the subjective and objective points of view (as used in most of Woolf's novels), The Waves, however, is presented through a series of direct discourses where the narrative voice is completely taken over by the characters. The presence of an omnipresent narrator who unifies the tone of the narrative and provides an overall objective view is no longer observable. The entire narrative of The Waves is composed of distinct segments of the six main characters' outspoken internal monologues, portraying the life as it is lived from within. Each character narrates in turns their feelings, sensations and perceptions founded upon his or her primeval emotions. The Waves is entirely built upon soliloquies of "self-presentations and self-justifications, rather than acts of communication" (Flint xi). Could not it be possible that the entire narrative is the narrative of the thoughts and memories of Bernard, given that his thought winds up the narrative, making a complete circle without discernible beginning or ending? In featuring six characters, each narrating its own feelings and emotions while summing up with one distinct narrative voice of Bernard, The Waves suggests, paradoxically, that different personalities and characteristics are formed along with different narrative lines, as suggested in medical accounts of cases of dissociative disorders.[44] Therefore, The Waves reflects in its narrative deployment some ambiguities about whether these six characters are inner features of one disparate self or six unique persons; though Bernard affirms, in parenthesis, "we are not single, we are one" (W 50).

The deliberate ambiguity of the narrative (between The Waves as a chronological development of a life narrative and as a reconstructed narrative of memory) turns out to be an even closer depiction of consciousness. For as

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[44] Ian Hacking, Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality And the Sciences of Memory (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1995).

consciousness emerges out of different plains of narrative, each comes to enclose its former layer as it recursively re-depicts itself, like a Russian doll. In other words, the narrative of consciousness is always and already a reworking of the immediate present. Consciousness, in neurological terms, is forever late in time. By rendering The Waves as soliloquies within a written text, Woolf has achieved the delineation of different layers of consciousness. This depicts not just the subject in the act of knowing as it articulates its thoughts, but also the weaving of the extended consciousness (as the subject reflects upon its own speculation and achieves an understanding through its memory and experience) and the conscientious empathy of surmising the consciousness of others. It exemplifies the existence of a core self that continually wraps itself with layers of narrative in its extended consciousness. This consciousness wanders back and forth, constructing an autobiographical memory as well as an autobiographical self (as the core self wedged into the texture of personal history and therefore generated from the continuous stream of history an identity). It also demonstrates how the mind regulates and integrates numerous strands of thoughts and various stimuli into a focused main stream. Nevertheless, one never knows the forces that carry the speech along, pushing the characters to think as they speak, generating various kinds of sensation they feel. In the form of soliloquy, the process of reasoning and re-reasoning within the characters' mind (as thoughts are expressed in formal speech) is presented in its immediacy and enacts the tendency of consciousness to feel as well as to reason and interweave.

The narrative in this co-responding soliloquy also portrays the empathetic projections of the other's consciousness. As the novel continues in sections of individual soliloquy, so one consciousness anticipates another: prognosticating, each soliloquy seems to respond to another, forming a dialogue between individual minds (or even dialogues between the selves within a mind). In Transparent Minds, Dorrit Cohn argues that "interior monologue is described as associative, illogical, spontaneous; the soliloquy as rhetorical, rational, deliberate" (12). Nevertheless, in all

its rationality and deliberateness, soliloquy displays the inner conflict between a subjective self absorbed with its own subjective feelings and emotions, and a self capable of objective reflection as it attempts to rationalise and reach beyond its own subjective understanding. Cohn comes to place The Waves in his study of narrative modes in the presentation of consciousness as "*in extremis*" as the interior monologue-soliloquy distinction blurs (165). Most novels that are described as stream-of-consciousness attempt to represent the flow of consciousness in terms of what Käte Hamburger has concluded as "where the I-originality (or subjectivity) of a third person qua third person can be portrayed" (qtd. in Cohn 7).[45] The Waves, instead, dramatises a more or less detached first person's interior analysis of what he has come to know and feel as it is transcribed into a more objective rhetorical discourse. Other than presenting simply *what* the characters think, The Waves attempts to show the process of *how*: the very process of how the mind learns and defines itself and from such a foundation ventures to extrapolate "how another mind thinks, another body feels" (Cohn 5). The characters do not simply think absent-mindedly, but they are generally over-conscious of what they have come to think, since their thoughts are presented in soliloquies of speech rather than simply an inner thought-stream in words. In speech, they not only narrate their thoughts but also question from where those thoughts spring forth. In individual yet responsive soliloquies, the characters attempt to untangle their own inner psychological states and also to understand those of others as expressed through their speech. Within this form of presentation, The Waves enacts consciousness from its very basic level as "consciousness lets us recognise an irresistible urge to stay alive and develop a concern for the self," to the most elaborate level as "consciousness helps us develop a concern for other selves and improve the art of life" (Damasio, Feeling 5).

In a 'dramatic soliloquy,' The Waves is dramatised by means of exchanging and juxtaposing a series of soliloquies of each character (which could be seen as

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[45] Quoted originally from Käte Hamburger's The Logic of Literature.

simultaneously a spoken speech of six individual characters or as the interior dialogues within the mind of a single character). With such an effect, the narrative brings a focus on what Woolf had always been attempting through her tunnelling process. The apparent separation of individuality and the communal unity that lies underneath are now simply two sides of the same coin. Each of them, as they respond to the soliloquies of the others, is conscious of another's inner thoughts. As they set out in diverse directions to pursue their goals, they suffer individually, but are empathised with communally. A mind seems to connect and encompass these six diverse characters. And as it is foreseen by Louis, "The time approaches when these soliloquies shall be shared" (W 28). Doris Shoukri also suggests that through The Waves Woolf has paralleled her idea of individual and communion, of moment and eternity, with the image of the sea and the wave. "The moment for her is experienced both individually and communally—each soul is in it and it is in each soul as the waves are in the sea and the sea is in the waves. One is therefore both separated and united with the underivded [*sic*] being which the sea suggests" (Shoukri 319-20). Julie Kane identifies in Woolf's novels various themes such as loss of self and merger with a greater unity in terms of mystical experience (a popular trend in Woolf's time).[46] Woolf fervently resisted the insistence on her affinity with mysticism, though similar concepts such as the apprehension of numinousness, timelessness, transcendence, and intensified meaning, could easily also be misrecognised through mystic terms in her work. Maybe the central concern of reaching an understanding of the world beyond the self in epistemology has often being confused with the idea of mysticism. For, "Metaphysics, from the first, has been developed by the union or the conflict of these two attitudes"—namely the scientific and the mystical attitudes (Russell, Knowledge 29).

Real life is never as concentrated or as still as Neville would have wanted it, and

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[46] Julie Kane, "Varieties of Mythical Experience in the Writings of Virginia Woolf," Twentieth Century Literature 40.4 (1995): 328-349.

it is against such a reality that human beings strive after a meaning of life and are compelled to comply with others through the conformist pressures of civilisation as suggested by Freud in "The Future of an Illusion" (1927).[47] Neville's heroes are like Percival, who could hardly come to life or be truly embodied in physical form. Either the hero or the moment of sublimity relies fully upon narrative for its substantiality, while the true life story which Bernard is forever gathering and which he endeavours to narrate could hardly form a grand epic. "[A]ll are stories," scattering hither and thither, "[b]ut which is the true story?" (W 167). Perhaps, true life is like bubbles. It is narrating and creating that provides it with a sense of substantiality, though it could never be fully represented. A non-expressible emptiness would eventually remain. Although Percival passes away, he remains the most solid and unified being for all the characters. Similarly, being the thing itself, Mrs. Ramsay in To the Lighthouse remains evasive. As Percival, she passes into "ghost, air, nothingness," and it is her abstractness that sustains her stability as well as her essence (TL 194). The grandiosity and stillness which Neville has emphasised and projected onto Percival—the admirable heroic figure for all these children—is mocked by Percival's sudden and untimely death. Life always seems to take the turns that are quite unexpected.

The narrative of The Waves, ironically implies the fictionality of all neatly planned life-narratives. As Bernard has come to realise from his final visit to Neville that to embody these stories one could only be like Neville who, "From the myriads of mankind and all time past …[,] had chosen one person, one moment in particular" (W 210). However, real life is as dispersed and as dreamlike as it can be. Life is like Bernard, who would lose his ticket and simply wander off from the wrong stop unplanned. "Among the tortures and devastations of life is this then—our friends are not able to finish their stories"—one could hardly conclude who one is (W 28). That is what makes life so unbearable. One could never depend on life to provide one with a solid ground or a substantial reality that one could cling onto. Thus, Rhoda, who could

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[47] Freud 12: 195.

not provide herself with a definite form because she fails to make use of the signifiers and be at rest with her own inner fluidity, is destined to be vulnerable. She, "the nymph of the fountain always wet, obsessed with visions, dreaming" could not possibly withstand the heat of the sun (W 211). Without form, she is destined to be "blown for ever outside the loop of time," for time could only be measured in distinguishable forms (W 15). When "The waves broke on the shore," the narrative ends in death—the state of stasis which one has always yearned for is also a state of emptiness which is also all-encompassing in its nothingness (W 228).

Being incapable of determining the fringes and edges of things at daybreak, owing to the weakness of the sunlight, objects in the world are unintelligible. As time leads on, the children learn a way to untangle the thread, to regulate the immense chaos around them, and to impose orders and delineate boundaries through language. Forms, sounds, and perceptions are being described: the rings, the slab of pale yellow, the globe, and the beast stamping. Nevertheless, the drawn boundaries and the imposed order are merely on the surface. Underneath, the fluctuation continues to swamp them with incomprehensible emotions that refuse to be made intelligible or available to rational understanding. The six characters start off searching for themselves and end by knowing not much more than what they have started with. Even later on they still betray an uncertainty that they cannot assert their own substantiality as well as their subjectivity. Until nearly the end of the novel, when they are already worn out by time and the torment of life (through the direct articulation of Bernard), still they are unable to delineate a central selfhood.

In her questioning of 'what is reality?' and 'what is life?', Woolf sought to bypass the opposition between the realist and the idealist and to portray a life appreciative of and acknowledging a subjective reality without denying the existence and the realness of the objects beyond subjective apprehensions (which closely reflects Thomas Nagel's contention about the dual nature of consciousness). Instead, the search inward into a specific psychological state is not simply a self-preoccupied

obsession but also an attempt to arrive at a general understanding of life and the building of subjective life within a socio-cultural context. For it is through the socio-cultural context of the community that the self could possibly attach a name, an idea, an image, to formulate and understand itself. The psychological inquest of 'self' is in fact the nexus of our understanding of the external world. Thus, in his attempt to untangle the question "Can we know of the existence of any reality which is independent of ourselves?", where does Bertrand Russell begin but by defining what is meant by 'the Self' (Knowledge 81)?

As neuroscience today tries to probe into the mind and provide objectified narrations and scientific explanations for the subjective qualia in terms that describe the functioning of the organic brain, philosophers and psychoanalysts continue to probe into psychical states in terms of personal and cultural history and especially of cultural formation through language (on the basis of autobiographical memory). However, as formerly discussed, consciousness involves both the processes of nature and nurture, of selfness or the 'I' as an interweaving process of both instinct as well as cognition. Although a nonverbal core consciousness and a core self, based upon the feelings of the body, forms the cornerstone of consciousness and the sense of self, only through words could the meaning and identity of the self be possibly defined and therefore grasped. If the world and the 'I' is nothing but thought, then as Sara once asked in The Years, where does thought begin? "And if one can neither think nor feel…where is one" (TL 210)? As The Waves has shown, thoughts begin with the feeling of the body and it is by these subjective feelings and emotions that the characters gradually contrive a narrative that might allow them to arrive at a definition of who they are and what they might be, distinct from others, when they are compounded and submerged within a communal narrative. The realness of my body and its feelings are not to be denied. And as the next chapter will expound, it is the denial of the body and its feeling that engenders unreason.

II

Dreamlike Perceptions, Real Sensations: Woolf's Voyage Out as a Return to the Shakespearian Poetic World

Intelligence and instinct now are one.

George Meredith, *Modern Love* xxx

From Plato's Republic, poets, because of their ability to stimulate untenable and preposterous emotions, are forever banished: for Plato, the human is by nature a being who might achieve the good only through the exercise of strictly rational faculties. Viewed as not only untrustworthy but also a potential disturbance to reason, emotions and feelings have long been condemned as an impediment to the rational mind. This traditional view of feelings and emotions could be glimpsed in the words of Sauvage: "The distraction of our mind is the result of our blind surrender to our desires, our incapacity to control or to moderate our passions" (qtd. in Foucault 85). Even Freudian psychology, with the acknowledgement of the instinctual drives and their relation to affects, aims at eradicating emotional upheaval in an effort to arrive at the elevated rationality of men as socio-cultural beings.

For Plato, mind is axiomatically distinct from the body, just as the soul is entirely separated from its material substance within Christian doctrine (which has absorbed and adopted a soul/body concept from the Greeks) and Cartesian philosophy.[1] But even for those theorists who accept an evolutionary view of the emergence of mind, once the mental apparatus is in place, it is often regarded as functionally separate from the body. A further aspect of this conventional thinking involves the view that the mind is not only no longer embodied within the body and unbound from its organic source but, it also retains a supreme domination over the body. Or, as Freud speaks in terms of a cultural-historical context, the belief in a

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[1] In Old Testament and Jewish tradition, there consists no concept of a soul continuing on its own after the perishing of the body.

higher-ranking spiritual soul over the corruptible body is a cultural evolution which tries to resist the mystery and cruelty of nature, especially the inescapability of death that it imposes on all living creatures.[2] As the mind, which is still subjected to its original animal and bodily nature, is perceived as a higher development of mankind and a separated and discontinued entity from the body, mental disorder therefore becomes an emblem of the failure of the 'independent' rational mind that has succumbed too easily to the primitive nature of human instincts. Within this scheme of dualism, the elevated soul and the sensual body are culturally absorbed into the binarism of male/female (masculinity/ femininity; self/other; civilised/primitive; the light of reason/the darkness of feelings and emotions). Although Freud conceded that conventionally "we too readily identify femaleness with passivity and maleness with activity," he still insists upon the deficiency and inferiority of the female super-ego (Waugh, Feminine 52).[3] The female mind is viewed as underdeveloped and inferior to the masculine mind because more dependent on the body. Thus, men's mental advance simply seems to be self-evident, as comically depicted by George Eliot in Middlemarch (1871-2): "A man's mind—what there is of it—has always the advantage of being masculine—as the smallest birch tree is of a higher kind than the most soaring palm—and even his ignorance is of a sounder quality" (26).

While order and law are viewed as masculine properties, unreason and madness, as a usurpation of the rational mind by the sensational body, acquire a feminine-gendered ideology and are described by Elaine Showalter as the female malady. Hysteria, in particular, is viewed as representing a "womanly" weakness. Shakespeare has Hamlet (in the 'guise' of a 'mad' dialectician) declare: "Frailty, thy name is woman" (1.2. 146). For instead of taking the rein of their bodily feelings and emotions, women are assumed by medical and psychological discourses as liable to fail to achieve a self-reflexive consciousness of their feelings and emotions—a higher

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[2] Sigmund Freud, "The Future of An Illusion" (1927). Freud 12:198.

[3] Freud: "Their [Women's] superego is never so inexorable, so impersonal, so independent of its emotional origins as we require it to be in men" (qtd. in Waugh, Feminine 52).

level of impersonal detachment from bodily disturbances—and therefore prone to suffer from a failure of will in retaining their personal integrity. Women, according to the conventional medical ideology, more easily allow themselves to be swayed by feelings which do not conform to the dictates of law and order (embodied in the ideal super-ego in the terms of Freud) and remain self-enclosed amidst a churning turbulence within.[4] Ultimately, as women come to dwell deeper in their own subjective realm, they are uprooted from the common consensual ground of reality. Evolved from the body, the female mind, in this view, despite its detachment from its organic source, cannot fully renounce the bodily constraints on the autonomy of the 'spiritual mind.' However, the rationalist's abhorrence of bodily feeling and emotions can be seen as a paranoid fixation on the power of an unintelligible 'other'—the unregulated 'Nature' of the world which an infant first experiences through the inconsistencies of the mother's body that sometimes nurtures but sometimes neglects. It is against this precarious Nature that humans seek consolation within the order of civilisation. As our consciousness hides away the body, the body now becomes an objectified other and potentially threatening to the subject's own integrity.

In the aftermath of Darwinism, wrote Roger Fry, "The assumption that man is a mainly rational animal [emphasis added] has given place to the discovery that he is, like other animals, mainly instinctive. This modifies immensely the attitude of the rationalist…What seemed like the wilful follies of mad or wicked men to the earlier rationalists are now seen to be inevitable responses to fundamental instinctive needs" (21).[5] As evidence shows, however, rigorous reason and obstinate insistence on science and abstract reasoning also result in madness. Both The Voyage Out (1915) and Night and Day (1919) (through a full display of the paradoxical opposition as well as affinity between the abstract symbols and the physiological reality of the flesh) are

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[4] Freud provides a rather controversial explanation for neurosis in Civilisation and Its Discontents (1930). He contends that "Neurosis was regarded as the outcome of a struggle between the interest of self-preservation and the demands of the libido, a struggle in which the ego had been victorious but at the price of severe sufferings and renunciations" (12: 309).

[5] Roger Fry "Art and Life" (1917), Vision and Design.

novels seeking for a harmony or co-relation between body and mind that might sustain sanity and healthy being. In both novels, the heroines are suspended between emotion and reason: for Rachel Vinrace, in The Voyage Out, music and feelings are more genuine, intense and meaningful than the words of Gibbon (which is, in the words of Rachel "strong, searching, unyielding in mind"), as for Katharine Hilbery, in Night and Day, the real is beheld through an even more depersonalised system of mathematic symbols in contrast to the more affectively and subjectively grounded language of poetry and literature (VO 185). Available ordinary language has failed their attempts to describe to themselves and others their states of mind.[6] Whilst Rachel, who constantly dwells in a 'depersonalised' subjective world of her core consciousness, is apt to feel surges of bodily sensation in a verbal vacuum that no literal meaning can possibly encompass, Katharine aims at a world of stars and numbers that abolish the subjective self in pursuit of a thoroughly objective apprehension of the world beyond any influence of the autobiographical self. Nevertheless, though the first is preoccupied with unnameable, subjective feelings, and the second solely with an objective quest for a universal and Pythagorean symbolic Truth, both kinds of experience diverge from the factual, material, ground of reality which is contained within the socio-cultural context and structured by the socio-symbolic order. Both characters are searching, with diverse means, for a pure symbol, an impersonalised metalanguage, devoid of any possible social implications, which they might then adopt in order to express the inexpressible Truth of their own ontological being-in-the-world.[7] Both of them dwell constantly in a world of their own—a world of vision bound by feelings (of 'instinctual insight' which is conventionally appropriated as a feminine quality) rather than socio-cultural facts.

Fact or vision, real or dream, it is questionable whether any experience could be

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[6] As noted by William James the lack of an appropriate and adequate language hinders tremendously our understanding of subjective facts. James 1:195.

[7] Paul de Man noted that for Mallarmé as well as for Lévi-Strauss, "the language of music, as a language without speaker, comes closest to being the kind of metalanguage of which the linguists are dreaming" (12).

conceivable without a sensory body, for "knowledge's empirical foundation is subjective" (Banfield, Phantom 68). Practically, human beings are "active sentient beings" (Russell, Knowledge 26). To be sensible, one simply has to be capable of 'sensing' the sensory input transfigured through the nervous system of the organic brain. Sanity is, in the end, sustained by sensibility. The Voyage Out as a voyage into the wilderness of the primitive and the unknown is a voyage questioning the correlation between the mind and the body (between 'reason' and 'unreason,' real and dream) where the civilised is offset by the primitive.[8] The story of The Voyage Out serves almost as a fictional narrative that exemplifies Freud's dialectic argument in "The Future of An Illusion" (1927) of the human's need for culture, civilisation and order as a protection against his inscrutable nature. Socio-cultural contexts, though they may be artificial and provisional, provide a systematic order that protects human beings from direct confrontation with the unregulated, overwhelming contingency of Nature. Although it is the bodily illness acquired by Rachel in this primitive world that cuts her adrift from the 'factual' world of English society, her initial inquiry and doubts about the possibility of her own social integration has already thrown her into a state of anxiety and into states of emotion for which she finds no name despite their intensity. The mental delirium which results from the disconnection between the mind (isolated within its own instinctive pursuit after the 'Real') and the socio-physical present derides the conventional idealism of a soul unbound from its body. Rachel's insistence on the 'Real' and the 'Absolute' ironically thrusts her into a delusive vacuum with no firm ground.

The Voyage Out is Woolf's version of a voyage into the darkness of the heart, a post-Darwinian immersion within the currents of neuronal transmissions between the body and the mind.[9] It is a voyage out of a rigid Cartesian rationality and the

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[8] Foucault 95-107.

[9] Also noted by James Naremore in The World Without a Self, "In departing from the brightly-lit, busy streets of London and voyaging to a village with the exotic, watery name of Santa Marina, the characters of the novel enter a strange, passionate, half-obscured world which is analogous to the private self" (31).

communal ground of Edwardian civilisation to re-encounter the primitive, instinctual, and subjective state of being that is fully bound up with instincts and affects that seem to defy linguistic representation.

Both The Voyage Out and Night and Day are filtered through a Shakespearian poetic lens. As The Voyage Out takes its characters and readers out of polite society and the drawing room novel of manners to re-encounter the splendour and grandness of a wild Elizabethan world, overwhelming in its vastness and incomprehensibility. Night and Day achieves a true comedic spirit of the Bard not by an encounter with the darkness, but rather through the delicate setting of a literary London drawing room tinged with a poetic air and endowed by a poet grandfather and Katharine's literary mother. Whereas The Voyage Out carries its characters to Santa Marina, symbolising a submersion into the sea without, as well as within, oneself, Night and Day takes the characters out of themselves and projects them onto a stage of make-believe. Yet, with its atmosphere of literariness, Night and Day recreates the ambience that stimulates feelings and invites emotional engagements which are regarded as distasteful and therefore prohibited in the polite society of The Voyage Out. Instead of polite exchanges and cultural phatic communications, feelings and emotions are intriguingly communicated through a poetic presentation of mathematical symbols and the flow of the music that liberate the characters from the constraints of polite social exchange. The make-believe staging of Night and Day functions to make the narrative itself a poetic (and also a Freudian dream-) world in which the characters as well as the reader are both participants as well as observers. The poetic world takes its participants out of themselves (as in the etymologies of e-mote and ecstasy), but in order to facilitate a more 'objective' reflection upon their subjective states. The theatrical effects in Night and Day ultimately allow the characters to disentangle dream and reality, whereas Rachel, in The Voyage Out, drifts into a state of delirium which protects her from any final confrontation with the illusions and ideologies of romance and marriage.

Night and Day achieves its tacit understanding through poetic symbols capable

of conveying profound and complex feeling and emotion. However, in The Voyage Out, without any available means to transcribe subjective reality into objective resonance, there is constantly an underlying frustration about the apartness and sense of separation between human beings (as Rachel has put it: "To feel anything strongly was to create an abyss between oneself and others who feel strongly perhaps but differently") (29). In Night and Day, reality is beheld through pure poetic symbolism: as Hewet has foreseen, reality, which defies translation, could only be revealed through silence. Yet, the novel of silence remains a non-achievable ideal in The Voyage Out. Rachel, who refuses the linguistic register of social bonding, remains confined within an internal world of her own, foreshadowing her final evasion of this incongruous world, since "self-attachment is the first sign of madness" (Foucault 26).

Within the medical history on mental illness, particularly the discourses on degeneration prevalent in Woolf's time, madness has often been associated with an animal nature seen as a primal condition pre-existing the evolution of a more advanced brain. Thus, madmen/women are often portrayed as "wildman and a beast, as a child and a simpleton, as a waking dreamer, and as a prophet in the grip of demonic forces," the said qualities depicted and examined throughout both The Voyage Out and Night and Day (Sass 1). "For classicism," as Michel Foucault has speculated in his historic research, "madness in its ultimate form is man in immediate relation to his animality, without other reference, without any recourse" (74). Both the image and the idea of madness change in the course of time. Darwin's idea of the origin of species by natural selection and the survival of the fittest underpinned the late Victorian idea of madness as the embodiment of degeneration. The idea of madness as a degradation of man to his animal nature was strengthened by the biological argument from evolution. "Following Darwin's theories of inheritance, evolution, and degeneration, an emerging psychiatric Darwinism viewed insanity as the product of organic defect, poor heredity, and an evil environment" (Showalter,

Female 18).[10] Madness, which had once been a divine punishment, the wrath of God, gradually came to be perceived and treated as a lack of self-control (the lack of a 'developed' rational mind) over one's animal nature—a failure of the mind to exert its will over the body. In an attempt to counter the forces of degeneration and in order to suppress the animality of the degenerate, Victorian society placed special emphasis on social etiquette and decorum, as if by manners and attire alone one could abolish or simply conceal one's animality.

Throughout The Voyage Out, the connection between the animalisation of the human body and the physical necessities of its existence is continuously observed. Analogies between human and animal behaviour are constantly made, as in Hirst's animated description of the hotel inhabitants 'devouring' their letters from home. The love-making scene between Arthur Venning and Susan Warrington, in alluding to animal behaviours, is depicted as if devoid of human dignity. It is a primal scene which Rachel, as a child of innocence, accidentally stumbles on and is petrified by its sheer carnality. Human features are often described in comparison to those of animals, as if these Englishmen who are so keen on their civilised etiquette (which "matter so much more than what's generally supposed to matter" as Clarissa Dalloway comments) are revealed to be, by nature, no different from animals (VO 41). Cambridge intellectuals are derided for the vulgarity of their bodily appearance; for example, "Mr. Pepper as though he had suddenly loosened his clothes, and had become a vivacious and malicious old ape" (VO 10). Civilised achievements do not seem to have changed the world very much from an ancient habitat occupied by non-human creatures; the dark uncivilised past lurks throughout the narrative. The English ship may seem to be a much more civilised place to live than the villa in Santa Marina (as observed by Mrs. Chailey), yet to Clarissa Dalloway, the ship seems to exist as its own separate world as

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[10] Showalter continues to write that "seeing the lunatic as a degenerate person of feeble will and morbid predisposition, Darwinian therapists... redefined their role as that of psychiatric police, patrolling the boundaries between sanity and madness and protecting society from dangerous infiltration by those of tainted stock" (Female 18).

if "they'd never been on shore, or done ordinary things in their lives," alluding perhaps to the 'ship of fools' (VO 41).[11] The civilised 'ordinary' world which people are so anxious to cling on to seems to be nothing but an illusion threatened by the randomness of nature and overshadowed by a devouring wilderness that it seeks to disguise and cover over. But even though the voyagers shun the properties of the body with their various preoccupations with mental activities such as reading, studying and talks, biological nature still silts through layers of social codes and etiquettes. Abhorring any identification with the animal, people reject whatever it is that is bodily and emotional and it is this which leads to the insincerity and concern to conceal feelings that Rachel finds so repulsive in society. Under such social restrictions, feelings become so detached within the protocols of civilised etiquette, that it is hard not to become remote from and unsure about the core of human affect and being. How to name feelings and in naming, know them, and in experiencing, therefore, the feeling of a feeling, to know that one exists? As Hewet asks, "How d'you know what you feel" (168)?

By the eighteenth century, madness had already come to acquire a cultural link with the imagery of the female body and femininity.[12] Woolf, being herself a psychiatric patient and a victim of patriarchal psychiatric practices, embarked on her writing career by challenging the socio-cultural image of madness and subverting patriarchal definitions of rationality. Both her heroines in The Voyage Out and Night and Day (Rachel and Katharine) possess the air of waking dreamers whose minds tend to wander beyond their physical presence, though ironically (instead of an emptied mind preoccupied with its bodily needs and desires) both of them are meditating on the metaphysical questions (transcending their immediate physical present) that have preoccupied (male) poets, philosophers, and mathematicians: Truth, Being, Law and Justice and perhaps "subject and object and the nature of reality" (TL 28).[13] Persisting

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[11] Foucault 7-9.
[12] Showalter, Female 8.
[13] Rachel is preoccupied with epistemological questions as she is constantly thinking of a world

in their own vision of reality, both heroines are disconnected from physical reality and alienated from their immediate material present. But Katharine's mother, Mrs. Hilbery, by assuming the role of Shakespearian fool (a typical guise of madness) is able to move between the worlds of illusion and actuality. In the words of her husband, Mrs. Hilbery is like a goddess from heaven (a comedic *deus ex machina*) who can resolve all the conflicts between social criteria and individual interests and concerns with a wave of a wand. Both the allusion to the fool and the goddess who possesses an unintelligible power to 'see' into an unpronounced nature seem to arise from the conventional imagery of madness. In her unregulated spontaneity, Mrs. Hilbery, like Bernard, fails to finish a linear, definitive, narrative, and therefore subverts altogether the Hegelian teleological history. As a Shakespearian fool, Mrs. Hilbery is raised beyond the original social texture. For her, there is no settled rule, but only an ongoing, rampant narrative that continues to formulate new circumstances. Unlike Rachel and Katharine, who innocently persist with the search for the metaphysical consolation of an 'Absolute Reality,' Mrs. Hilbery, in the mien of court jester, trifles with all the seemingly real and resolute proprieties. In her portrait of these female characters, Woolf deliberately draws on a cultural tradition which views madness through its female emblems while showing that profound metaphysical questions are posed by the female rather than male characters, and thereby challenging the idea of madness as a female malady and formal rationality as the triumph of the 'masculine' mind.

Insisting upon truth and seeking after the real, Rachel passes into delirium as a result of the conflict between feeling life and living it in a Victorian patriarchal society. In seeing life as it is, she comes to *feel* that life. Yet, subjected to a Victorian society, she is forced to renounce the reality of her feelings and emotions as a woman. Thus,

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existing beyond, though imperceptible to, her 'self. She often expresses an unquenchable desire to pierce through the veil. Her accounts of "the world [as] composed entirely of vast blocks of matter, and that we're [human beings] nothing but patches of light" seems to echo what Hume has suggested, that the self is merely 'a bundle of perceptions' (276). As for Katharine, she believes in the firm ground offered by the numbers and symbols of physics and mathematics which seems capable of containing the forms and the formal irregularity of life.

the sickness she acquires enables her to detach herself from the physical present and thereby from the demands of the social world. In the wake of Rachel's death, Hirst (who enjoys solitude with books and who entertains himself with thoughts and ideas rather than ordinary social activities) realises the consolations offered by society in the guest lounge of the hotel where life is re-consolidated after Rachel's death through habitual custom and everyday life. As Freud has suggested, society, civilisation, for all its discontents, enables individuals to bear the unbearable in life. Social conversations may be mendacious and untruthful, yet it is by staging and protecting such an 'illusive' reality rather than piercing through its veil, that the human self is protected from madness and delirium, since, in reality, the contradictory in life is often so great that the mind cannot otherwise accommodate itself to it. The novel is in this sense a feminine response to Conrad's own interrogation of a heart of darkness. Woolf, producing a tragedy and a comedy, begins her writing career questioning whether it is not the case that we have come to place so much emphasis upon reason and rationality (in fear of the animality lurking within our nature) that we neglect the importance of a "double capacity to feel, to reason" which Bernard has noted is a scarce virtue, barely achieved (W 57). It is with the regard of emotional reality that Mrs. Hilbery redeems her youngsters from the tragic conviction of patriarchal power and restores the possibility of genuine living.

"Virginia Woolf is as much interested in the emotional context that gives rise to the ideas as in the ideas themselves. She is particularly interested in those states of consciousness where thought and emotion are inextricably mixed," writes David Daiches (25). There is still a perceived distinction between the presentation of thoughts and mental activities and the sentimental expression of feelings and emotions residing within Daiches's opinion. However, it is certainly the integration of the two which Woolf sought to achieve. Woolf's epistemological quest for the 'real' (the material reality of the social-physical world as well as the immaterial reality of the sensational life) was uniquely interwoven with her own sensory experience as a

woman suffering most likely from a bipolar disorder, now ironically, perhaps, understood as one of the psychiatric class of disorders of affect. The disturbance of the mind and the indispositions of the body must have raised questions for Woolf about the tangible reality of the world; she reflects such anxieties through the plight of Rachel in The Voyage Out.

According to Daiches, 'sentimental fallacy' is much more often employed in dramatic works that seek to evoke empathy and emotions in the audience, while novels and prose writings are seen as more connected to the over-cerebral or the 'intellectual fallacy.'[14] Dramatic works aim at reproducing sentimental feelings in the audience (a somewhat Platonic understanding), while novels and prose works seek to assign bodily feelings and emotions to an intelligible definition (here too, Daiches follows broadly the Platonic division of genres.) Nevertheless, in Woolf's experimental writings, the real is most often glimpsed through those temporary moments when states of mind and bodily feelings are no longer separable—the flows of the mind embody the rhythm of the body and vice versa. And most often of all the moment is grasped not through verbal thoughts, but through a sense of feeling in the body. As she wrote in A Room of One's Own:

> What is meant by 'reality'? It would seem to be something very erratic, very undependable—now to be found in a dusty road, now in a scrap of newspaper in the street, now in a daffodil in the sun…Sometimes, too, it seems to dwell in shapes too far away for us to discern what their nature is. But whatever it touches, it fixes and makes permanent. (ARO 99)

The erratic unreliability of the 'real' is not simply bound up with the self-enclosed monadic moment but also inextricably bound up with the emotions and feelings of that particular moment. It is the feelings of the body that have lit up the moment,

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[14] According to David Daiches, the intellectual fallacy is "where the most 'real' facts about men and women are considered to be their states of mind," whilst the sentimental fallacy considers "the interplay of human emotions as the most 'real' aspect of human life" and "which puts emotional states highest on the stepladder of 'real' facts about men and women" (27-8). Yet still, Daiches categorises Woolf's writing mainly in terms of the intellectual fallacy.

registered the 'real,' and made it stand permanently in the mind. One could venture to suggest that the real (which Woolf is seeking after) is felt by the body and something only experientially known rather than calculated. Yet, this sentimental reality can only be communicated through linguistic symbols: it is in words that reality is formulated. Henceforth, in metaphors and metonymy, Woolf sought to conjoin the subjective reality of the body to the objective reality of social symbols. Daiches also stresses the intricate relation between the objective and intellectual 'real' world of science and the subjective and emotional reality of art, as a theme of Woolf's aesthetic quest. As he writes, "There is an essential subjectivity here, an interpretation of reality in terms of human reactions, which distinguishes art, one supposes, from science" (Daiches 36). In order to unify these two apparent oppositions of the subjective (sentimental) art and the objective (rational) science, Woolf launches her experiment as a new form of writing that is both intellectual and sentimental at the same time and which will enable its reader to feel the rhythm of the emotional narrative with the same detachment as observing an objectified form: to be simultaneously engaged and estranged; to be both the observing subject as well as the observed object; both the spectator and the character itself. And only thus could she possibly re-construct a 'solid' reality as a combination of scientific facts as well as subjective apprehensions.

Although excessive emotions and surplus feelings might result in irrational behaviours and 'unreasonable' decisions, rationality depends on a proper healthy ground of feelings and emotions. How would life have become devoid of emotions and feelings as they—being the most fundamental regulation of life—signify the primary state of existence of an organism in receiving and responding to stimuli from the external world? The pulsing of the body is the basic 'reality' of life and without which there is no being, let alone intelligence. Could there be a soul or rational mind deprived of a body and without interaction with the world? This is the question posed through the allegorical image of "the brain in a vat," a metaphysical question resulting from the conventional dichotomy of mind/body. Is the soul merely incorporated in the

body as suggested by René Descartes' famous pronouncement, *Cogito ergo sum,* or maybe through the Neoplatonism encapsulated in "Pepys' motto from Cicero, *Mens cujusque is est quisque (one's mind is who one is),*" (Russo 16)?[15] Both accounts seem to recognise the 'I' as being solely identified with the mind and its mental activity, disregarding the material ground of its body. Even if the mind could simply sustain itself through an intact nervous system of the spine and the brain, it is quite plausible that it would still configure a phantom bodily existence which prompts this feeling of a self. As explicitly put by William James, "its [the present thoughts] appropriations are therefore less to itself than to the most intimately felt *part of its present Object, the body, and the central adjustments*, which accompany the act of thinking, in the head. *These are the real nucleus of our personal identity*" [James's emphasis] (1:341).

In his pursuit of an 'objective' depiction and understanding of the world, Descartes, eventually, came to view the mind (and its signifying 'I') as capable of thinking and doubting 'on its own' as the irresolvable foundation upon which all knowledge is grounded.[16] Thus, Descartes' objective science, which aims at eliminating any sensory illusion, is ironically founded on the most subjective basis of an incontestable 'I' which is (as Descartes believed) indubitable in the sense that it surpasses any scientific measurement and representation. In the reconciliation of the mind and body, Descartes simply contended that the thinking 'I' is non-matter and thereby he raised it above the doubt of science (though along with the advances of science, the indubitable soul and perhaps even God are dethroned from their supreme *a priori* state).

The mathematical logic that seems to probe behind all material appearance and

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[15] The motto is inscribed on an arch of the library gateway of Magdalene Cambridge. John Paul Russo, I. A. Richards: His Life and Work: "Pepys chose the motto for the suggestive links between Neoplatonist metaphysics, Ciceronian classicism, and St. Paul; [Pepys] entered [Magdalene] college in 1651, 'when Cambridge and Magdalene had been full of very sensible and exciting Neo-Platonists" (16).

[16] See René Descartes, Discourse on Method, section IV. Discourse on Method and the Meditations trans. F. E. Sutcliffe (London: Penguin, 1968) 53-60.

achieve the granite hard table of truth could not possibly circumscribe the thinking and reasoning 'I' which is non-matter and thus escape the prescription of the neutralised governing laws of matter that have been discovered through science, mathematics and physics. (And as Freud, William James, and Henri Bergson also suggested, the mechanism of the psychical state should be approached and understood through psychological laws rather than the law of the Physics.) Consequently, from the dubious nature of Cartesian dualism arose the duplicity of the real of the formal and insubstantial mathematical table, and the substantial yet delusive material reality—an impassable yet paradoxical gulf between the two fundamentally different realities held separately by the idealist and the materialist.[17] For as the world of physics deals with matter, the real is not seen by the corporeal eye, but rather conceived by the insubstantial 'mind' (the Cartesian mind or 'I' is fully and entirely the self-reflexive conscious mind) through numbers and formulas.[18] As explained by Banfield, "Without sense-perception, there is no way out for the logician-philosopher; without logic, there is no knowledge beyond sensation" (Phantom 24). Yet, in pursuit of the absolute 'Real,' the idealist, such as Descartes himself, resorts to an understanding through an attempt to finalise the intrinsic laws of the material world, contemplated and achieved through the objective reflection of the human mind. Science, with its objectivity, enables us to see into the corporeal unseen (the hidden formulas and rules according to which the material appearance of the world is grounded). Nonetheless, one could not deny that this instinctive 'insight' into the truth and real is firmly grounded on feelings and emotions.

To pierce through the veil of material appearance and see the underlying structure is the ultimate task of mathematicians, physicians, philosophers and also of

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[17] Bertrand Russell writes in The Analysis of Mind, "Those who maintain that mind is the reality and matter an evil dream are called 'idealists'...Those who argue that matter is the reality and mind a mere property of protoplasm are called 'materialists'"(2).

[18] The Cartesian dichotomy between the mind and the body could be now understood as a failure to conceive the conscious mind as formed through various layers. Thus, from such dichotomy arose the entire matter of the problem of knowledge which "is the quest of getting to the lighthouse on its 'stark bare rock,' its ground of granite, from which its 'misty eye,' its rainbow illumination of the world, stares out into the darkness of the surrounding sea" (Waugh, "Revising" 53).

Woolf who endeavoured to present through her narrative the perplexity of her own and everyone's relation to reality and the understanding of that reality. Following Cartesian dualism, reason and rationality seem to be the achievement in the end of a full renunciation of the subjective self. Yet, how is it possible to be deprived of the 'I' completely in any understanding of the world: who is then to conduct the thinking? Just as modern science seeks to transcend any subjective impingement of the corporeal and sensory body on objective reasoning, one version of modernist aesthetics endeavoured to de-personalise subjectivity by displacing the subjective 'I' with an emphasis on "formal distance" and "impersonality" as in T. S. Eliot, Joyce, and Wyndham Lewis. The 'I' which modern science and art both seek to obviate is the higher self-reflexive mind that is still fully bound to its personal concerns—an 'I' constructed from autobiographical memory which has outgrown the constant adjusting phase of the core self and has now adopted a rigidly formed temper that orientates one's relation to the external world. It is this autobiographical selfhood which art and science seek to reach beyond: either towards an ultimate objectivity (that is capable of perceiving its own subjective point of view as merely one among numerous others) or towards a preliminary subjectivity existing prior to the formation of selfhood and locating here the fundamental reality of being in existence.

Although objective rationality is not possible without the pre-existence of a subjective 'I,' the objective consciousness that is the layer of reflexive consciousness has for long been the only layer that is recognised as definitive of the human mind. A value difference therefore evolves along with the division between the reflexive mind and the bodily-bounded mentality which is imbricated in the mind/body split. Woolf's attempt at impersonality and detachment is firmly rooted in a subjective base which corresponds to Damasio's understanding of the architecture of consciousness. As shown by James Naremore, instead of interposing distance between the self and other, Woolf tends to blur the boundaries between the self and other in order to achieve a communal effect; and as the individual 'I' merges into a common current of 'they,'

distinct subjective apprehensions are blended into a universal objective feeling.[19] The 'rationality' of Woolf's novels is incorporated into her rhythmic narration that depicts the ebbs and flows of inner feelings, reflecting a universal rhythm of the body that (though a shared aspect of all being) generates individual perceptions. The subjective realm still baffles scientists to this day as it continues to resist objective presentation and the nearest it seems that one could possibly come to address and communicate the subjective realm is by "rendering" it through a mimesis of the feeling and emotion-engendering process, as in literary embodiment, instead of through direct literal depiction as in scientific description.[20] Involved in the literary is surely always some version of what T. S. Eliot has suggested in "Hamlet" as the theory of 'objective correlative': by building up the circumstances and elements that induce feelings rather than addressing the feeling itself.

According to Damasio, language and creativity are the steps towards conscience—an empathy that feels and knows the feeling of others by means of reflexive nerves. There is an urge to communicate, to transcribe both subjective as well as objective reality in order to accommodate and consolidate it. Yet, the deficiency of language often frustrates one's communication. Symbolic language, though "can never be anything but anthropocentric" and perhaps self-centric, has long been taken as a means toward impersonal and objective rationality (Beer 41). For symbolic language, resembling an upper level of the nervous mapping in the working of consciousness, maps out the self in relation to the world. All language is therefore self-reflexive. In the diagram drawn by Damasio, linguistic ability and creativity is placed beyond the extended consciousness representing a transition from a more subjective consciousness of 'I' towards greater objectivity. The linguistic ability in deploying the symbolic order is a departure from the material ground of the bodily—a self-detached reflexive posture. Consequently, having a mind or not having a mind

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[19] James Naremore, The World Without a Self (New Haven: Yale UP, 1973) 24-5.

[20] The idea of rendering (rendu) is expounded by Michel Chion in La toile trouée. See Slavoj Žižek, Looking Awry (1991; Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT P, 1992) 40.

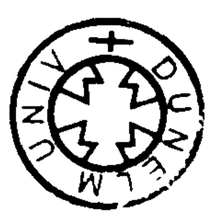
becomes identified with one's rhetorical skill in communicating to the outer world one's feelings and thoughts. Yet despite Rachel's capacity to feel, St. John Hirst, the epitome of a Cambridge intellectual in The Voyage Out, still questions whether women have a mind or not, for he assumes their incapacity to appreciate the delicacy of words and with that their inability to reason and judge in sensible verbal articulation. The tendency of Hewet and Rachel to adopt vague figures of speech in expressing complex states of mind is often sneered at by Hirst. He calls Hewet "a singularly untidy mind" that lacks continuity and draws no conclusions (VO 96). How Hirst values reason and rhetorical ability! How he praises Gibbon's 'immaculate' style—"Every sentence is practically perfect" (VO 184)!

Although Rachel Vinrace sets out to 'see' life in The Voyage Out ironically through life, she encounters death. In Naremore's words, The Voyage Out is a voyage out of life. Perhaps with all the implications of the Cambridge Epistemology and the insistence on rationality, it is a voyage out of the body in seeking for a sublime ideal of the soul, for the unsubstantial 'Real,' and therefore paradoxically, out of the ground of life. As indicated by Foucault, "Madness begins where the relation of man to truth is disturbed and darkened" (104). Rachel's capacity to feel, instead of strengthening life, induces her instead to question the socio-symbolically constructed life which is embodied through the superficiality of social languages in all their insincerity. An unmitigated disparity seems to exist between what is felt and the words that seek to signify and represent feelings. Rachel's feeling can only be expressed through the abstraction of music. But, without the capacity to adopt words, she also fails to achieve a more consolidated understanding of her turbulent feelings and eventually she loses her grasp on reality. Rachel's bodily illness has driven her away from material reality: "She was completely cut off, and unable to communicate with the rest of the world, isolated alone with her body"—a body of feeling which she cannot communicate to the outer world (VO 312). The general obsession with the distinction between dream and real, instead of enabling Rachel and other characters to attain the

'Real,' rather overturns the ground of reality as the characters drift further away from the factual into a visionary, dreamlike, world of the mind.

Mind and body, masculinity and femininity, tend to be in immediate opposition to one another throughout The Voyage Out. Woolf is exploring and attempting to suggest an answer to Hirst's question of the role of 'education' (the social institution) in the differences between men and women. Both Rachel and Hirst are in pursuit of the real, though they adopt entirely diverse methods and means: one through nonverbal feelings and emotions (exemplified through music), and the other through logic, rhetoric and symbols. Hirst (as a fellow of Cambridge and, in his own evaluation, one of the three most distinguished men in England, who places immense stress on mind and its capacity for abstract speculation) characterises the spirit of the age that disregards the discordance and intricacy of life in living it as if, through reasoning alone, everything could be understood in the fashion of an Aristotelian belief in logic and geometry. Thus, he concludes, "I see through everything—absolutely everything. Life has no more mysteries for me"; while, for the novelist Terence Hewet, life is full of untold, unintelligible, hidden stories (VO 155). "It [life] seems to [Hewet] tremendously complicated and confused. One can't come to any decision at all; one's less and less capable of making judgments" (VO 205-6). Truth of life is transient and capricious. It could not possibly be held and fully possessed.

Hewet, as a novelist, seems to be a mediator between the definitive reason of Hirst and the hazy and woolly feelings of Rachel. Through him, the paradoxical relation between dream and reality is first revealed. To write a novel of silence, as he claims to do, is an attempt that seeks an alternative mode of communication that might transcend the present capacity of language to integrate what is personal into a communal mood and understanding. Although Hewet, as a novelist, seems to acknowledge the importance of feelings and emotions and is more inclined to learn and appreciate the lives of women, still he makes the comment that Rachel would never understand Hirst's virtue with the words: "you'll never see it!" (emphasis added)



he exclaimed; "because with all your virtues you don't, and you never will, care with every fibre of your being for the pursuit of truth! You've no respect for facts, Rachel; you're essentially feminine" (VO 278). Paradoxically, Rachel's antagonism to Hirst is itself an inquiry after the Truth veiled behind the flamboyant words and 'obscured' by the apparently logical and correct rhetoric.

Sailing into the Amazonian wilderness, Hirst observes how queer it is that the wild landscape gets on one's nerves: "it's all so crazy. God's undoubtedly mad. What sane person could have conceived a wilderness like this, and peopled it with apes and alligators? I should go mad if I lived here—raving mad" (VO 260). The wild landscape seems to reflect what the self has always tried to repress—the vast inconceivable darkness of the *id* concealed beneath the conscious *ego* which is socio-symbolically structured by civilisation (as defined in Freudian terms). The immense wilderness within and without, mirroring each other, disturb all sense of 'proportion' and confuse dream and reality. "Dreams and realities" is repeatedly questioned; for as subjective and objective points of view offset one another, the ground of reality and dream becomes no longer discernible (VO 172). Direct confrontation with the external wilderness makes it also impossible to shun the dark reality of the unintelligible feelings within. The image of the self as a ship sailing solitarily upon the sea, surrounded with a bluish veil, without any shore to connect it with the rest of the world, runs throughout the narrative. The image of the sea is a conventional image and symbol of madness. As Rachel has lamented: "What's so detestable in this country… is the blue—always blue sky and blue sea. It's like a curtain—all the things one wants are on the other side of that. I want to know what's going on behind it. I hate these divisions…One person all in the dark about another person…Just by going on a ship we cut ourselves off entirely from the rest of the world" (285). The English society which Rachel encounters and becomes involved with in this primitive landscape of Santa Marina seems to represent the flimsy interface between consciousness and unconsciousness, between the mind and the body.

where boundaries are blurred.

Harvena Richter also takes The Voyage Out as a voyage inward.[21] She conjectures that, in The Voyage Out, to feel is not a passive product but rather an active reaching out. In pursuing life and the knowledge of life, Rachel is not simply waiting for feelings to arise passively, but she approaches feelings actively in seeking for their causes as well as meanings. "Thus Mrs. Woolf's emotional moment may be said to be not passive cerebration but the activity which we know as life" (Richter 32). Contrary to Richter's account, Woolf is portraying feelings on two levels, both their spontaneous generation (forming a reference ground for the core self and core consciousness) and as they are known and actively interpreted by the subject (in autobiographical consciousness, by referring to the historical context of the subject's memory). It is, in fact, simultaneously a passive as well as an active process—a non-conscious intake as well as a conscious reflection—as the novel addresses both the feelings that arise without the knowledge of the subject and also those that are felt and known by the subject. In the passage where Rachel wanders around the hotel strained by mysterious agitation, one grasps clearly her subjective interaction with an overwhelming emotion with which she cannot possibly come to terms. Rachel nonetheless notes the difference between having a feeling passively and feeling a feeling actively.[22] In the course of the novel, characters, especially Rachel and Hewet, who are more apt to feel, are often struck with unintelligible feelings and emotions—a sudden plunge into sadness or a strain of anxiety springs forth from nowhere—and they are driven to make sense of this in order to bring it under control. But, words and language fail them. Without words to pinpoint or offer a clear framework, these emotions and feelings remain unapproachable: without form, rationalised reflection on them is unattainable.

The Voyage Out, as a voyage inward into the inner self exploring subjective

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[21] Virginia Woolf: The Inward Voyage.
[22] Damasio Feeling 279-80.

feelings and emotions, is also a voyage out into a sea without a centre, without a pretext—a battle-ground where the confrontation between objective and subjective perceptions is fully played out. Richter has noted that "The title of the French translation comes closer to expressing the essence of her work [The Voyage Out]: *La Traversée des Apparences*—the crossing of outward appearance into reality" (26), coinciding with what Hewet concludes that he and Rachel are seeking: "to find out what's behind things [...] Things I feel come to me like lights...I want to combine them" (VO 207).[23] The Voyage Out, aims to pierce through the veil and approach the hidden question at its very heart: what is the true reality and what is simply appearance. Both the characters and the text struggle with the impossibility of a pure transcendental objectivity. Rachel steps upon the journey to 'see life' in order to understand the internal churning of feelings and emotions that she has been unable to name, yet what she encounters is a whirling sea where all ideas, beliefs, and perspectives are kept afloat without possible anchors as "atoms flying in the void," swirling along with the tempest (VO 63). Rachel sets out to know the world and its reality, as symbolised by the ship the Euphrosyne itself, who "infinitely more mysterious, moving by her own power and sustained by her own resources" sails towards the unknown which "might give her death or some unexampled joy" (VO 25). As it aims at a thorough disclosure of the absolute 'Real,' the narrative of The Voyage Out probes into the *heart of darkness* that unravels itself most fully when socio-cultural constraints are no longer adaptable.

The world seems to vary along with the shifting of feelings and, as the world is perceived through the mist of emotion, it seems often unreal. Does Helen's black volume of philosophy on "the Reality of Matter, or the Nature of Good" reveal more reality than the half-felt, half-known feelings that Rachel finds hard to voice (VO 25)? Rachel has always been prompted by a desire to probe behind that which is considered

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[23] Christy L. Burns notes in her article, "Re-Dressing Feminist Identities: Tensions between Essential and Constructed Selves in Virginia Woolf's Orlando," that "Virginia Woolf plays on a twentieth century conception of Truth, derived from the Greek notion *alethea*, unveiling" (343).

to be factual, but she is constantly baffled by the social code that prevents her from stating genuinely what she feels: "It appeared that nobody ever said a thing they meant, or ever talked of a feeling they felt" (VO 29). Social discourses are utterly disjointed from true feelings and emotions and, being inexpressible under this pressure of social constraint, are generally repressed. But, even if Rachel and Hewet seek to be candid about what they actually feel, the socio-cultural context frustrates them with its lack of appropriate words and means. Since "the simplest of wishes cannot express itself without hiding behind a screen of language that constitutes a world of intricate intersubjective relationships, all of them potentially inauthentic" (De Man 12). As a result, even though full of the rattling sounds of social conversation, an even more profound silence prevails throughout The Voyage Out. The inadequacy of verbal language to communicate true feelings makes the "relations between different people…so unsatisfactory, so fragmentary, so hazardous, and words so dangerous that the instinct to sympathise with another human being was an instinct to be examined carefully and probably crushed" (VO 178). Yet the social life which Rachel takes as insincere to the extent of seeming unreal is for Helen a temporary relief (which Hirst also comes to apprehend in the end). The 'fictional' reality of social-symbolic conventions serves as a safety zone that protects one from an external reality that could be ironically detached and rendered as unreal. Even if it is "a moment's make-believe," the apparent social reality secures her as the "profound and reasonless law [of nature] asserted itself, moulding them all to its liking, making and destroying" (VO 249).

Both Hirst and Helen, in the Western cultural tradition of ocular-centrism, are apt to 'see' (to speculate) through the mind's eyes, whereas Rachel and Hewet are more prey to emotion, inclining to feel the agony of living and wanting. Both of them lament that people are so dishonest about their feelings, feigning to feel what is not felt as they fail to understand the content and meaning of their feelings. Nonetheless, as one resorts to novels of silence and the other to music, they acknowledge that the

true presentation of feelings could not be approached through the available symbolically coded languages and words. Either by music or by silence, they seek to achieve an "objective correlative" which is to provide the elements and construct the situations that stimulate the feelings rather than their direct or literal depiction.[24]

Hewet, as a young apprentice novelist, envisions a novel of silence about things which people don't say. Apprehending the essential objective of founding a neutral means of communication in silence, Rachel advises him that he ought to write music instead of novels since "music goes straight for things. It says all there is to say at once" (VO 195). Although the narrative betrays its underlying scepticism about the insufficiency of Logos, still, as one can see in The Voyage Out, ideas are addressed straightforwardly and explicitly thematised, rather than carried indirectly through the narrative form as they would be in Woolf's later novels. Perhaps in music and silence, there is a liberation from the practical social context. However, there is also the peril of chaos. Much of both Hewet's and Rachel's unregulated perceptions are articulated literally in The Voyage Out when they are trying to make known to the other the ideas which each dwells on. A muddle of semi-transparent yet indiscernible and unapproachable sensations frustrates Terence and Rachel as they both struggle to understand the unformed ideas within themselves. There are more dialogues than internal monologues or presentations of thoughts in The Voyage out (voices of Rachel's internal thoughts are scarcely rendered in indirect discourse), yet paradoxically the novel falls further back into a greater silence surmounted with inarticulate feelings and thoughts. In seeking obscure ideals that they can hardly envisage, they attempt to capture them through words, through direct narration, yet as logos and signifier continue in an endless process of deferral, no finalised meaning can possibly be formed. Failing to make any form out of her intimated visions, Rachel falls into an incommunicative silence as she resists further engagement in the social narrative and so she fades out of the narrative of life.

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[24] T. S. Eliot, "Hamlet" 61.

Reading the silence in Woolf's narrative, Patricia Ondek Laurence suggests that silences, the unspoken, the blanks, are left in the narrative as a means for Woolf to suggest what lies beyond the representation of language and to invite her readers to engage in the creative process as they explore the crevasse of silence in the narrative. Laurence sees the silence formed as a foreground for the communion between the novelist and her readers. The silence is intended to be heard and attended to. The novel of silence which Hewet or Woolf has in mind is a novel that presents the unspoken and embodies the indescribable. The silence is the absence of a dogmatic judgement imposed by the narrator. Yet, the silence is not an unregulated chaotic silence, but a silence that corresponds to the hidden nature of life. The silence which Woolf and Hewet attempt is a silence that mediates between objective and subjective experiences of the characters and of the readers. It is rather like Rachel's music, a communication of feeling without words through 'pure symbols,' a thoroughly neutral ground (like the drawings or the mathematical equations that reflect and communicate Ralph and Katharine's subjective feelings to each other in Night and Day).

The maladroitness of Hewet and Rachel in appropriating languages and words to their needs seems to reflect a lack of narrative skill in their novitiate creator. "Terence is Virginia Woolf, too, the dedicated yet still immature artist, who attempts to give order to perceptions of reality (for Terence it is easy to conceive incidents, but difficult to put them into shape)" (McDowell 77). However, Woolf does succeed in suggesting that feelings and the thoughts prompted by feelings come before the forming and the application of words. In further development, Woolf's narrative technique gradually reaches a maturity by which she is able to show her readers how her characters would be able to communicate, to connect, not through articulated words, but through mutually responsive streams of thought. Each character, whether acquainted with any of the others or not, seems capable of transcending his or her personal boundary, reaching over to the other, inferring others' consciousness.[25] The hidden pattern of

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[25] Freud 11: 167-173: "The Unconscious" (1915).

life in communicating with reality is therefore drawn and substantiated by the narrative. The silence prevailing in the narrative of Woolf's later novels is the wellspring of the free life-flow like the mysterious passenger in the car, or the skywriting in Mrs. Dalloway, that propels a flow of common humanity and links up temporal and spatial separations.[26] In literature as in life, says Woolf, a novelist should resemble a hostess who engenders conversations that would bridge the gulf between individuals. What would be more appropriate than engaging her readers to experience the psycho-physical sensations and perceptions of the character?[27] The subjective realm is unknown and impenetrable; furthermore, it leaves its spectators in awe with its sense of profundity.

As early as the 1970s, critics such as Richter had come to realise that Woolf's moments of being and the meaning of life are anchored in her sensitivity toward the subtle and minute flows of feeling and emotions. The body is central to Woolf's narrative. It is a texture of the body which Woolf is composing. Richter observes how perceptions, words, and emotions interact and weave into one another in Woolf's narrative: "Visual impressions coalesce to form an emotion which begins a flight of thought, an instantaneous flash of daydream. Words 'explode' with their associative meanings which in turn affect the body…The myriad atoms of impression combine and recombine to produce emotion that 'shoots through the moment'" (29). With The Voyage Out, Woolf and her narrative set forth in quest of the meaning of words. The narrative examines the applicability and exposes the possibility of words in expressing feelings and thoughts: what is 'love'; what is being in love; is this what one means by 'love,' her characters ask constantly? How is one able to conceive of love if, for Rachel, one has never been in love before? Words, as embedded within cultural contexts with connotations of their own, most often fail to transcribe subjective feelings that are deeply bound up with personal and autobiographical memory. "It

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[26] Patricia Ondek Laurence, The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991).
[27] CE 1:330.

seemed to [Rachel] that her sensations had no name" (VO 211). Paradoxically, it seems as if only by attaching the physical sensations to a name could one possibly comprehend the fast beating of the heart, the flushing in the face, and all other physical pains of the emotions and feelings?[28] Rachel tends to see in representative images rather than in terms of verbal delineation when she thinks about her relationship with Hewet. Feelings and thoughts continue to well forth incessantly within Rachel while she strives to mould them into musical rhythms if not in words.

Tossing between the subjective and the objective, scientists, philosophers and artists are constantly strained between these two polar aspects of conscious being, between the camps of idealism and realism. The Romantic poets too, such as Samuel T. Coleridge, had also relied for their inspirations on bodily perceptions and sensations, though the romantic aesthetic aims at an "integration of opposites through a higher self-forgetfulness" (Sass 37). With their emphasis on emotions and feelings, the Romantics, though reacting against the rationalism of the eighteenth century, never actually depart from a transcendental belief that the mind is able to achieve a higher spiritual insight—"a direct sensuous intuition of reality" (qtd. in Sass 150). But as they also took into account the engagement of the body, Romantic writers also began to suggest new ways of thinking about the mediation between the mind and the body (challenging the legacy of Plato, Descartes and Kant). Although Louis A. Sass recognises many affiliations between twentieth-century Modernism and its Romantic forebears in the early nineteenth century, he contends that Modernism displays a more "hyperreflexive" self-awareness. He sees a refusal in Modernism of a possible integration between subject and object or a final correspondence between human being and nature, which the Romantics sought. "The modernists," writes Sass, "have opted either for an extreme inwardness, an egoism or solipsism that would deny all

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[28] In a passage where Hewet and Rachel come to an understanding and become engaged to be married, Rachel observed, "very gently and quietly, almost as if it were the blood singing in her veins, or the water of the stream running over stones, Rachel became conscious of a new feeling within her. She wondered for a moment what it was, and then said to herself, with a little surprise at recognising in her own person so famous a thing: 'This is happiness, I suppose'" (267).

reality and value to the external world, or else for a radical materialism or positivism in which not only nature but man himself is stripped of all human, and even of all organic, qualities" (37).

Yet, in contrary to Sass's opinion, these are the two oppositional forces that Woolf endeavoured to resolve through her narrative. Although the inward focus on internal thoughts and consciousness is a well-recognised feature of modernist writings, nonetheless, the obsession with subjective points of view should not be taken as a denial but rather an attempt at unifying the subjective with the objective—a re-recognition of reality by integrating subjective feelings with objective reasoning, or rather an apprehension that subjective feelings are always woven into objective reasoning and objective rationality is often piloted by subjective instincts. What the modernists manifest through their fragmented multi-perspectival writing is a perpetual struggle between a consciousness that is "inevitably perspectival and concept-imbued [...one that] is always arranged, simplified, schematised, interpreted through and through" and a yearning for "'the unique and entirely individual original experience[s]' from which concepts ultimately derive" (Sass 150).

For centuries, people have sought to transcend corporeal confinement and been defeated with a sense of humiliation "to find [as Richard Dalloway has realised in The Voyage Out] what a slave one is to one's body in this world" (VO 64). It is perceived in the Western philosophical context that the achievement of the mind could only be pursued by discarding whatever is of the body; the absurdity is reflected in the ridicule of the 'beautiful soul' implied in the image of Hirst whose bodily ugliness is set against his self-evaluation of the cleverness of his mind. Nevertheless, with the advance of biology, psychology, and in the aftermath of war, philosophers began to reconsider not just the idea that the 'mind' is incorporated within the body, but also to think about the importance of well-being in the body to a healthy, 'reasonable,' mind. Merleau-Ponty's expression of "the actual existence of my body is indispensable to that of my 'consciousness'" and "it is essential to me not only to have a body, but to

have this body" (Phenomenology 501) agrees with what Thomas Nagel has recognised, that "What was unique to that part of an organism's psychological life, which we label as 'conscious,' he [Nagel] wrote, was its being the source of 'there being something it is like to be that organism'" (qtd. in Lyons 181).[29] As scientists endeavour to cling onto the notion of a transcendental Ego that would enable them to see past worldly illusion and achieve an incontestable, universal law that strings together all the worldly phenomenon, poets continue to muse over that paradoxical consciousness of being-in-itself and being-for-itself, for, as Rachel has observed, "How, indeed, could [it be possible] to conceive anything far outside [one's] own experience" (VO 216).

The Voyage Out, which launched Woolf's career as a writer, also led her to embark on the philosophical quest for naming and describing the perpetual co-relation of the subjective mind (that evolves from the feelings of the body but in return views its body as an object) and the objectified body. (Or, perhaps it is better put as the mind's subjective understanding of the body and the body's objective presentation of its status.) The novel itself, its protagonist, Rachel, and also the ship, Euphrosyne, that transports them out of London into the wilderness of South America, all seem to converge into a single female persona who is about to discover real 'life,' life that has long hidden beneath the social convention of Victorian Englishness. Though Rachel is as excited as she could possibly be at the thought of 'true living' which this journey toward emancipation seems to promise, her father's wish to make her a Tory hostess already endows the life to come with a doomed inevitability. For instead of being expected to become a conscious autonomous being, Rachel's life back in England will be, as foreshadowed, the death of the soul, if not of the body.[30] Rachel's death has always been anticipated by the undertone of the narrative. A 'real' factual world which she seeks is nevertheless beyond her reach (and also beyond the reach of any other human being). Although Helen insists on leading Rachel to see real life and is eager to

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[29] Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception is first published in 1962, ten years before Thomas Nagal's essay, "What is it Like to be a Bat?", published in Philosophical Review 1974.
[30] MD 64.

show her the "facts of life…What really goes on, what people feel, although they generally try to hide it," she nevertheless puts a premium on the virtue of the civil life that shields us from the frailty of life in all its insubstantial reality; this Rachel fails to recognise (150). Her social inflexibility prevents her from establishing any connection with her body that is both socially and personally acceptable. Inevitably, the incongruity between social demands and natural drives leads her from the world of material reality into a bewildered delirium.

Rachel is rather like the fairy-tale princess, Sleeping Beauty, whose consciousness of being in this world is awakened by a kiss. The awakening brings to her "The vision of her own personality, of herself as a real everlasting thing, different from anything else, unmergeable, like the sea or the wind, flashed into Rachel's mind…I can be m-m-myself" (VO 75). Subjectivity or the consciousness of the self is ratified by the capacity to feel. But, as the question which is put forward to Hirst by Hewet, a character used as a contrast with Hirst, "[has one made] enough allowance for feelings" (VO 96)? Or, could one be allowed genuine feelings: to feel what one feels rather than to feel what society allows one to feel? Hewet, as a novelist, reflects how because people care nothing about the novel, and see it as a trivial form, that allows him the freedom of expression to depict "the way one's seen the thing, felt about it, made it stand in relation to other things" (VO 204). He is overcome with "The mysteries of life" and, just like Rachel, with "the unreality even of one's sensations" (VO 178). In this South American coastal city, Santa Marian (which reminds Mr. Pepper of the Elizabethan age which froze in its self-enclosed ancient state, disconnected from outer civilisation), Rachel is about to break from her Richmond upbringing and set forth to encounter life, to discover a "*brave* new world" within and without herself (Tmp. 5.1.183).

Contemporary neuroscientists have started to affirm not only the contribution of feelings and emotions to rational behaviours, but also that consciousness is fully grounded on bodily emotions and feelings. Both Antonio Damasio and V. S.

Ramachandran (like Freud before them) use quotations from Shakespeare's works to illustrate their scientific works. Have these scientists also come to "[meet] life fortified by the words of the poets" (ND 125)? Poets, in their ability to convey the subtlety of subjective feelings, emotions, and thoughts, seem to have apprehended the intrinsic quality of 'being' and its temporality by attending to the flickering of feelings and by appreciating the world through the bodily senses rather than simply by logical reason. Poets often engage their readers to experience, feel and relive those fleeting instants through which life or being reveal themselves to the conscious mind—those moments when consciousness becomes conscious of its own existence. Poets are capable of communicating the most subjective qualia and transcribing internal subjective realities and have achieved what modern day science and technology is still ineffectual in characterising. As also inferred by Woolf, art is a meeting-place where individuals conjoin to form a collective experience with each connecting through their own subjective ground. The philosophical dominance of dualism led Plato and later thinkers to mistake poets as simply those who veil the mind in illusive perceptions that conceal actual reality, the absolute Real independent of all substance, as well as of the mind. However, like Rachel, Socrates questions "How will you set about looking for that thing, the nature of which is totally unknown to you?" (qtd. in Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology 431). The Real sought by the mind is conceived by the mind and its significance is a constituted sign of the mind reincorporated through linguistic symbols. Yet, the mind is formed and shaped through the organism's interactions (the actual 'bodily' contact) with the world around it.

As Umberto Eco has speculated, literature seems to teach us more about the phenomenology of the mind and its perceptions than neurology.[31] By depicting feelings and emotions, poets have touched upon a certain truth of 'being' as it is, that reason and science could not fully realise even in the present age. It is poets and artists

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[31] Umberto Eco, The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana, trans. Geoffrey Brock (London: Vintage, 2005).

rather than scientists who have given us a sense that one's body is "the nexus of living meaning" (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology 174). Although Hirst as a typical Cambridge idealist criticises Hewet for his novelist's tendency to show a "lack of continuity," and an inadequacy in logical reasoning, it is Hewet who has come to perceive life as it is (VO 97). Hewet, who also drifts along with all his uncertainties and spur-of-the-moment responses, anticipates Bernard of The Waves. While Hirst groups people into types through deductive reasoning and sees life in rigid order, Hewet appreciates the triviality of life and the differences between individuals: "No two people are in the least the same" (VO 97). Like Bernard, Hewet sees lives and selves as numerous bubbles; though each is separated and enclosed upon itself, each also has the flexibility to be absorbed and intermixed with another: "The truth of it is that one never is alone, and one never is in company," bringing out that constant paradox that rests within Woolf's idea of the tunnelling process (VO 98).[32]

One is, inevitably, intermixed with the world. Poets, plausibly, through their pursuit of feelings, have realised that "The union of soul and body is not an amalgamation between two mutually external terms, subject and object, brought about by arbitrary decree. It is enacted at every instant in the movement of existence" (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology102). And it is such an irresistible interaction between the self and the outer world connected by the body that forces Rachel further into a world of her own as "All sights were something of an effort, but the sight of Terence was the greatest effort, because he forced her to join mind to body in the desire to remember something. She did not wish to remember" (VO 328). Thus, in disowning her bodily and emotional response and yearning for a retreat from the disturbance of the world, she sinks deeper into delirium: "she wished to be alone. She wished for nothing else in the world" (VO 328). She has, theoretically, disowned her

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[32] "Meaning? Oh, something about bubbles—auras—what d'you call 'em? You can't see my bubble; I can't see yours; all we see of each other is a speck, like the wick in the middle of that flame. The Flame goes about with us everywhere; it's not ourselves exactly, but what we feel; the world is short, or people mainly; all kinds of people" says Hewet in answering Hirst's unyielding pursuit of the actual meaning of his figure of speech (VO 98).

body in rejecting its feelings and emotions, its influence, in order to attain to the dimly perceived Real; however, a Real that is only conceivable through the body.

Instead of trying to dissociate the soul from the body which it inhabits, poets, as they feel rather than judge, articulate an integrated wholeness between body and mind, bringing together the segregated nightly dreams beheld by the mind and the sunlit realities felt by the body (or maybe, the hidden realness beheld through abstract contemplation and the illusion of corporeal perception). Night or day, dreams or perceptions, which is the absolute real and which is the quasi-reality? In all its ambiguity and disguise, realness and reality perpetually elude apprehension.

In contrast to the horror of the confrontation with the real and reality in The Voyage Out, Woolf plays romantically with the eternal paradox of reality and appearance in Night and Day (with its constant allusions to Shakespearian comedy). Walking down the Strand, Katharine Hilbery, the heroine of Night and Day, in her usual absent-mindedness, keeps repeating to herself, "It's life that matters, nothing but life—the process of discovering—the everlasting and perpetual process" and yet she has not truly lived a moment or ever stopped to savour those uncertainties met through life's journey (ND 106). Her life, like the one which Rachel has led in Richmond, is a life built upon disguises. Through Katharine's life, one sees the contradictions of female stereotypes, the poetic enchantress versus the confined slave of the household (as further expounded by Woolf in A Room of One's Own).[33] Born into a family whose greatness centred on the achievement of her poet grandfather, Katharine fights deliberately against the family's literary tradition and secretly pursues a world—of stars and of mathematical correctness—cleansed of all obscure and distrustful human feelings and emotions. Ironically, in her enthusiasm for 'the Real' and 'the true reality,' and through her insistence on "something that hasn't got to do with human beings," she has drifted into a nightly world devoid of substantial sunlit reality (ND 163). To confront the real by forswearing the unreality of bodily feelings and emotions

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[33] ARO 40.

is to uproot oneself from any possible consolidated ground. The unnameable void of the Lacanian Real that eludes all symbolic representation is in fact the most substantiated power of nature located in the body. Being the immediate descendant of a great poet, could Katharine finally come to see what is beheld by her poet grandfather—"something lovely or miraculous vanishing or just rising upon the rim of the distance" (ND 271)?

With The Voyage Out and Night and Day, Woolf subtly displays the adverse position of women within a society where there is a constant demand for reason and rationality, while women are forever deemed to be emotional and irrational beings. "[W]omen, within our dualistic systems of language and representation, are typically situated on the side of irrationality, silence, nature, and body, while men are situated on the side of reason, discourse, culture, and mind" (Showalter, Female 3-4). Both novels enquire into the opposition between what has been presumed and instituted as femininity and masculinity. Situating herself between science and art, between objective and subjective apprehensions of life, Woolf began in The Voyage Out with a pessimistic perspective on the future for women, torn between the traditional ideal of a chaste angel in the house (an object of men's desire) and the modern pursuit of a reflexive soul (a subjective entity of its own) that could plausibly be truly felt and lived. Although Rachel is urged to learn the 'real' world, the real world as it hides its cruel reality in silence, could not deal with her frankness. Her music of feelings and emotions that play without verbal articulations could only be apprehended implicitly. To insist on attaining the real, would not only deepen the abyss between sign and meaning as well as between self and other. However, Woolf turned towards a much more optimistic anticipation in Night and Day in which all conflicts are resolved in a style of Shakespearian comedy and a mutual understanding of the other's state of mind is made possible. What has been taken merely as dream and delusion inevitably forces the heroes and heroines to acknowledge its reality.

With the confrontation of different social classes within society and, beyond this,

the confrontation of civilisation and the primitive, the question of what is real and what is reality inevitably interposes itself. In The Voyage Out, a microcosm of various social circles is presented, from the academic scholars to the aristocratic descendents and, through them, a sundry world of disparate realities is revealed. Rachel, under the guidance of her aunt, Helen Ambrose, is incapable of accommodating what she actually feels to the social codes and cultural languages of the scholarly atmosphere that surrounds her (as characterised by the numerous Cambridge graduates: Mr. Ambrose, Mr. Pepper, and above all Hirst). The congregation of people with diverse backgrounds seems to subvert the possibility of achieving a common ground. Art, science and social reality: each take up their own reality and each is examined and measured through one another's stance; each is more or less held as incomprehensible, 'outlandish,' through the eyes of the other. The arrival of the Dalloways onto the ship gives a vehement shake-up to the original party. They represent a completely different world and reality. Through the introduction of this new couple on board, Rachel becomes acquainted with the reality of the diversity of the world and is prepared for the education in life which Helen has proposed. Being attended to as an individual rather than as a child by the Dalloways, Rachel is now given a chance to speak and to express herself. In articulating her feelings and emotions, she starts to take shape and become a person, a subject, rather than just a stock character. However, her subjective formation is cut short by the insufficiency of social language.

Although class differences still persist in Night and Day, Katharine, in the dim twilight of reason and passion, of mathematical logics and poetry, is ultimately saved by a romantic belief represented by her mother, Mrs. Hilbery, a true and immediate descendant of the 'poet.' Katharine presents the combination of a fantasised heroine and an ordinary real life woman who pours tea, pays bills, and orders dinner. She is mythical, yet at the same time ordinarily down to earth. When Katharine refuses to believe in literature, to read poetry, and is obstinate in insisting on the abstract but iron hard truth revealed through mathematics and astronomy, Mrs. Hilbery, again and again,

implores her daughter to believe in love and to react spontaneously and truthfully to her true emotions. Love, though merely a state of mind, is to Mrs. Hilbery the most truthful thing in human life. Mrs. Hilbery, being a poet's daughter, inherits a true Shakespearian spirit, as is implied through her pilgrimage to the poet's tomb (though, like Woolf herself who is also uncomfortable with the paternal implication of 'Shakespeare,' Mrs. Hilbery is eager to redefine 'Shakespeare' into the maternal figure of Anne Hathaway). As she says, she is most like the fools of Shakespeare's plays who, in their worldly silliness, are actually those who see past worldly appearances. Compare this with Helen's insistence on bringing Rachel out from her confined education and experience (which she has had, living most of her life in Richmond with her old aunts) to learn the world and its reality, but which leads Rachel to become more and more bewildered. The more she tries to know about reality, the more quasi- and dreamlike the world seems to be. There is nothing which Rachel could possibly hold onto as a 'granite' truth, thus she lapses more and more into a world of her own and eventually into a state of delirium that is completely disconnected from the world shared by people around her.

Whereas in The Voyage Out there seems to be an abhorrence of any exhibition of animal emotions and feelings unregulated by reason, Night and Day celebrates the spontaneity of human feeling and emotion in a Shakespearian style of fantasy where, as realities and dreams are interwoven, orders and decorum are subverted. The voyage out into the wilderness brings beliefs and senses of reality into direct confrontation, while the dramatised London drawing-room, in all its ceremonial social play-acts and customs, preserves the fantasy-space (in Lacanian terms) and continues to affirm its own reality. Within the fantasy-space, the distinction between the actuality of the day and the nightly dreams becomes transferential and identical. What is real can just as easily become make-believe, as Ralph Denham has said, "[Love is] only a story one makes up in one's mind about another person, and one knows all the time it isn't true" (ND 212). And nevertheless, Katharine represents to Ralph the only reality in the

world as indeed he confides to Katharine. The make-believe game that continues through Night and Day as characters struggle to attain consistent self-images and images of others who they pursue, eventually turns dreams and unrealities into substantial realities and ends in a happy resolution, as each of them is finally put in touch with their true feelings. Within the fantasy-space as in dreams, all is made possible beneath the protective screen of the dream without being absorbed into the conundrum of a chaotic void. Contrarily, The Voyage Out, in its insistence on learning worldly realities, inevitably falls into a state of desolation where any sense of belief is shattered and everyone is left deluded.

When what has been disguised by the two couples starts to rise to the surface in Night and Day, the music of Mozart's The Magic Flute is performed by Cassandra. As the two couples try to attend to the decorum defended by society, Mrs. Hilbery expresses endless regret about this modern life, where people are connected with formality and with technological devices such as telephones, rather than with their true feelings. "How odious the triumphs of science are…They'll be linking us with the moon next," comments Mrs. Hilbery, in a passage where Katharine keeps being summoned by the ring of the telephone (ND 261). The Magic Flute is played in order to cheer up Mrs. Hilbery who suddenly laments the death of poetry as "there wasn't some young writer with a touch of the great spirit—somebody who made you believe that life was *beautiful*" (ND 354). It is a lament for the death of poetry as well as a grieving for an age that no longer celebrates feelings and emotions. The motif of the split behind the night realm of 'obscurantism' (represented by the Queen of the Night) and the enlightenment of the rational day (celebrated by the patriarchal order and wisdom of Sarastro, the priest) in The Magic Flute, echoes in the theme of Night and Day.[34] Yet, instead of coinciding with the thorough leaning toward rationality personified by Sarastro in The Magic Flute, Night and Day satirises Mr. Hilbery's

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[34] Jane Marcus has also noted the resemblance between Night and Day and The Magic Flute. See "Enchanted Organ, Magic Bells: Night and Day as a Comic Opera" Virginia Woolf: and the Languages of Patriarchy (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1987) 18-35.

overreaction to his daughter's concealment of her broken engagement with William Rodney with a degenerate description of "the extravagant, inconsiderate, uncivilised male, outraged somehow and gone bellowing to his lair" (ND 426). In fact, Mr. Hilbery is seen as a 'Hamlet' figure by Mrs. Hilbery. It is the Shakespearian fool, Mrs. Hilbery, whose 'sensible' reaction to the dispositions of the young couples redeems the novel into a comedy.

Katharine, similar to Pamina, is lured from the influence of her mother and also her matriarchal inheritance, captivated by the priest of reason and wisdom in the sense of her pursuit of mathematic and logical correctness. Ralph Denham, on the other hand, posing like Tamino, is possessed by the image of Katharine and sets out in pursuit of her in response to what he has *felt*. Ralph, as his sister Joan has foreseen, possesses that "peculiarity which sometimes seemed to make everything about him uncertain and perilous" (ND 102). Has Ralph been a prey to bodily emotions and feeling as a rationalist would assume? Like a herald of the queen of the night, Ralph indulges himself with illusions, reacts on impulse and dreams away his nights while trying to keep a sense that he is proud of himself "upon a life rigidly divided into the hours of work and those of dreams; the two lived side by side without harming each other"(ND 104). But, it is by taking steps to resolve these two distinct lives, between dream and reality, that offers him the possibility of retaining a sensible life. Similar to Tamino, Ralph also meets defiance from the paternal character, Mr. Hilbery, whose demand of "a complete abstinence from emotion" and a prohibition of interaction and communication between the lovers seems to correspond to the trail which Sarastro has put forward for Tamino (ND 399). Mr. Hilbery's trial, contrarily, does not lead the lovers to a union, but rather to a permanent cessation of communication. Instead of having Ralph take Mr. Hilbery's advice of abstinence, Woolf has Ralph seek to correspond with Katharine and reassure her of his love. And while he is composing this letter, Mrs. Hilbery appears in time to solve the deadlock set by patriarchal obstinacy.

Night and Day ends with a fairy-tale happy ending, with the hero and heroine living happily ever after, subverting the original distinction of night and day and extolling the union of the emotional and rational as well as of feminine and masculine qualities.[35] Unlike the final triumph of the rational over the dark power of night in The Magic Flute, Night and Day ends not by total subjugation to paternal rationality, but rather with the recognition of a perfect balance between feelings and reasons.[36] It is the return of Mrs. Hilbery who makes possible the union of the couple and resolves the obstacle created by social decorum: its conventions and class distinctions. When their relationship is finally sanctioned by Mrs. Hilbery, Ralph and Katharine read each other's manuscripts, each illustrating their states of mind. They meet at a midpoint of the emotional and the rational, either through the abstract mathematic equations which Katharine has been trying to work out secretly, or through the figures which Ralph has drawn on the blank space of the letter written to convey his feelings about their relationship and what they have achieved. As they read the script that embodies their most private emotions and feelings about each other, they come to behold and acknowledge a subjective world seen individually but nevertheless co-responsive to one another. The reconciliation between the emotional and the rational at the end of Night and Day is what saves the novel and its heroine from the tragic ending of The Voyage Out.

Instead of poets, The Voyage Out is surrounded with a group of Cambridge intellectualists and scholars who strip the beauty of the world in search of the skeleton truth latent beneath—a kind of satire of the Platonic Republic under the guardianship of philosophers. Instead of celebrating human feelings and emotions, The Voyage Out displays a constant suppression of the body. Exposure of the bodily aspects of human

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[35] Mrs. Hilbery with her faith in love and poetry seems to pose as the queen of the night who celebrates the mysterious quality of life that cannot be explained but simply felt. Nevertheless, it is she who has restored the order of life ruined by Mr. Hilbery's insistence on rightfulness and customs.

[36] It is said that The Magic Flute corresponds to Mozart's interest in Freemasonry. More interestingly, the symbol adopted by the Freemasonry in its square rulers and compasses denotes a kind of mathematical and logical accuracy.

nature is not simply indiscreet and unacceptable, but is even a form of degeneration. Nonetheless, Woolf ridicules these Cambridge academics, with an exaggerated emphasis often that is comic, over the incongruous over-development of their minds and their pathetic bodily presences and under-development of emotional intelligence. The discordance between the mind and the body is further accentuated by the personage of St. John Hirst who, describing himself as one of the three most distinguished young men in England, has the most deformed body: "When naked of all but his shirt, and bent over the basin, Mr. Hirst no longer impressed one with the majesty of his intellect, but with the pathos of his young, yet ugly body" (VO 96). In a curious parallel to the ideal of de-clothing the illusive appearance and attaining the absolute truth hidden behind, Woolf continuously acquaints us with images of these intellectuals' bodies being uncovered to display something more skin to animalisation than to the beauty or goodness beheld by the mind.

Subjective emotions and feelings are conceived as an impediment to any attempt at abstract analysis and objective understanding of the world, and this justifies the desire to abolish their influence thoroughly from logical reasoning and most philosophical conceptions of the real. In The Voyage Out, as the readers first encounter Clarissa Dalloway, one hears her commenting on music: "I don't think music's altogether good for people" says Clarissa, "Too emotional, somehow…The people who really care about an art are always the least affected" (VO 39). Through Clarissa's words one detects a society which values the detachment of emotion even in the appreciation of arts such as music and even in the appreciation of Wagner's operas such as Tristan and Isolde. Nevertheless, what psychologists have called 'the experience error' seems to be ineluctable; as Merleau-Ponty has asserted, "if we try to seize 'sensation' within the perspective of the bodily phenomena which pave the way to it, we find not a psychic individual, a function of certain known variables, but a formation already bound up with a larger whole, already endowed with a meaning"

(Phenomenology 10).[37] Would the absolute reality be attainable through pure reason when "the sense of reality, is a sort of feeling more allied to the emotions than to anything else" (James 2: 283)? If any intake of perception is primarily bonded with feelings and emotions, one must doubt whether any absolute objective judgement is achievable, let alone inevitable? In The Voyage Out and Night and Day, objective inquiries and reasoning are constantly bound up with subjective interests, and only with the recognition of one's true emotions and feelings could any reasoning possibly take a true course.[38]

In an extensive chapter on reasoning in The Principles of Psychology, James devoted himself to explaining what are the characteristics of basic reasoning and what distinguishes the thinking and conceptions of a genius from an ordinary mind. He comes to identify the ability to see and associate similarity as the fundamental factor of reasoning. James differentiates reasoned thought into two stages: "one where similarity merely operates to call up cognate thoughts, and another farther stage, where the bond of identity between cognate thoughts is noticed" (2:361). He further discerns the minds of genius as falling into two main sorts: "those who notice the bond and those who merely obey it. The first are the abstract reasoners, properly so called, the men of science, and philosophers—the analysts, in a word; the latter are the poets, the critics—the artists, in a word, the men of intuitions" (2: 361). James sees that whether in arts, literature or in science, the supreme success relies on the capacity for association by similarity. Although James thinks it is absurd to make an absolute statement that the analytic mind is indisputably superior to an intuitional one, he does see the analytic mind representing a higher stage as it not only knows and acts in accordance with what it knows, but it is capable of reflecting on how it comes to know.

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[37] In Phenomenology of Perception, Merleau-Ponty defines 'the experience error' as that "what we know to be in things themselves we immediately take as being in our consciousness of them"(5). He goes on to further state that "we do not succeed in extricating ourselves from it in order to achieve consciousness of the world. If we did we should see that the quality is never experience immediately"(5).

[38] James 2: 339.

An analytic mind is prominent for its ability to distinguish the linkage between the immediate substances hidden beneath and it therefore thinks in an abstract manner. However, an intuitional mind suggests through similes and metaphors that characterise the associations of similarity in simple yet allusive comparisons. However, analytic or intuitional, both are means of reasoning.

Even in James, the engagement of the body and whatever is personal and subjective, are still discredited and therefore debarred from scientific inquiry and experiment in a tradition elevated by Kant's ideal perspective that pure objective knowledge might be attainable. Night and Day, in its style of conventional drawing-room comedy, addresses that ambiguity between the claim for rationality and the romantic spirituality of the eighteenth century which Woolf had once noted: "It is worth noticing that the craving for the supernatural in literature coincided in the eighteenth century with a period of rationalism in thought, as if the effect of damming the human instincts at one point causes them to overflow at another" (qtd. in Johnson 184).[39] Whether a mere coincidence or perhaps Woolf inserted the symbolism deliberately, The Voyage Out, in all its allusions to Cambridge and Cambridge idealism, has Rachel Vinrace, as a 'pianist' play Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, a series of eighteenth century composers who all display the transition from the refined decorum of Classicism to Romanticism and eventually to the operas of Richard Wagner whose music is claimed by Friedrich Nietzsche to be the Dionysian rebirth of European culture in opposition to Apollonian rationalism.

Woolf launched her writing career by questioning the beliefs and attitudes of English empiricism and epistemology, questioning the ideal of obtaining a pure abstract knowledge of the world, questioning the nature of truth and the sense of the real. Her father, Leslie Stephen, had said that "literature is the highest imaginative embodiment of a period's philosophy" (qtd. in Johnson 179). Woolf's writing, in all its

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[39] George M. Johnson, Dynamic Psychology in Modernist British Fiction. Originally adopted from Woolf's essay, "Across the Border"; both of the Mozart operas, Don Giovanni and The Magic Flute, alluded to in Night and Day, signifies the turning toward the Romantic era in musical arts.

concern with feelings, thoughts, and reality, reflects the modernist preoccupation with psychology, whether as the emerging science of the mind and self, or as an attempt to understand the inexplicable mystical experience of the unsubstantial soul. Her experimental modernist works are an inquest that probes into the ground of the 'Real' that anchors one's 'being,' yet which had been thrust into doubt by modern science. But if 'belief' is in-itself already a blend of emotions and feelings and scientific inquiry is supposed to obtain an objective reflection of one's belief, then surely one should also take account of the very belief in the effectiveness of science and mathematical logic?[40]

Thus, Woolf embarked on a voyage out of that Cartesian dualism prevailing in academic spheres after the age of reason and within which rationality culminates with a constant if latent fear of the ungovernable feelings and emotions of the body. She plunged herself into a philosophical whirlpool where real and reality, real and unreal, are set off against one another merely as states of mind, as "Each world whilst it is attended to is real after its own fashion; only the reality lapses with the attention" (James 2:293). Real and unreal, belief and disbelief, are two faces of the same coin as seen by James that, "Disbelief is…an incidental complication to belief" (2:284). It is by believing in one thing that makes one disbelieve in its contradiction. And therefore, according to James, the opposite of belief is not disbelief but doubt. Have we, just like Katharine Hilbery in Night and Day, in our belief in absolute certainties promised by the concrete law of mathematics or the movement of the stars, come to "underrate the value of that emotion"—namely love, whose overwhelming power is exalted through the plays of Shakespeare (ND 307)? The thread of this Shakespearian theme runs throughout Night and Day, accompanied by the rationalism of Mozart's music echoing in the background. The Shakespearian theme pronounces not only the motif of love, but also (as Night and Day constantly alludes to As You Like It) how ideas, beliefs, and perceptions are subjected to change in accordance with one's feelings and

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[40] James 2: 288.

emotions. As Woolf has come to recognise in A Room of One's Own, creative androgyny is what 'the Bard' has bequeathed to his descendants and to the civilisation in whose heart he stands. The greatest creative mind at its incandescent point is a perfect integration of sense and sensibility and a full display of both feminine and masculine qualities. Shakespeare continues to haunt Woolf's writings though, as Julia Briggs has noted, Woolf never actually approached the great poet directly in her critical essays.[41] Yet, his words, his images, linger through her fictional works and resonate with her motifs in acknowledging the constant presence of a subjective integrity through the correlation of the mind and the body.

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[41] Julia Briggs, "Virginia Woolf Reads Shakespeare: or, Her Silence on Master William," Reading Virginia Woolf. In most of her novels, Woolf has endowed a particular Shakespearian allusion or imagery.

III

Androgyny as the True State of Being

> The mind is certainly a very mysterious organ, I reflected,...about which nothing whatever is known, though we depend upon it so completely. Why do I feel that there are severances and oppositions in the mind, as there are strains from obvious causes on the body? What does one mean by 'the unity of the mind'?
>
> A Room of One's Own

Androgyny, a full embodiment of Woolf's aesthetic idea, is not just the epitome of her artistic pursuit of life-writing but also an apotheosis of her feminist claims. Through the metaphor of androgyny, Woolf construed a descriptive imagery of a more truthful state of being which has long been misrepresented and camouflaged beneath the prevailing concepts of Cartesian dualism and the Kantian idealism of a Transcendental Ego. Androgyny represents Woolf's primal argument that real being and living is built upon an intact coordination of mind and body; reason and feeling. Every work of Woolf, as it strives to depict the formation of subjectivity and the emergence of self through the feeling of feelings, exemplifies and embodies a narrative of androgyny. Woolf's idea of androgyny is not simply that of a balance between equivalent and complementary characteristics of masculinity and femininity, but instead more an attempt to reify the harmonised orchestration of different tiers and states of consciousness in a healthy mind.

The stream of thought or consciousness in the individual mind is initially brought together and directed by a feeling of self—a pressure or intensity felt within as suggested by William James—which is conceptualised as the core self in the more recent accounts of neurophysiologists such as Antonio Damasio. Underneath Woolf's narrative, "the nucleus of the 'me' is always the bodily existence felt to be present at the time"; by the continuous depiction of feelings, the concealed body discloses its

presence (James 1:400).[1] Grounded in feelings of each moment, subjectivity is nevertheless metamorphic and apt to vary continuously. Still, threaded by feelings, an intrinsic grounding in a core self sustains the continuity of a consistent selfhood. A manifold as well as a continuous self is therefore constitutive of the nature of being. Woolf's fictional narratives often provide a spectrum of all possible selves, displaying a variant degree of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' multiplied within one being (ranging from the definite 'I' designated by the symbolic order of the Name-of-the-Father to a cluster of watery feelings of simply being-there).[2] The duplicity of a multiplied but nevertheless congruous selfhood is most conspicuously demonstrated by The Waves where we have six distinct voices of different characters that gradually converge into one voice of Bernard, and also through Orlando's portrait of different transitions and developments within one self.

Seemingly, Woolf was seeking in narrative an experiment to justify whether the manifold is actually within the mind, in thoughts, or in Reality.[3] Perhaps, as Woolf implied, it is neither fully in one nor the other, but an intermingling result of the self's interactions with the world. A multiplied selfhood emerges out of the subjective feelings kindled by external objects, and yet a compound of variant perceptions of the external object is unified through the subject. Since to feel is to know, all perceptions and knowledge are nevertheless shaded with subjective feelings. Even in abstract symbols of numbers and words, the sense of reality is not imparted through the knowledge of the external world alone but intrinsically felt in the body. Woolf had contemplated what it means to write about people's relation to reality in A Room. People relate to the world and its reality differently, as shown through the discrepancy between Orlando's admiration of Nature's beauty and the Gypsies' apprehensiveness towards its cruelty. Or as in The Waves, each of the six individual characters adopts to

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[1] James uses 'me' in referring to the empirical self. James 1:371.
[2] See also Beer 41 and Havelock Ellis's Studies in the Psychology of Sex (1905). Woolf noted in a 1926 diary entry expressing her interest in reading Havelock Ellis. See WD 95.
[3] James 1:363.

the real world in variant ways as they develop divergent perceptions and formulate reality through different vocabularies, enacting a "narrative play" that might help them to conceptualise the world as it appears to each of them.[4] Initial perspectival descriptions indicate for each a personal adaptation to the world. Bernard, as a novelist of little phrases, sees a form that engenders flexibility as well as possibility, resembling Woolf's 'luminous halo': "I see a ring…hanging above me. It quivers and hangs in a loop of light" (W 5). Although, similarly, Neville, the poet and the classicist, sees "a globe…hanging down in a drop against the enormous flanks of some hill," already he shows a tendency to perceive a human life reified in a grand and resolute epic stance (5). The slab of yellow and the purplish background conjure up a sense of an earthly terrain, betraying an innate maternal nature in Susan. Jinny, who turns out to be all-sensual and bodily, sees "a crimson tassel…twisted with gold thread" that immediately tantalises one's sensory nerves (5). Louis, who is preoccupied with genealogical inheritance, hears the stamping of the chained beast. Eventually, Rhoda, as a watery nymph who is unable to cling onto any form, hears simply the fluctuating sounds of "cheep, chirp; cheep, chirp; going up and down" (5).

Like James, Woolf suggests that the flow of the 'I,' from fluid to solid, consists of different levels of neuro-psychological states that converge into a general flow of consciousness, sustaining the organism's subjectivity. Aiming at a full presentation of the character's subjective reality, the social and the objective world is painted with the variant feelings and emotions of its observers and percipients in Woolf's narrative. Different traits of the self (and Woolf often uses the image of fish to represent such movement) rise to the surface and assert themselves on different occasion. As in Mrs. Dalloway, Clarissa, walking across London to buy her flowers, is compelled to recognise the stirring of a 'brutal monster' in her, as Miss Kilman's relation to Elizabeth is brought to mind by Clarissa's delight in window shopping, in the thought of gloves and shoes and then the thought of Miss Kilman's likely disapproval and

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[4] Nussbaum 238

social envy. The narrative genuinely portrays a manifold Clarissa who, with each turn of a corner (in both bodily situation as well as thoughts), unfolds different characteristics. With diverse streams of feeling, variant characteristics are conjured:

> these selves of which we are built up, one on top of another, as plates are piled on a waiter's hand, have attachments elsewhere, sympathies, little constitutions and rights of their own, call them what you will (and for many of these things there is no name) so that one will only come if it is raining, another in a room with green curtains,...and so on. (O 212-3)

The manifold selves are facets of an unnameable yet protean, 'Key self.' The "multi-dimensional quality of self" is therefore fertilised through the narrative presentation that "the self is *felt*" and in and through feelings the self is sustained (Richter 113; James 1:298). By portraying feeling as the essential executor of the selves within a singular subject entity, Woolf linked the 'soul,' the Cartesian 'I,' back to its substantial ground in the body, and therefore achieved an androgynous subjectivity that thinks concurrently with its bodily feelings.

The idea of androgyny is a pertinent description of the most fundamental and natural state of being as the conscious, rational, mind (traditionally viewed as a masculine quality) evolves from and remains finally grounded in the organism of the body its feelings and emotions (traditionally associated with the feminine). Androgyny depicts metaphorically a state of being which integrates fully body with mind and thereby indicates rationality as thoroughly underpinned by feeling. It is the 'unity-emotion' which Roger Fry regarded as what "supervenes upon a process of pure mechanical reasoning" in science and in art "a process of which emotion has all along been an essential concomitant" (73).[5] As scientists, logicians, and mathematicians seek in symbols a resolution which aims to liberate the soul from its body, they often forget that their thoughts and inspirations, as suggested by Fry, are governed by intuitions supported by feelings of unity and harmony beyond logical and

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[5] Roger Fry, "Art and Science," Vision and Design.

formal terms.[6] When Fry, in the light of aesthetic reception and appraisal, emphasises feeling rather than Cartesian 'seeing,' Damasio, with the modern insight into the brain also contends that the sensory body provides the essential ground reference for the mind: "Emotion, feeling, and biological regulation all play a role in human reason. The lowly orders of our organism are in the loop of high reason" (Descartes' xxiii). And it is this loop of both 'lowly orders' and 'high reason' to which the metaphor of androgyny alludes. In stressing and recognising the intuitive base of knowledge and the intelligence of emotions, androgyny does not defy the value of logical reasoning in 'theoretical understanding of the world' which works towards "a certain liberation from the life of instinct, and even, at times, a certain aloofness from all mundane hopes and fears" (Russell, Knowledge 36). But androgyny does seek to accredit the sentient constituents of a rational mind which has been estranged from its organic base.

Focussing on the narratives of the autobiographical memory, especially the mental property that directly contributes to our sense of self and identity, it seems inevitable, argues Martha Nussbaum, that we foreground the involvement of linguistic cognition in the formation of selfhood. However, the case of Phineas Gage, discussed by Damasio in Descartes' Error, suggestively subverts the importance of language in the existence of consciousness and the constitution of a consistent selfhood, since the change of Gage's character and behaviour did not involve any language impairment.[7] The intricate co-relation and mutual responses set up between the mechanism of the organic brain and the thoughts and feelings that build up the 'self' makes it quite impossible to discern the state of consciousness before the involvement of language. Although Nussbaum uses signifiers to indicate the different attitude and emotional responses towards a relationship pronoun such as 'mum' (especially with the inclusion of possessive case as 'my mum') and a formal address as 'Mrs.__,' one might also

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[6] Fry 69-74. See also Russell, Knowledge 29-36.
[7] Damasio, Descartes' 21-22.

argue against her that the attachment feelings for a 'mum' are not simply in language, as suggested through the cases of Capgras syndrome where the patient fails to recognise intimate relations and acquaintances as a result of disconnection between visual, sensory and emotional responses.[8] The feelings of warmth for a mother must surely be there before the attachment of the word 'mum.'

Perchance, the perplexity could be slightly unravelled by discerning the Freudian (linguistically structured) unconscious apart from the neurological subconscious. In the subconscious realm, the received stimuli are not immediately registered in linguistic form and the core self is simply vaguely known through a sense of feeling. It is undeniable that a pre-linguistic subjectivity is already formed through such waves of feelings. Nevertheless, it is through symbols and social languages that the mind conceptualises, appropriates and registers the ideas formed out of the new stimuli. Under its multi-layered construction, consciousness starts to develop its subjective autonomy and to conjecture a self-identity apart from its physical status, the organic source that it has hidden away. Despite Steven Pinker's contention that language plays a tremendous role in our conceptualisation of the world and of ideas, what substantiates and holds together the sense of selfhood are the feelings which are fundamentally "the 'momentary view' of a part of that body landscape" (Damasio, Descartes' xxv).[9] In a comical caricature of the nature of the human subject, Nietzsche writes in his essay "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense" in 1873 (years ahead of the psychoanalytical practice of Freud and Lacan):

> What does man actually know about himself? Is he, indeed, ever able to perceive himself completely, as if laid out in a lighted displayed case? Does nature not conceal most things from him—even concerning his own body—in order to confine and lock him within a proud, deceptive consciousness, aloof from the coils of the bowels, the rapid flow of the blood stream, and the intricate quivering of the fibres! She threw away the

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[8] Ramachandran, Emerging 1-26.

[9] Steven Pinker, The Stuff of Thought: Language as A Window into Human Nature (London: Penguin, 2007).

key. (115)

Already Nietzsche recognised the body which consciousness has hidden away as the 'lost object' that the subject is continually searching for.[10] As the subjective centre remains in a void without a substantial core, symbols and language become its sole bulwark and therefore "the symbol's order can no longer be conceived of there as constituted by man but must rather be conceived of as constituting him" (Lacan 34). In the Logos, one has made a dwelling-place (as described by Rhoda by placing the square upon the oblong) to symbolise the missing substance and to embody life. "This is our triumph; this is our consolation," as though what 'seems' has become the only possibility of what there actual 'is' (W 123). And if life lives in signs alone, which is probably what Rhoda has recognised through the death of Percival, she needs no longer fear bodily dispersal.

The concealment of the body seems to allow the mind full autonomy to recreate itself and exercise itself in abstractions so that it re-conjugates its own reality and identity apart from the body. A split and a gap eventually remain in such a reality and identity that is unbounded from its body and formulated through the Name-of-the-Father. *Cogito ergo sum*—does the 'I' come before the flow of the thought? Or, does it form out of the stream of thought? As Woolf and her characters constantly question, where does thought begin? Perhaps, as Sarah has suggested in The Years, the thought that constitutes or simply suggests the selfhood of 'I' springs from the periphery of the sensory nerves of one's body—"In the feet?" (97). Since it is through feelings and thoughts that the existence of an I is conjectured, by naming it with a fixed identity, it comes into existence. The conjecture of a fixed selfhood, 'I,' could be related to the Lacanian concept that the Name-of-the-Father is founded upon an absent *cogito* and, therefore, it is with the imposing of the symbolic order that the

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[10] Lacan refers in the "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'" collected in Écrits that the Freudian notion of "the Ψ system, a predecessor of the unconscious, manifests its originality therein, in that it is unable to satisfy itself except by *refinding an object that has been fundamentally lost* [author's emphasis]" (34).

absent centre is signified and conceptualised. However, the presumably absent centre is not altogether a non-existence but rather a non-concentric diffusion that could not otherwise be fully comprehended and designated.[11] And it is precisely this primordial condition of subjective existence which is fundamentally ungraspable yet undeniable that the idea of androgyny seeks to embrace: an absent presence or present absence.

The body, though absent from conscious thought, nevertheless underpins and conducts its flow. With the re-acknowledgement of the body, the psychological estrangement and the inner split that pertains to the inconsistency between the imago of the mind and the real body might be finally expelled. Joanne A. Wood also construes an affinity between the idea of Neutral Monism, proposed by Bertrand Russell, and Woolf's concerns to re-integrate bodily experiences into the working of consciousness, and Woolf's narrative is thus understood as an attempt at 'physical' rehabilitation.[12] Laura Doyle comments that Woolf's narrative is an attempt at a re-configuration through the body of the emptiness at the heart of life, an attempt to relocate abstract thoughts through material objects.[13] In short, the narrative re-attributes to the body what the body has already brought about in consciousness. The objective landscape drawn by Woolf's narrative is permeated with subjective feelings. As in The Years, the gloomy despair and the jollity of hope of the characters are mirrored in the description of the London ambience in the interludes. With "an uncertain spring," the narrative of The Years immediately reflects the incertitude borne within the hearts of the characters as they wait around the deathbed of the mother (3). Seasonal descriptions are but projections of interior conditions. Therefore, a hot midsummer night reflects the dreamy complexity of Eleanor, whose life is just beginning.

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[11] Judith Ryan, "The Vanishing Subject: Empirical Psychology and the Modernist Novel," PMLA 95.5 (1980): 863.

[12] Joanne A Wood, "Lighthouse Bodies: The Neutral Monism of Virginia Woolf and Bertrand Russell," Journal of the History of Ideas 55.3 (1994): 482-502.

[13] Laura Doyle, "'These Emotions of the Body': Intercorporeal Narrative in To the Lighthouse," Twentieth Century Literature 40.1 (1994): 42-71.

In Woolf's narrative, objects are imbued with the personal feelings and emotions of the characters. With Jacob's Room, immediately the reader is introduced to a world immersed in the tears and sorrows of Mrs. Flanders. The lighthouse and the bay are wobbling and quivering, distorted by the tears imposing themselves between the subjective mind and the external world. As the night begins to fall and the tide is coming in, Jacob, who wanders away alone, starts to feel petrified by a sense of being lost. A kind of mirage world is presented through his terrors as he is misled by such projections onto the outer world of his inner horror and his longings for security. Thus, a rock wrapped with seaweed is mis-recognised as 'Nanny.' Running towards the rock for security, a feeling of betrayal comes up in him as the reality of external objects reveals and reasserts itself. In despair, Jacob re-invests his dependency by projecting onto the skull—an object of solidity that offers the final security and being and protectiveness of non-existence. However, the projected subjective feelings are not always recognised by the characters themselves, since the symbolic-constructed 'I' often fails to acknowledge its own body and feelings.

Woolf's enquiry into 'Reality' of both the internal and the external world is also a question about the arbitrary division between the objective and the subjective world. In her narrative, they are perfectly blended through the indirect discourse of a de-personalised narrator whose consciousness and voice, as J. Hillis Miller suggests, depend on those of the characters, positioning the narrator in the role of Echo (who without words of her own, still interposes her own judgemental value through the words of others).[14] Despite the inward turn into consciousness, Woolf's modernist experimentation does not negate the body and the body's experience as a physical being.

The concept of androgyny should not be taken solely to mean a masculine and/or feminine orientation or sexual politics, but rather might be reconceived as a

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[14] J. Hillis Miller, "Mrs. Dalloway: Repetition as the Raising of the Dead," Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982) 176-202.

reconfiguration of the traditional mind/body (mind/matter; self/other) dualism. Androgyny, plausibly, is an attempt to reach beyond the Cartesian subject (beyond the imposition of the 'I' which is symbolically transfixed) towards a bodily grounded being. It is an ideal which aims to restore the sense of being and of one's understanding of the process of life to its most essential form, in which the self is no longer a singular, consistent, and concentrated entity, but rather diffusive and translucent. The 'I,' the 'uncircumscribed spirit,' which Woolf had been pursuing, is intrinsic to the organism's process of feeling and knowing its existence in the world, as opposed to the projected self-images that are refracted through the image and gaze of others: the socially-conceptualised 'I.' Often Woolf's male characters display a masculine insistence upon a consistent, stabilised 'I,' while female figures achieve the 'I' in its most inner and essential quality by simply feeling and being amongst the flux of time.[15] In spite of the fact that the self is naturally and essentially an impalpable entity, the act of resolutely holding onto the 'I' emerges in her work as a construction of Western masculinity which is threatened by the elusiveness of 'feminine' being in all its fluidity and formlessness. The essential state of being-in-itself that pre-exists a self-reflexive consciousness is constantly obscured and blocked by the 'I' of the being-for-itself.[16] The Suffrage movement (perhaps all human rights movements) aroused anxiety about the nature of subjectivity, since the ego is fundamentally a socially constructed imago and is founded through the reflection of the image of the other. The self here is only to be known through the other.

At the *fin-de-siècle,* the heated debates on sexual equality of the Suffrage movement provoked late Victorian society to become even more anxious to maintain the gender boundary that was seemingly on the verge of collapse. Society was

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[15] "'Being' in novels by Proust, Faulkner, Joyce, and Woolf was elusive and contingent, never fixed and often fragmented, yet full and buoyant, because it was caught up in the phenomenological flux of time" (Doyle 44).

[16] "Sartre assumes the essential deadness of objects and focuses his philosophy on a distinction between being-for-itself (humans with consciousness) and being-in-itself ('mere' objects or animals), exhorting humans to denounce mere in-itself existences and forge meaning for-themselves. Merleau-Ponty, by contrast, explores the ways in which our *in*-itselfness in conjunction with the in-itselfness of the object world contains the means for constructing worlds for-ourselves" (Doyle 47).

vehemently against equality between the sexes and insisted on the continued polarisation of gender roles. "No age can ever have been as stridently sex-conscious as our own" (ARO 89). In Woolf's view, as women pleaded for equality, they also provoked a consciousness of sexual identity which fatally imperilled the spontaneity of creative writing by bringing sexual differences so into focus that a gender-conscious 'I' inevitably prevailed: falling across the page in defence of its virility or (in the case of a feminist) shouting the virtues of femininity. Such practices potentially destroy those intrinsic parts of the self that exceed the demarcation of gender difference. For Woolf reckoned that the consciously incited awareness of sexual difference and inequality might gradually be submerged into a background and nonconscious state. However, conversely, such awareness might simply constitute "persisting conditions that are often unnoticed partly on account of their pervasiveness" and thereby the involvement of these emotional states in one's judgement is undeniable (Nussbaum 71). As Woolf has observed in A Room, female writing is often crippled by a rust in the heart at having constantly struggle with no outlet for a recognition of talents. Whilst in the egotistic writings of men, the anger of the male towards the female is everywhere to be seen.[17] Identifying anger as a masculine aggressiveness, A Room makes an effort to avoid its own emotion of anger through its prevailing jocular tone. With the character Rose, in The Years, Woolf imparts her stance that the violence that rises out of anger and spite should be equally criticised in a woman as in a man, even in a supporter of the Suffrage movement who promotes the rights of women. "Force is always wrong" as Kitty repeatedly asserts (Y 132). Literary works which incite or carry anger towards the other sex, as Woolf argues, lack suggestive power. They are unable to provoke communal recognition and fusion, for they are produced with the purpose of self-assertion.

Just as the two polarised sexes are wrestling in the world, combating each other for social identity and position, the 'masculine' and 'feminine' parts of the mind are

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[17] ARO 92.

also driven by the social insistence on being rational and on competition for status and authority. The bipolar disorder (formerly known as manic-depressive disorder) from which Woolf suffered the torments of body and mind is often suggested by critics, such as Nancy Bazin, to be the embodiment of her personal strife in struggling not only against the egoism which she inherited from her father, but also a female, self-effacing, identity dominated by the image of her submissive mother.[18] Seeing herself as the "heiress to two very different and in fact opposed traditions," Woolf was tormented mentally as well as bodily by "these two rival streams dashed together and flowed confused but not harmonised in her blood" (qtd. in Showalter, Literature 265). For as a writer, like Neville in The Waves, Woolf must be able to give form to, in order to 'crystallise,' the moment. Yet, to be creative she has to be, like Bernard the novelist, porous and boundless. Woolf's narrative sought to peer through the text blocked by her own egotistic 'I,' to attain a dispersive but not submissive subjectivity as a fundamental state of being.

Both her parents and their respective values had haunted Woolf throughout her life, twisting her one way and another, until she came to write To the Lighthouse as a means of expiating these feelings. She had resented the demands of her father, yet seen herself, like her father, as wilful. She too, like Mr. Ramsay, yearned perpetually for maternal love and attention. In To the Lighthouse, Woolf has Mr. Ramsay drawing continuously the energy from the maternal body of Mrs. Ramsay. As Mr. Ramsay comes to his wife and son to seek sympathy and to draw from her a sense of vitality, James actually feels "all her [Mrs. Ramsay's] strength flaring up to be drunk and quenched by the beak of brass, the arid scimitar of the male, which smote mercilessly, again and again, demanding sympathy" (43). Being comforted and reassured by his wife, Mr. Ramsay "drops off satisfied," leaving his wife, who sits in complete exhaustion and attempts to "fold herself together, one petal closed in another" (44). The maternal body is described as a source of life that is offered passively and

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[18] Nancy Topping Bazin, Virginia Woolf and the Androgynous Vision (New Jersey: Rutgers UP, 1973).

unreservedly to the demands of men who will incorporate it into their own achievement of selfhood. As a female writer, Woolf had to seek within for that feminine source of life energy and to nurture her creative power in a dissolution of the self, whilst, at the same time, she had to contract, to cling onto the egoistic drive for self-assertion, in order to produce and write with an aim of being recognised. By revisiting her long-lost childhood and confronting the ambiguous feelings towards her parents, Woolf, like Lily Briscoe, could only pacify the ghosts haunting her mind by recognising a mid-point (not simply upon the canvas or amidst the narrative but also within herself) which both marked a distinction but also served as a connection and unifier between the presumptive masculine aspect of self-assertion and the feminine tendency to flow and dissolve.

In A Room of One's Own, the female narrator, citing Samuel Taylor Coleridge, pronounces that "a great mind is androgynous" (88). In her opinion, what Coleridge means by 'androgynous' is not simply sympathy with women's minds but rather a mind that has the capacity to absorb and express feelings and emotions freely and spontaneously: "He meant, perhaps, that the androgynous mind is resonant and porous; that it transmits emotion without impediment; that it is naturally creative, incandescent and undivided" (89). "The normal and comfortable state of being is that when the two live in harmony together, spiritually co-operating" (88). No struggle would there be in denying or suppressing one's feelings and emotions in order to sustain one's masculinity as a man or to abjure the conventional image of femininity; no personal spite, nor grudge against the social system of the world or the conventional gender assumptions of others, would persist to preoccupy one's mind. On the contrary, by recognising that being is naturally fluid and gender characteristics are socially instituted notions, one becomes capable of establishing a self which is fully at ease with its inborn fluidity and without need therefore for any constant assertion of the 'I': a public pronouncement of the subject's existence, whether as a man or as a woman; a roaring plea for recognition. As illustrated in To the Lighthouse, Lily could not

possibly paint if the voice of Charles Tansley continued constantly to intrude, provoking her egoistic defences. Lily's final brush-stroke down the canvas is a line of unification and delimitation: the line cleaves in both sense of the word.

In an attempt to write and create, Orlando construes, through the imagery of submersion into an unnameable infinity, the self-dissolution in a creative act which bears so much resemblance to Mrs. Ramsay's sinking into the wedge-shaped core of darkness within herself:

> Sunk for a long time in profound thoughts as to the value of obscurity, and the delight of having no name, but being like a wave which returns to the deep body of the sea; thinking how obscurity rids the mind of the irk of envy and spite; how it sets running in the veins the free waters of generosity and magnanimity; and allows giving and taking without thanks offered or praise given; which must have been the way of all great poets, he supposed … for, he thought, Shakespeare must have written like that,… anonymously, needing no thanking or naming. (O 72)

When Orlando mocks the superficial nature of conventional biography and the fictional invention of gender identity, it also questions the entire network of social and cultural values that seeks to attach a definite framework to one's self. By bringing the entire socio-cultural system under question, Woolf deconstructed the very idea of an authority that defines and yet confines the self. But she also exposed the anxiety attached to being left floating amongst uncertainties as these original foundations are demolished. The gesture of decomposition of the original authority (the very basis upon which identity is built) is as perilous as self-annihilating. For though restriction, on the one hand, means limitation, on the other hand, it provides a definite boundary and upholstery for the definition and support of the self. Limitation protects one from the panic which arises as one is exposed to uncertainties.

The wedge-shaped core of darkness with which Mrs. Ramsay feels at ease could hardly be appreciated and understood by the other characters. Mrs. Ramsay is a mystery to everyone. The wedge-shaped core into which she has sunk provides her

with an inexhaustible depth. By forsaking an insistence upon 'I,' she is fathomless, formless, and limitless. She has retained every possibility by simply being 'herself'—an impersonal 'self'—in the sense of being free from any social role. She is both intelligible and unapproachable for Lily Briscoe, because it would be impossible to achieve the intimacy which Lily longs for, unless she would first relinquish her insistence upon distinguishing herself as a female artist who is able to paint. Both Charles Tansley and Lily Briscoe are much fascinated by Mrs. Ramsay because, like Mr. Ramsay, they are both passionately concerned with how to locate themselves within the social domain and they fight fervently against any counterforce that seeks to diminish their external identity. As they both cling tightly to an 'I,' Lily feels that it is hard to get along with Charles Tansley, because his subjectivity is so much built upon the negation and exclusion of others.

While the insistence of an egoistic 'I' is often taken as a masculine mannerism, Showalter distinguishes self-annihilation as the hallmark of female aestheticism.[19] For Showalter, the self-annihilation of 'female' writing like Woolf's represents not the discovery of a 'true' self, but a suicidal obliteration of selfhood. The immersion into the dark, psychological depths, and the feelings of dissolution experienced by Mrs. Ramsay and Mrs. Dalloway, are therefore taken by Showalter not as a female discovery of authentic identity but as a female renunciation of subjectivity under the pressure of an oppressive Victorian patriarchy. However, as carefully examined by Patricia Waugh, the wedge-shaped core of darkness "may be a form of liberation from the violences of a constructed and unified ego" (Practising 117). If one perceives consciousness and selfhood as a multilayered construction, then the dissolving of a socially imposed self-identity is not necessarily a self-annihilation but rather a further quest for an essential subjectivity beyond the instituted social identity that pre-exists the mind-body split.

In his sketch of the building of consciousness, Damasio places creativity and

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[19] Showalter, Sexual Anarchy (London: Virago-Little, Brown and Company, 1992) 250.

conscience above the construction of autobiographical selfhood, thereby echoing Woolf's idea of the honeycomb. Built upon autobiographical consciousness, creativity and conscience attain to an objectivity that incorporates the essential core consciousness that evolves out of a bodily context. The dissolution of the egotistic 'I' is in fact the means of transcending the autobiographical self and liberating incandescent creativity. Only with the dissolution of the socially constructed 'I,' could one possibly reach an objective view of the very essence of selfhood concealed behind egotistic self-concerns. Mrs. Ramsay's immersion in the wedge-shaped core of darkness is both a "losing of personality" as well as "being oneself" (69-70). When one particular identity is assumed, other possibilities within the self are inevitably nullified. Therefore, only through the dissolution of the constructed social selfhood, could one regain the wholeness of oneself. For a woman, to assume a social identity, as a wife and a mother, compromises identity, forcing her to disown her feelings of the body. In such detachment, the body is reduced to nothingness and Clarissa is no longer Clarissa but 'Mrs. Dalloway.'[20] Clarissa's identity is therefore fixed by the social context, displacing and abolishing whatever innate self she has borne. She is forced to abdicate the reality of her own body. As the body becomes estranged from the heart-felt sensorium and becomes rather a symbol within the social context, Clarissa nevertheless feels herself to be a detached perceiver of herself, while ironically the detachment from the body subverts the being of the self as an objective perceiver. With the denial of the body, the 'I' that has endlessly pursued a way out of its body could not possibly persist and eventually fades out into nothingness. Clarissa's own sense of subjective reality is negated through the abdication of the sensoriness of her female body. Instead of Clarissa, she assumes a social identity detached from her own bodily sense of self.

Androgyny is also a metaphorical statement of a balance between a life-drive towards socially-identified selfhood and the death-drive towards self-dissolution and

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[20] MD 11.

yet a fuller embrace of the self. One without the other would be death itself. Being discharged of her maternal obligation as the children are taken to bed and, finding herself alone, Mrs. Ramsay can finally gather her energies and be nothing more than simply herself. By sinking into the wedge-shaped core of darkness, "this self having shed its attachments was free for the strangest adventures" (TL 69). This shedding of social symbolism (which Mrs. Ramsay sees as her "apparitions") and sinking into the body, provides an inverse account to that of Clarissa's disclaiming of her female body (TL 69). Mrs. Ramsay sees that only as "a wedge of darkness" could one possibly find absolute tranquillity (69-70). However, in accompaniment to the renunciation of social identity, she becomes thoroughly 'objectified' and 'de-personalised.' As she says, she has become "the thing she looked at—that light for example" (TL 70). By being herself, wrapping up her subjectivity fully within herself, ironically she ceases to be a recognised subject, but instead a mirroring object, without trace of perceivable subjectivity. She has negated her social subjectivity and with such thoroughgoing negation, "There appears to be no identity, no autonomous self" (Waugh, Practising 117). The full immersion into the intrinsic flow of bodily feelings paradoxically 'disembodies' her in relation to factual life. In the view of others, she becomes remote, aloof, and without life. As she sinks down into the darkness, she is fully herself, yet a self deprived of social, objective, reality.

"The forgetting of Being is a part of the very essence of being," says Martin Heidegger (qtd. in Doyle 45). To be fully oneself without self-conscious reflection on the world's opinion and the gaze of others is to be in a state of incandescence. It is what Mrs. Ramsay has come to achieve as she sinks into the wedge-shaped core feeling the 'self' dissolving. The self is no longer defined by any social and gender roles nor through the reflection of others, but, though fluid and formless, a condition of selfhood is nevertheless felt, unswervingly and profoundly, as the pulsing of life and the stimulation of feeling. The self has now ceased to perceive itself from one, and only one, perspective (it has transcended its autobiographical self), and therefore feels

itself unbound from social definition to achieve infinite being. This infinite subjectivity, instead of being self-bound, is more adaptable to the objective world: "if I can perceive it simultaneously from more than one perspective," "I can perceive something objectively" (McCleary xvii).[21] It is the 'I' without the need of a definition—the 'I' of the core consciousness before it is woven into the texture of autobiographical memory; yet it is also an 'I' that is capable of standing outside itself, perceiving itself no longer simply through its own autobiographical memory. No concrete boundary is needed to secure this 'I.' Whether the 'I' displays by nature what we come to designate (in the conventional terminology) as masculine or feminine features, it is not as a result of socio-cultural constraints. This is what Lily Briscoe has learnt through conjuring the 'spirit' of Mrs. Ramsay and what enables her to finish her painting. She has been combating masculine demands, even her own 'masculine' pride urging her to sustain her 'self' as a painter and artist, and her self-consciousness of the socio-cultural 'male gaze.' First of all she must learn to feel freely and then she needs to be able to reflect on her feelings and to attend to an objective understanding of them as the self stands back from itself (the very process of artistic creation in Woolf's view). Through the image of Mrs. Ramsay, Lily's grip on the 'I' is loosened. She must dissolve her 'self' and its obsessions before she can re-connect with the deceased Mrs. Ramsay and only then can she empathise with the 'otherness' of Mrs. Ramsay's grieving husband and begin the process of propinquity and detachment which might produce truly creative art.

In A Literature of Their Own, Showalter (whose feminist insistence on a category of innate femaleness is still anchored in conventional sexual ideology) critically remarked that androgyny is an inhuman and unattainable utopia which Woolf adopted to evade her uneasiness about the sensations of her own female body. She wrote, after reviewing the works of Dorothy Richardson, "how much better it would

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[21] Richard C. McCleary, Preface, Signs, by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1960; Northwestern UP, 1964) xvii. Originally wording: "I can perceive something objectively only if I can perceive it simultaneously from more than one perspective."

have been if [female artists] could have forgiven themselves, if they could have faced the anger instead of denying it, could have translated the consciousness of their own darkness into confrontation instead of struggling to transcend it" (Showalter, Literature 262). Yet, even after such a reflection, she continues to denounce Woolf's idea of androgyny without realising that her former conclusion is a literary kindred spirit to what Woolf is trying to illuminate in A Room. In Showalter's words, "Androgyny was the myth that helped [Woolf] evade confrontation with her own painful femaleness and enabled her to choke and repress her anger and ambition" (Literature 264). But Woolf did not deny her anger against injustice, she simply refused to comply with the violences of a patriarchal society. In comic spirit, Woolf sought to expel altogether the masculine property of anger and the capacity of the egoistic 'I' to dominate her mind and her creativity. Instead of fighting with force, she ridiculed masculine megalomania as an expression of the immense insecurity within men (as in the character of Mr. Ramsay who is "venerable and laughable at one and the same time") (TL 51). Woolf did not judge, but instead assumed the pose of a detached analyst who simply reveals the absurdity of present realities and beliefs.

In responding to Toril Moi's defence of Woolf and her androgyny idea, Showalter states that the aim of her study in A Literature of Their Own is not the textuality of women's writing, but the relationship between the dominant and the muted culture: how they are valued; how it is possible for the minor culture to develop a standard and tradition of its own. Such a concern seems to be in close parallel to what Woolf had advocated throughout A Room: the need to create a room where the private feminine self, instead of being beaten into conformity, would have a chance to grow and flourish (within an oppressive male culture) according to its own nature. According to Showalter, her criticism of Woolf and her opposition to the idea of androgyny should not be approached through philosophical or linguistic methods, as Toril Moi has suggested in her Sexual/Textual Politics (which argues against Showalter's criticism of Woolf through the Post-Structuralist ideas of Derrida and

Kristeva, rather than Showalter's standpoint in cultural anthropology and social history). Yet, Showalter ventures to suggest that Woolf has conformed to the traditional image of a "melancholy, guilt-ridden, suicidal" woman (Literature 264). Such an accusation betrays Showalter as embodying her own inheritance of the patriarchal ideology of *the female malady*. Although, in the end, Woolf still surrendered to death (fearing that her mental illness would eventually overwhelm her sanity), her suicidal act might be seen, like Septimus's, to be propelled by the patriarchal authority of medicine that threatened her sense of integrity.[22] Perhaps, like Septimus, her self-annihilation was an effort to preserve the precious treasure: the autonomous self free from the constraint of social authority. "Death was defiance," defiance against the socio-cultural constraints on selfhood (MD 202). "Death was an attempt to communicate"; to reach the centre which seems to be unattainable in the socio-contextualised life (202).

To write as a woman who has forgotten she is a woman is not a suppression of her femininity and her female experience.[23] Instead, to forget thoroughly, to reach beyond a consciousness split by the egotistic insistence on the 'I' and to transcend the female plight, the woman artist must immerse herself in the darkness in order to feel deeply her own inner conflicts, to learn her troubling thoughts and then to dissolve her distress and anxiety along with a socially constructed subjectivity. To write as a woman is not necessarily to write with the white ink of milk: the female body need not (and should not!) be solely identified as the body of motherhood. As a woman, Woolf might not have experienced the process of reproduction that all women of her time were expected to experience if they were to be regarded fully as 'women,' yet that does not make her claim to write as a woman less authentic. Woolf did not reject femininity. What she rejected was the feminine self governed by masculine values and

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[22] Once, on the edge of a nervous breakdown, Woolf noted in her diary: "Thought of my own power of writing with veneration, as of something incredible, belonging to someone else; never to be enjoyed by me" (WD 94).

[23] ARO 92.

the ideology of her patriarchal society. It is not a natural inborn femininity, but rather a nurtured and instituted identity. Woolf did acknowledge the different qualities and traits of different sexes. What she repudiated was the dominant voice of an overmasculinised society which proscribed the gender role of women.

Showalter's concise definition of androgyny—"full balance and command of an emotional range that includes male and female elements"—does not seem to encompass the full picture which Woolf tried to draw for the idea of androgyny (Literature 263). Androgyny is a figure of speech describing a state of mind. Curiously (or perhaps not so very curiously) it maps onto the neurological accounts of consciousness that posit both a ('masculine') socio-symbolic 'I' (of extended consciousness fabricated along with autobiographical memory, consistent and capable of self-reflexive reasoning) as well as a ('feminine') core self which is impalpable and impregnable and accessed through a dim sense of bodily feelings and yet also intelligible as a "luminous halo" that surrounds one, providing a fundamental sense of *Dasein* (of an unformed 'I' being-there). The mind exists as a perpetually ongoing editorial process of composing a consistent autobiographical selfhood (that one comes to identify as the 'I') expressed through language, while a more basic and intrinsic self seems to subtend this autobiographical self: "the true self, and it is, they say, compact of all the selves we have it in us to be; commanded and locked up by the Captain self, the Key self" (O 214). It is an awareness immersed in feelings; and through its feeling of feelings, the 'self' emerges and persists, sustaining continuity without being fixed. In James's view, "Resemblance among the parts of a continuum of feelings (especially bodily feelings) experienced along with things widely different in all other regards, thus constitutes the real and verifiable 'personal identity' which we feel" (1:336).[24] It is an 'I' that could never be fully defined by the social language within the present socio-cultural context, yet nevertheless, it subsists along with the existence of the body. In narrative, Woolf contrived to catch this 'spirit' of life when it is off-guard. For

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[24] Ryan 861.

James, Woolf and Damasio, this 'spirit' of self is a conglomerated sum of all the half-felt feelings and half-formed thoughts that circulate within one and that the poetic writer might attempt to capture through a non-analytic and thoroughly 'embodied' kind of language.

Androgyny is a descriptive image of what Bernard describes as the double capacity to feel and to reason. As an example of an androgynous selfhood, Bernard, though conceiving of himself to be complex and many, is nonetheless fully himself. "[J]oined to the sensibility of a woman…Bernard possessed the logical sobriety of a man" (W 56). Bernard's flexibility perhaps leaves him without a rigid and constant enclosed frame, but unlike Rhoda, he is not altogether formless. He has no need to hold himself to any framework. Neville, who is rigid and precise, is nevertheless constantly struck with an unintelligible, non-existential, stasis which he calls "stricture," "rigidity," "death among the apple tree" (W 17). It is a projection of an inner desire for order and the meaning of life against the precariousness and contingency of being-in-the-world (as further elucidated through the unworthy death of his personal epic hero—Percival). Instead of combating the essential fluidity and uncertainty of being, Bernard embraces life with all its possibilities and so achieves being in its entirety. He allows himself to feel the current and gush of the bodily emotions and feelings. As Bernard himself has perceived, "something remains floating, unattached" and with his little phrases and storytelling, he liberates himself as well as his listeners from the oppressive restriction of the social present and delivers them into a fantasy world of complete self-autonomy and self-creativity: "when he [Bernard] talks…a lightness comes over one. One floats, too, as if one were that bubble; one is freed; I have escaped, one feels" (W 57; 27). The embrace of the self-obliterating inner darkness (as Mrs. Ramsay has observed) liberates him from the "fret," "hurry" and "stir" of the treacherous life (TL 70). Being compared to Byron, Bernard seems to be a comical reflection of a Byronic hero whose obstinate disregard of any social decorum in the pursuit of selfhood and self-achievement, is in the end simply also a

desire to mingle and merge with others. Seeking life in all its possibilities, he concludes his life-narrative with the claim: "Against you I will fling myself, unvanquished and unyielding, O Death!" (W 228).

Lacking an obstinate and secure sense of form, Bernard is hardly a successful novelist, for he fails to complete any of his stories. In Neville's opinion, Bernard is prevented from determinate actions or definite resolutions because of "his incorrigible moodiness" (W 35). "He is shaded with innumerable perplexities," thinks Neville of Bernard (W 35). As Bernard also realises about himself, his absorption in concrete reality and his tendency to flow with bodily feelings leaves him unable to detach himself from the bodily present into the kind of abstraction that allows words to be finalised through "refrigeration" (W 50). Being always bodily and emotionally involved, his phrases and his novelistic insights are inevitably "dabbling always in warm soluble words" (W 50). His triviality seems to resemble Marcel Proust whose androgynous mind, in Woolf's opinion, possesses more of a feminine quality; and like Dorothy Richardson, he is forever constructing a continual story without an end, and thus contradicting the patriarchal linear history whose meaning lies in its culmination.[25] Bernard seems to symbolise the state of mind that flows freely and undividedly, unharmed by the strife of life and of the world, in perfect consort with itself. Paradoxically, it is this state of mind, with its integrity based upon a flexibility and fluidity, that Woolf has identified as the 'backbone' of a writer.[26] For only under such a state of mind, could one receive the world and life fully and roundly as it is and in return generate through its writing the essence of being.

Proposing the idea of androgyny, Woolf did not seek to abolish the different qualities of men and women, for as she wrote: "It would be a thousand pities if women wrote like men, or lived like men, or looked like men, for if two sexes are quite inadequate, considering the vastness and variety of the world, how should we

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[25] Showalter, Sexual 240-62.
[26] ARO 66.

manage with one only. Ought not education to bring out and fortify the differences rather than the similarities?" (ARO 79). Contrarily, Woolf urged us to seek out our innate differences and to recognise such differences without attaching to them any definitive evaluation or measurement (especially the measurement of the prevailing masculine values of the patriarchal society), for what grounds could we provide for such an evaluation unless we could step out of gender altogether? Society and its cultural values might change and there might come a time when femininity and womanhood would be otherwise defined; a time when "[women] will take part in all the activities and exertions that were once denied them" (ARO 36). They might be in the laboratory doing experiments. They might be in parliament making laws. This time may be approaching, as the narrator reminds its female readers (listeners), for "most of the professions have been open to you for close on ten years now" (ARO 101). The prospect of a new womanhood is similarly advocated in Mrs. Dalloway as Elizabeth Dalloway wanders through London in omnibuses, conceiving the opportunities she might have in the future. Even those jobs which are conventionally designated for women might also be valued differently. When women are struggling with their designated femininity and the social expectation of their womanhood and motherhood, men also are bound by their assumed masculinity. For, as observed in A Room, even when men seem to be in every way superior, they too are angry, judging from their expressed opinions about women. For, as they barely acknowledge but nevertheless emotionally intuit, their superiority might only be secured as long as women remain their inferiors: the master-slave relation is essentially fragile.

Given the topic of women and fiction, the narrative 'I' of A Room goes to the British Library in search of an answer for the true state of a woman in documented historical facts. In an ironical reflection on the topic 'women and fiction,' 'the fictional facts' which men have gathered about women are disclosed through research and documentation catalogued as authoritative truth. But such documents rely on the facts of a female image distortedly drawn by men of power, honour and qualifications.

Either in the apparent fictive narrative of poets and novelists or the concealed fictional quality in the words of historians and biographers, women are portrayed through the gaze, imagination, and ideology of men. The narrator of A Room therefore concludes from her 'factual' research that women would never be offered an equal chance to men, for "Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size" (32). In A Room, by disguising its inquest in the form of a fiction, Woolf tries to reveal the general 'fiction' of the facts written on women and fabricating a womanhood (caught between the virtues of Virgin Mary and the sin of Eve[27]) that must be protected by patriarchal society. "Anything may happen when womanhood has ceased to be a protected occupation" as the narrator of A Room looks forward into future possibilities (36). A Room begins by pondering the given topic of "women and fiction"; the narrative 'I' by offering her idea that "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction," starts with a consideration of the financial circumstances of women (3). Showalter has criticised Woolf for hiding behind a fictional framework and detaching herself through an unserious and facetious tone. Yet, it is through its own fictionality that A Room comes to reveal the fictionalised facts of women.

A Room, written immediately after Orlando, possesses a similar spirit to Orlando. As the fictive biography enables Orlando to transcend time as well as sex and become the embodiment of androgyny, A Room carries the idea forward through its fictionalised discussion of women and fiction. Both alike are playful in tone, mocking the reality of 'fictional' facts. Although Orlando was originally planned as a "jeu d'esprit," a writer's holiday from her serious experiments, it is no less a criticism of social stereotypes, ideologies, and fictive realities as A Room. As the fictional

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[27] Beth Rigel Daugherty, "'There she sat': The Power of the Feminist Imagination in To the Lighthouse," Twentieth Century Literature 37.3 (1991): 289-308. Daugherty sees the mother-child image as an reinforcement of the venerable Mother who sacrifices 'her self,' while the story of the Fisherman and his wife resembles Eve's sin for knowledge and power.

counterpart of A Room, and underneath the fictional disguise, Woolf exhibits the absurdity and the fictitious nature of biography, history, and recorded facts:

> To give a truthful account of London society at that or indeed at any other time, is beyond the powers of the biographer or the historian. Only those who have little need of the truth, and no respect for it—the poets and the novelists—can be trusted to do it, for this is one of the cases where the truth does not exist. Nothing exists. The whole thing is a miasma—a mirage. (O 135)

Stretching across four centuries, Orlando makes the inconsistency between socio-cultural conventional demands more perceptible and ironical to its readers. Orlando is Woolf's most self-conscious contemplation of the art of biography: how should one write a biography; what should be the main concern of a biographer; how could a biographer capture more fully the characteristic of his subject? By raising the question of a substantial self and a fixed identity, Orlando has been seen as particularly important by post-structuralist critics for it does indeed, in exposing the fragile foundation of the signifier, also challenge conceptions of name and identity.

By placing various value standards and diverse social contexts side by side, Woolf, in Orlando, displays the mirage-like nature of socio-cultural conventions through different ages. In each specific epoch, a peculiar *zeitgeist* is manifested which is also comically reflected through the depiction of the weather—a preoccupation of the English. Thus, in the passionate age of the Elizabethan, "The brilliant amorous day was divided as sheerly from the night as land from water…The rain fell vehemently, or not at all. The sun blazed or there was darkness" (O 19-20). With the ending of the Eighteenth century, cloud starts to gather over the sky of London and "damp now [begins] to make its way into every house—damp, which is the most insidious of all enemies" (O 157). In exaggerating the temperament of each age, Orlando flaunts the deceptive solemnity of traditions which are actually easily manoeuvred and apt to change. Orlando thus exposes the fictive nature of the 'apparent facts' that are

recorded by historians and biographers. Even gender traits and propensities, instead of being an intrinsic nature, are liable to change according to the outfits and clothing adopted. Outfits not only shape the manners and deportments of Orlando, but they also prompt different gazes from others that further condition her behaviour. Therefore, she reflects, "there is much to support the view that it is clothes that wear us and not we them; we may make them take the mould of arm or breast, but they mould our hearts, our brains, our tongues to their liking" (O 132).Although pervaded by the comic spirit of Shakespearian transvestism, Orlando is a Nietzschean narrative experiment 'on truth and lies in a nonmoral sense,' peeling layer by layer the socio-cultural lies formulated by the convenience and urgency of social life, in an attempt to unveil the perpetual Truth of the human state of being. In a momentary apprehension, Orlando realises "At one and the same time, therefore, society is everything and society is nothing. Society is the most powerful concoction in the world and society has no existence whatsoever" (O 136).

The idea of androgyny serves to rescue women from their present status as Echo who, without a voice of her own, could only resonate with the pompous narcissism of men. Superior though men are, still they need further confirmation of their superiority by debasing women (either devaluing their intellectual ability or seeing it as a dark, irrational, unintelligible, 'feminine' force). As Woolf has stated, "The history of men's opposition to women's emancipation is more interesting perhaps than the story of that emancipation itself" (ARO 50). In both A Room and Three Guineas, Woolf witnesses how desperate men are in asserting women's gender role in society and imbuing them with the social expectations of their womanhood and daughterhood: coercing them to take up marriage as their one and only option of a 'career.' Even their unequal pay for work is a discouragement for them to be financially independent.[28] The emancipation of women has brought, as Showalter has pointed out, not only a battle between the two sexes as men resent women's liberation from their conventional role, but also a

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[28] Three Guineas 166-167.

battle within the idea of sexual identity itself. For, how does each sex conceptualise itself without a mirroring counterpoint? "What was most alarming to the *fin-de-siècle* was that sexuality and sex roles might no longer be contained within the neat and permanent borderlines of gender categories" (Showalter, Sexual 9).

The plight of female creative minds is self-evident through the metafictionalised voice of A Room: "it needs little skill in psychology to be sure that a highly gifted girl who had tried to use her gift for poetry would have been so thwarted and hindered by other people, so tortured and pulled asunder by her own contrary instincts, that she must have lost her health and sanity to a certainty" (45). The words seem to spell out the strain of Woolf as a female writer who seeks for a maternal tradition, yet who is also compelled to kill the selfless 'angel in the house' that complies with patriarchy. Without a prominent maternal figure, similar to Mrs. Hilbery, Woolf pays homage to Shakespeare, who despite his incandescent and androgynous mind, might nevertheless be construed as a patriarchal figure. In A Room, Woolf endeavours to displace his parental authority onto a sibling relationship which addresses all hypothetical female writers as 'Shakespeare's sister.'

A creative writer must transcend the socio-cultural gender ideologies, loosen the grip on the egoistic 'I' and accept willingly that, more or less, there are so-called masculine and a feminine trait co-existing within oneself. A creative mind, writes Woolf, must be neither fully masculine nor feminine, but instead the writer has to forget whether s/he is a man or a woman as both masculine and feminine qualities within such a mind should be perfectly blended—a mind which is "man-womanly" or "woman-manly": "anything written with that conscious bias [of sex] is doomed to death. It ceases to be fertilised" (ARO 94). For such a mind would be endlessly distracted from whatever is required by the plot of the novel or, in Woolf's own terms, "[one would be] thinking of something other than the thing itself" (ARO 67). One would be writing in order to sustain one's selfhood, to prove and defend one's subjectivity. In short, one would be constructing a narrative of one's egoistic 'I' rather

than writing about the story, the characters, or the truth of being.

Androgyny thus adheres closely to the ideal of what John Keats would call 'negative capability,' an ability to create without an enforced self being impelled to defend its virility or to assert its social identity. It is a capacity to yield to the formless and yet formal void/plenitude of the nature of selfhood. In To the Lighthouse, Mr. Ramsay, comparing his personal achievement to that of Shakespeare, comes to recognise that he would never reach Z, the supreme destination, but rather he would be striving between P and Q, and probably would eventually reach an end at R, the initial of his name (suggested by Elizabeth Abel as the achievement of the egoistic 'I').[29] Perhaps this is because he is driven by the desire to establish himself (worrying as always about his social image and his posthumous reputation and the publicity of his name). He covets an acclaimed reputation, imagining how posterity will judge him. He is self-obsessed, constantly demanding attention and recognition and sympathy from others. He might simply end up achieving himself, but never moving beyond himself.

To attain the ultimate achievement of Z (which perhaps only Shakespeare has come to achieve), one must be able to transcend the egoistic 'I' and look beyond. Such is the world that Bernard tries to envision—"a world seen without a self," a transcendence of the egoistic selfhood and its consolatory projections and yet also a return to the bodily-bound feelings of being-in-the world from which the imaginative projections of that self might go forth (W 221). Instead of perceiving and interpreting the world through a self, the self is reflected and known through the world perceived. For the objective world is permeated with subjective feelings which are mainly unrecognised by subjects themselves. So, the evidence that not a trace of self has left its mark in Shakespeare's works (as in A Room) suggests that it is through its absence of the 'I' that the full dimension of Shakespeare's mind could possibly be suggested.

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[29] Elizabeth Abel, Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1989) 56-7. See also Rachel Bowlby, Virginia Woolf: Feminist Destination (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988) 63-79.

Woolf praises Shakespeare: if ever there was a mind that is incandescent, it must be Shakespeare's.[30] Both Woolf's and Keats' accounts acknowledge that a degree of flexibility and impersonality is essential to creativity. Both of their accounts indicate how the self-conscious 'I' would hinder the flow of the mind and sterilise its fertility.

Woolf has observed that it is inevitable for one to be "surprised by a sudden splitting off of consciousness" as the mind alters its perspectives, bestowing upon the self an ability to conceive itself as an insider as well as an outsider of circumstances (ARO 88). Such splitting of consciousness is the quality of an inner self seeking to glimpse beyond "the dominance of the letter 'I' and the aridity, which, like the giant beech tree, it casts within its shade" (ARO 90). Only with the removal of the block 'I,' can a fuller apprehension of the essence of being and of a more objective reality be possible. An androgynous mind, in perfect consort with itself, creates an unself-conscious, forgetting, state of being. It is a state in which the 'I,' since its existence and integrity is no longer threatened, ceases to cloud over the mind. In contrast, writers, whether male or female, who are over-conscious of their gender position within society inevitably write with anger or agitation. Though the grudges against and the opinions of patriarchal society might still remain, an integral mind would not allow such prejudice to pervade all thoughts and diminish its own integrity. So Bernard who, though conscious of Neville's opinion of his untidiness, does not feel pressured to conform to or to resist the image or identity that his friend has imposed on him. He is sure that he could never be thoroughly defined or transfixed by his friends. What others see is only an apparition of oneself. The true inner state remains invisible and unlimited.

With the advocacy of the necessity for a room and five hundred pounds for a woman to write, Woolf was not simply creating a new circumscribed ground for the future female artist (as she expressed in a letter that the room and the money should

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[30] ARO 52.

not be interpreted literally).[31] She urged them to seek and create their own specialties, to forge their own means to express and create, to go beyond the boundary. Yet, for Showalter, "Woolf is the architect of female space, a space that is both sanctuary and prison;" while in the opinion of Peggy Kamuf, the room which Woolf has created is a transitory space of a feminine art yet nevertheless a space of interruption (Literature 264).[32] The room, as Kamuf sees it, is the subjective space: "the room of the Cartesian subject, where Ego sum is struck as an emblem bearing a proper name, taking up space whose limits can be delineated and, perhaps most importantly, where the subject becomes one—both singular and whole" (13). Both Showalter and Kamuf see a walled room of limitations and restraints, while A Room is actually an unlimited and creative space of self-liberation. It is the wedge-shaped core of darkness of feminine creativity. It is an infinite space of fantasy, of dream, where the self is both absorbed in its own being, weaving and reweaving its own narrative and yet re-imagines future spaces for other female selves. Though interruptions will always occur, whether in the room of the mind or the material room in spatial reality, the room and the five hundred pounds is not a constraint which Woolf imposes on the female artist, but instead they are seen as means that enable women to disregard boundaries and discard an instituted female identity. The room and the five hundred pounds grant female writers a new and free territory within which to break the sentence, as well as the sequence, designated by a patriarchal society. Without economic independence, women cannot achieve intellectual and emotional independence: the creative mind rests on material foundations.

Threading her way towards the final pronouncement of the androgynous ideal of the mind, Woolf begins with the most basic material facts: bodily needs. For, a natural androgynous mind is firmly rooted on a material base. The traditional categories of masculinity and femininity are irresolutely founded upon discrepancies of financial

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[31] Letter, dated 16 August 1932, to Harmon H. Goldstone. L 5:91.
[32] Peggy Kamuf, "Penelope at Work: Interruptions in A Room of One's Own." NOVEL 16.1 (1982) 5-18.

status and economic strength. As the narrative 'I' in A Room wanders from college to college, from luncheon to dinner, what preoccupies her is how physical satisfaction could have aspired to great talk, ideas or simply a poetic thought. As she said, "The human frame being what it is, heart, body and brain all mixed together, and not contained in separate compartments…, a good dinner is of great importance to good talk. One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well" (ARO 16). Although seemingly vulgar, material realities are nevertheless fundamental to intellectual freedom and creative spirit. The self within her, as the narrator has observed, is 'rusted' by her poor economic state. She has been striving to earn her own living, forced to take up jobs which she does not wish to do. The talent, the poet, within her, is eroded away along with her self, her soul, under the strain of living. By chance when an aunt is dead and leaves her five hundred pounds a year, "and whenever [she changes] a ten-shilling note a little of that rust and corrosion is rubbed off; fear and bitterness go" (34).

Various interpretations of the term 'androgyny' have been proposed by critics. Whether Woolf applies androgyny as a complete annihilation of the distinction between masculine and feminine or as a balance between these two qualities could lead to quite controversial conclusions. Orlando is generally recognised as the work that carries forth most fully in novelistic terms her idea of androgyny. However, by neglecting the fact that the very idea of androgyny has run throughout most of her writing, the interpretation of her idea of androgyny often winds up with a conclusion that is far from Woolf's original intention. Her idea of androgyny is but a subtle reflection of her interest in the Cambridge theory of epistemology. The idea of androgyny therefore should not be taken merely as a declaration of female rights and equalities. It was an idea for Woolf inextricably bound up with the pursuit of a transcendental yet unsubstantial reality: it is a quest after the problem of "subject and object and the nature of reality" (TL 28).

To understand androgyny and the incandescent state of mind it represents, one

must be able to imagine consciousness as multi-layered and multidimensional. There are different levels of subjective and objective consciousness. One tends to experience consciousness as a whole without sensing any division of its processes, and therefore the final conceptualisation of a self-reflexive consciousness in abstract symbols is made to stand for the entire process (from the in-take of the stimuli, to the interpretation of the stimuli and the subject position, to the subject's knowing of its position, and finally culminating in the form of conscious thoughts). The very idea of androgyny acknowledges more than anything what Merleau-Ponty has described as the carnal base of the immaterial mind. By androgyny, Woolf is saying that consciousness and mental properties are naturally orchestrated combinations of one's emotions, feelings and conscious reflections on such feelings and emotions that have come to be known as thinking and reasoning. Androgyny however, undermines the traditional demarcation of masculine and feminine gender roles and comes to be perceived as an idea of the genuine and undivided state of being that acknowledges the mutuality between the 'feminine' and 'emotional' body and the 'masculine' and 'rational' mind. Androgyny challenges an Apollonian civilisation that places utmost emphasis on incorporeal rationality and the absolute Real. The challenge is based on her recognition of the body and the feelings it feels and through which Woolf came to advocate the idea of androgyny as the most natural and creative state of the mind. Androgyny, instead of being a flight from her female body, is the conclusion to Woolf's inquest as a novelist into the nature of being, and the true relations between mind and body.

Androgyny is a notion carrying the sense that in life to feel is to think and to be able to think rationally one has to have an intact mechanism of feeling. Androgyny is what Woolf has perceived as the natural healthy state of being (a reciprocal co-dependence of mind and body), while real madness is being either completely 'masculine' or 'feminine' when either feeling or reasoning entirely takes the rein and attempts repression of the other. It is also a metaphorical depiction of what James

argues "that personality implies the incessant presence of two elements, an objective person, known by a passing subjective Thought and recognised as continuing in time" (1:371). The advocacy of androgyny is more Woolf's direct confrontation with a stifling masculine rationality than the flight from her femaleness that Showalter asserts. For by undermining the drastic dichotomy between rationality and sensuousness, resorting to a pre-cultural nature of life and stressing the mutual dependence and co-existence between rational conception and carnal perception, Woolf has also come to subvert the cultural conception of gender differences (as well as the mind/body split) and therefore opened up a new vista, free from any social-cultural constraints, in understanding 'women' and 'femaleness.'

IV

Mrs. Dalloway: "Ode to Time; An Immortal Ode to Time"

> Ah, love, let us be true
> To one another! For the world, which seems
> To lie before us like a land of dreams,
> So various, so beautiful, so new,
> Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
> Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
> And we are here as on a darkling plain
> Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
> Where ignorant armies clash by night.
>
> Matthew Arnold, *Dover Beach*

"Fear no more the heat o' th' sun/Nor the furious winter's rages" (Cym. 4.2.259-60). The mournful words of the dirge of Cymbeline sing out the thematic mood of an apprehensive London society recovering from the horror of the Great War. Woven into the narrative of Mrs. Dalloway, the words that were once meant to appease the soul of the dead and to alleviate the minds of the living from their grieving for their lost loved ones, also and somewhat paradoxically, endow both an impulse to feel and taste life subjectively as well as an entreaty to detach oneself from living in order to obtain an objective, impassive view of life which protects one from the sorrow of contingent experience. The Shakespearian wording, "the heat o' th' sun," expresses at once both the exultation of life and also its tribulation; whilst "fear no more" pacifies the mind by inducing apathetic indifference towards the pulsing of life, as well as signifying the stasis of death. An inner conflict between a yearning for and a fear of both life and death is therefore prominently illustrated. And betwixt these conflicting feelings there resides a convoluted consciousness of temporality that divulges both the process of successive development within each subjective world and a present temporal position which is being wedged into "their places in an ode to Time: an immortal ode to Time" (MD 76).

Mrs. Dalloway brings out this paradoxical apprehension of the precariousness of life in its monadic and contingent disparity placed against the definite conclusiveness of death as an atemporal condition. The narrative, wandering in and out of different characters' mental states, presents, in parallel to a constant awareness of time passing, a self-enclosed state of the core consciousness living fully within the very moment and inattentive to the progress of an external temporal reality. The narrative thus presents a reflexive consciousness wedged within a memory of the past and an expectation of what is to come in a recognised span of time. In the narrative of the characters' minds, a moment is prolonged beyond its measure. The time of narration taken up in the inner narrative of the characters largely exceeds the tempo paced by Big Ben. Therefore, in the reminiscent narrative of the past, the past recalled through a consciousness aware of the span of time is relived in a pure duration of the present. Sitting with Clarissa Dalloway sewing in her drawing room, or musing with Septimus Smith and Peter Walsh in St. James' Park, the reader is given a protracted sense of time—one minute of a particular state of the mind eclipses any alternate consciousness of the present and becomes an hour, a day, a whole episode of the past—until the chiming of Big Ben finds its way to recall attention to the present moment and reminds both the character as well as the reader of the actual time passed.

The extended consciousness, in configuring an autobiographical narrative, induces an intensive awareness of temporality. Withdrawing beyond the present moment of its physical and mental state, the reflexive consciousness pictures its subjective present in context with other moments and therefore recognises the development of time. Time has been lost. And against the backdrop of the perennial world of Nature, sung through the immortal ode to Time, the subject apprehends its finite being. With the juxtaposition of these two layers of conscious states in their diverse features, the kinetic and static duality of being in time is therefore enacted and rendered through the narrative. What is further entailed, however, is a sense of the duplicitousness involved in the recognition of an external reality while one

experiences and embraces an innermost subjective quality. The world would certainly continue to exist without any one of the numerous subjective worlds. Its independent reality is indisputable. Nevertheless, with the loss of a subjective world, a segment of the world is likewise irretrievably lost forever.

The self-awareness of the subject's spatio-temporal position in the world manifests the human capacity to attain a relatively objective comprehension of the world (which "is compatible with the essential subjectivity of the mental") through individual, subjective standpoint (Nagel 17). The soaring ambition of the human 'soul' to get outside the body and beyond its own "house, by means of thought," forms the backdrop of the narrative in Mrs. Dalloway and illuminates its theme of individual relations to both the objective and subjective reality of being (MD 30). The narrative, in drawing a general pattern of life through the conglomeration of individual voices (as each individual consciousness builds up the narrative consciousness of the novel), characterises a human subject continually shuffling between a qualitative subjective experience and a shared objective comprehension. In Mrs. Dalloway, the reader, like Clarissa, as she stands looking face-to-face with an elderly woman across from her window, is confronted with a seemingly disparate yet nonetheless co-responsive individual consciousness: "She parted the curtains; she looked. Oh, but how surprising!—in the room opposite the old lady stared straight at her!" (MD 203). The confrontation with the presence of another impenetrable subjective space is an abhorrent experience as the similarity of one and the other threatens one's subjectivity. But knowing that one is not alone also provides consolation. Trans-subjective empathy is suggested as Clarissa looks into the eyes of the old woman across from her and sees her self and her life, just as the existence of Septimus has impinged upon her consciousness. The subjective world of the woman and of Septimus would always be a mystery to her. Yet, the sense of the plausibility of transference between distinct subjective consciousnesses not only links Clarissa to Septimus (who she knows only by name yet for whom she feels a mysterious empathy) but also threads each personal

strand in life into a vocal tapestry of a collective narrative that postulates "a world that simply exists and has no perspectival centre," crooned by a bodiless voice of no age (Nagel 27).

By contrasting the chiming of Big Ben (that assigns an incontestable public and perhaps 'objective' time) with the irregular 'subjective' temporality within the mind (that swerves in various temporal modes of extension and contraction), Mrs. Dalloway provides a graphic illustration of the multifarious temporality of different conscious states. These nevertheless correspond to the body and its position in the world. "The most dramatic way of entering the character's consciousness is by the modes of time," says Richter (149). The conjunction of a distinctive time mode (that distinguishes as well as connects individual subjective realms) provides the elemental effect of the tunnelling process which Woolf has contrived through writing Mrs. Dalloway. The arrangement of the characters' adaptation to the interior tempo of their own, and to the exterior temporality designated by Big Ben, stages an inquiry into the nature of reality—the relativity of subjective and objective reality. With the deployment of various temporal modes in Mrs. Dalloway, the narrative renders an autobiographical consciousness, shifting between a subjective and an objective point of view of itself in relation to the world. Although Mrs. Dalloway is traditionally deemed to be broadly a variation on the stream-of-consciousness technique, the stream of the thought presented through the free indirect discourse is in fact fully allocated in the pulsations and feelings of the body. The flow of the narrative coheres with and responds to a bodily rhythm in the exchange of intakes and exhalations of breath and to the gathering and dissolving waves of feeling. And the development of plot recounts a constant interchange between opening up and closing down within each individual. According to William James's speculation in The Principles of Psychology, it is the lack of an adequate vocabulary (to describe the combination of feeling and thought in representing our mental flows) that hinders and obscures our understanding

of the states of consciousness.[1] By writing life as it is genuinely lived, Woolf has come to ascribe the emergence of consciousness to feeling: specially those feelings which have long been concealed behind the reflexive self-awareness of the subject's position in the world.

Probing into the mind of its characters, Mrs. Dalloway is a narrative of an All Soul's Day, as described by J. Hillis Miller, that resurrects the dead into the present.[2] But it is also a narrative of 'soul discourse' (as the word, 'soul,' becomes an obsessive referent to all the thoughts of the characters) that sketches the mental processes involved in accommodating the subjective and psychological world of the self to an external world and reality that contains that subjective world as well as being contained within it. The narrative is working all along to delineate 'the soul,' its nature and its status, but above all how it configures its being through its temporal relations in this world. The narrative, with its continuous sense of agony about the deprivation of one's subjective world (the elimination of individuality through the coercion of social norms) strives to transcend the familiar oppositional claims of the realist and idealist about whether the world is out there by itself or simply exists within the mind. The existential reality of the subjective world is what the narrative implores the reader to recognise and to respect. The persecution of 'the soul' by an insidious social compulsion towards measurement—proportion and conversion— appals both Clarissa and Septimus as they silently implore the world of polite society to grant some licence for subjective space. The abhorrence expressed in the text towards characters such as Peter (to some extent), Miss Kilman, Dr. Holmes, and Sir William Bradshaw, is that they force their values and judgement upon others and in doing so subdue, confiscate, and annul their subjectivities. Although each of them seemingly assumes a role of caring and protection, as professional men and women, they care not for the personal needs of an individual, but some utilitarian and abstract idea of the general good of

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[1] James 1: 185-198.

[2] J. Hillis Miller, "Mrs. Dalloway: Repetition as the Raising of the Dead" Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982) 176-202.

society and civilisation. Perchance, what they truly aim at is their own prospering as they inflict on others their view of the world and therefore establish their professional authority: "Worshipping proportion, Sir William not only prospered himself but made England prosper, secluded her lunatics, forbade childbirth, penalised despair, made it impossible for the unfit to propagate their views until they, too, shared his sense of proportion" (MD 109). They become judges. Their opinions are irrefutable verdicts that carry no truth.[3] The profession of caring ironically becomes an institutional force that eradicates personal singularity. Such characteristics are part of the idea of human nature, as Septimus speculates: "Human nature, in short, was on him…Once you stumble…human nature is on you. Holmes is on you": individuality is subdued into the impersonality of a conformist mass (MD 101). There is always a tension among the individual subjectivities of the novel. Confrontations between subjective spaces are often abrasive and brusque: unsound tussles within the souls seeking to affirm their own realities and in so doing estranging themselves from their own inner core of subjectivity. Yet, the narrative, like its protagonist, Clarissa, advocates and upholds an acknowledgment of individual subjective space:

> Had she ever tried to convert any one herself? Did she not wish everybody merely to be themselves? And she watched out of the window the old lady opposite climbing upstairs. Let her climb upstairs if she wanted to … Somehow one respected that—that old woman looking out of the window, quite unconscious that she was being watched. There was something solemn in it—but love and religion would destroy that, whatever it was, the privacy of the soul. (MD 138-9)

The external world of Mrs. Dalloway is perceived and experienced through the body: "how things appear to us depends on the interaction of our bodies with the rest of the world" (Nagel 15). The tempo of the body and the feelings and emotions it provokes are eternally projected onto the world. 'The soul,' or simply the internal

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[3] MD 162.

subjective space, is mirrored and reflected by the external world: "People, objects, landscapes—all the world which forms the boundaries of that semi-transparent envelope of consciousness—become a series of mirrors reflecting the many aspects of the character[s] [themselves]" (Richter 99). Even the temporality of the mental pace of thought is perpetually projected onto the external world and interacts constantly with objective public time. Thus, the narrative of Mrs. Dalloway is as much a narrative of the mind as one of its correlative body. The multi-layered deployment of time has come to capture the twofold relativity in introspective discourse between the subject as observer and inspected object, observed by its reflexive consciousness that has taken a stand further removed from immediate subjective perception. Through the representation of co-responses between perceptive thoughts and sensory stimuli, Woolf ingeniously provides her readers with new perspectives on the understanding of 'soul discourse.' The body and its feeling are here re-situated as the focalisers for conducting rational thought and socially appropriate behaviour. As the narrative of the soul becomes thoroughly bound up with feelings and emotions, Mrs. Dalloway suggests that, although language has its primal position in characterising our psychological conception and preoccupations, it is the capacity to feel that designates a 'soul.'

The opening of Mrs. Dalloway directly conveys to the reader an experience of the body and a consciousness founded upon the body and its feelings. It is through the sensory intakes of the body that the mind's narrative of the past is induced:

> What a lark! What a plunge! For so it had always seemed to her when, with a little squeak of the hinges, which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the open air...feeling as she did, standing there at the open window, that something awful was about to happen. (MD 3)

The present feeling incites a similar experience memory imprinted on her through the sensory intensity of past experience. Through a similarly congenial physical state,

Clarissa's memory of Bourton is revived. The bodily position has brought the past, Peter Walsh, Sally, vividly back into a narrative of reminiscence which embodies and restores the past to the present. The notion that it is always the body that goes through the experience first is the intellectual and intuitive kernel that grounds the technical experimentation of the novel. Real living cannot exist apart from bodily feelings and emotions. Thus, the stifling of feelings and senses, resulting from the masculine training of the war, has left Septimus in a corpse-like existence without the possibility of feeling and anchoring his own subjective position in the world. The detachment from the body and the full denial of subjective reality have provided him with no possible resolution which might accommodate a 'sensible' recognition of an integrated reality mitigating the destructive dualism of absolute subjectivity and rigorous objectivity. Thus, "real things—real things were too exciting" (MD 155). For they elicited a reality conjoined of both the subjective and objective and thereby incompatible with the centreless objectivity he has been forced to accept—a world devoid of personal feelings and emotions—and with the full subjective domain (into which he has submerged) that defies any intrusive information from the outer world.

Split between objectivity and subjectivity, Septimus is immobilised. Although objectively he oversees his physical present, the moments of the war still preoccupy his subjective reality. Such an impassable discord between seeing and feeling prevents him from acting in the world. He sees himself weighted down, petrified among the crowd, yet he cannot possibly initiate a movement as his objective reflection has alienated him from any responsive movement of the body. Even a simple act such as opening the eye and perceiving the world is pre-figured through an objective reflection on the action and its possible consequence: "He began, very cautiously, to open his eyes, to see whether a gramophone was really there" (MD 155). In perceiving the gramophone and then the sideboard, the plate of bananas, the shifting of focus enables an engagement with the body. As the flows and acts of the body are no longer checked by a 'judgemental,' self-reflexive point of view that terrifies him and prevents

him from engaging in real living, a genuine being is therefore made possible. He has long prohibited the flow of his feelings for fear of insanity, yet, opening his eyes, he finds himself reassured by the present: "But there was nothing terrible about it, he assured himself...Why then rage and prophesy? Why fly scourged and outcast? Why be made to tremble and sob by the clouds? Why seek truths and deliver messages...Miracles, revelations, agonies, loneliness, falling through the sea, down, down into the flames, all were burnt out, for he had a sense[emphasis added], as he watched Rezia trimming the straw hat for Mrs. Peters, of a coverlet of flowers" (MD 156). The physical engagement prevents him from taking the pure, detached, objective stance, picturing his own interaction with the world. He is in transports of joy when the hat is actually finished: "It was wonderful. Never had he done anything which made him feel so proud" (MD 158). In contrast to the war, "It was so real, it was so substantial, Mrs. Peter's hat" (MD 158).

Septimus's insanity resembles Rachel's (the heroine of The Voyage Out): derangement as dissociation between subjective and objective realities. Both of them suffer from an estrangement and denial of their sense of subjective reality as part of that reality. They are both screened and prevented from a full integration of the subjective and the objectively real. Though Septimus's condition accords with everything that has been written recently on the effects of war trauma, both Rachel and Septimus experience the enforced dualisms of the modern world as a kind of trauma. Rachel and Septimus, like Rhoda too, in The Waves, cannot incorporate their dreamlike senses of the body into any feeling of the real through social symbolic orders. Rachel, who dies of an actual bodily illness, a fever, provides an inverted perspective on Septimus's condition. In contrast to Septimus, her ability to feel, especially the present, instead of sustaining a sense of reality, becomes too overwhelming and incompatible with social propriety. In her pursuit of the real, her incapacity to accommodate a subjective reality within the objective one drives her into a delirious unreality disconnected from her body. Rachel, in her sickness, refuses to

recognise Hewet, whilst Septimus re-adepts momentarily to the real world by conjoining body and mind. The body interposes itself amongst the narrative, forcing recognition. The body remembers the exultation and the woe and wretchedness it has been through. Through the sensory narrative of the body and the subjective reality that it endows, sanity and insanity are therefore characterised.

A suggestively wounded heart, symbolised by Clarissa's own illness, arrests the narrative as well as its reader in that state of suspension that Clarissa herself has often felt before the out-booming of Big Ben. Situated on a June day directly after the devastating war, the narrative begins with the presentation of the ebullient cosmopolitan spirit of London which has resumed its usual order, or so it seems, with Big Ben striking the hour and the flag flying on top of Buckingham Palace. Along with Clarissa, one feels the freshness, the excitement, of the day when some past joy is remembered: a party bringing together people who one has known from the past, a glamorous celebration of life in the present now, is expected that very evening. And yet, a sudden pistol shot in the street startles everyone and reinvokes a condition of alarm. Society is still much agitated. Oftentimes the narrative assumes a pacifying monotonous tempo (as if the waves collect and fall, collect and fall) when, all of a sudden, a rupture, an unexpectedness (as a pistol or a doorbell going off) that has been awaited, disrupts the hypnotising rhythm to shatter the peace and quiet that the narrative has been building toward. Against the precariousness of the present, characters are prompted to search back into an ancient past for a sense of security and certainty—to a pre-oedipal, matriarchal and pastoral world as depicted by Elizabeth Abel; a world delivered from time (a timeless utopia) as it is sung by the battered woman.[4] Despite Clarissa's exuberant assurance that this is what she loves, "life; London; this moment of June," unavailingly, an anxious and mournful spirit has sprung out of some sense of indefiniteness and unpredictability that haunts the mind

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[4] Elizabeth Abel, Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1989) 31-2.

of Clarissa and of all the characters throughout the entire narrative (MD 4). "It [is] very, very dangerous to live even one day," in Clarissa's opinion (MD 9). For to live is to commit oneself to precariousness and contingency in temporality. The happiness of the moment is that it is an enclosed certainty within which one no longer need fear for "the heat o'th' sun/nor the furious winter's rages" (Cym. 4.2.259-60).

Seeing the internal conflict of the post-war British Society that wishes fervently to suppress the horrifying memory of the war, to re-establish its former order, and to return to the past, the refrain from Cymbeline (as Julia Briggs has observed) is an attempt to pacify the surviving society by believing at least that those who have sacrificed their lives, the war dead, have escaped life's miseries.[5] They have been delivered from time and the indefiniteness that it incites. By these words, the narrative mourns for the dead with the prospect of appeasing the mind of the living, rescuing them from the sorrow of the war and the suffering of life. And therefore, the words of Cymbeline no longer just denote the burden of life as the dead are finally delivered from it, but instead it encourages life and endurance. As if in answer to the falsehood of Imogen's disguised death (as she lies, living but without feeling) in Cymbeline, the words, re-contextualised in Mrs. Dalloway, endorse a sense of living as being capable of feeling and responding to that feeling—not being half-alive as Rezia sees the people in England; or as Septimus, whose feelings have been stagnated by the war; or by the desire to conform to the patriarchal doctrines of a masculine ideal which regards feeling as 'effeminate.'[6] The words of Cymbeline entreat an acceptance of the body and its subjective reality as part of Reality, as the play anticipates a reawakening of the senses and therefore the revival of Imogen.

For as it has been said, Septimus' problem is not that he is feeling too much, but that he is feeling too little. His incapacity to feel, to connect himself to his bodily presence, has already turned him into merely "a piece of bone" (MD 17). "Emotional

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[5] Briggs, Virginia 139.

[6] Imogen is the heroine of Cymbeline. The elegy is attributed to her when she falls into a false death and is thought dead.

repression was an essential aspect of the British masculine ideal" (Showalter, Female169).[7] The passions and feelings that were once lit up by Miss Isabel Pole and by her sharing of Shakespeare and Keats are put out by the 'masculinity' which Septimus has been expected to acquire through the war. He was passionate once and was being compared to Keats, although Mr. Brewer, seeing the change which Miss Isabel Pole initiated in him, has advised football (which, as identified by Showalter, is also an exercise of British masculinity): "Generals wrote in all seriousness about the English military advantages of prior training in football, and it was considered plucky and spirited for platoons to kick a football through No Man's Land on the way to attacking an enemy trench" (Female 169). The war has brought to fruition the result of 'manliness' in Septimus. Yet, the stifling of his capacity to feel has also destroyed Septimus's capacity to live.

In order to protect an England consisting mainly of Shakespeare, and which, ironically, celebrates the sentiment of life (argued in Three Guineas), Septimus takes part in a war which has helped to strangle the feelings and emotions that once flowed with the words of Shakespeare. "[W]hen Evans was killed…Septimus, far from showing any emotion or recognising that here was the end of a friendship, congratulated himself upon feeling very little and very reasonably [emphasis added]. The war had taught him. It was sublime" (MD 94-5). He seems to have unbound himself from corporeal confinement and achieved a transcendental sublime. Yet, emotion continues to mount under its unconscious suppression. In rejecting the subjective reality of his bodily state, a discontinuity is therefore created within Septimus. This discontinuity in feeling has cut Septimus adrift from the past and therefore from whom he was. Without this sense of continuity, the Septimus who was once embedded in a Shakespearian dream of England, is dead already. He affirms his own 'pastness.'

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[7] Showalter further writes, "as Fussell notes in his glossary of the feudal vocabulary of the prewar English literature combat, "not to complain" is to be "manly" (Female 169).

There are not just miseries in life, but exquisite happinesses and ecstasies. Only by living, by staying alive, and above all by allowing oneself to feel, could one possibly experience these sensations through the unfolding of time. "It is living, not dying, that counts," as it is once declared by Clarissa in her first appearance in The Voyage Out (50). However, when Clarissa returns in Mrs Dalloway as a woman of fifty years of age, she no longer resembles that high-spirited, pragmatic lady who discourages the sentiments of Shelley's "Adonais" with an enthusiasm for living and doing. On the contrary, Mrs. Dalloway embodies altogether what Clarissa has formerly ridiculed: "He has outsoared the shadow of our night;/ Envy and calumny, and hate and pain,/ And that unrest which men miscall delight,/ Can touch him not and torture not again;/ From the contagion of the world's slow stain/ He is secure, and now can never mourn/ A heart grown cold, a head grown grey in vain;/Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,/ With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn" (40.325-360).[8] Having gone through the war, Clarissa, in her old age, seems to refer back to her juvenile spite over the cruelty of life and once again the aspiration to an abstinence from actual feeling and living.

Clarissa too has failed to feel: "She could see what she lacked. It was not beauty; it was not mind. It was something central which permeated; something warm which broke up surfaces" (MD 34). From Peter Walsh, one learns that, deep underneath, remorse and bitterness against life is borne within Clarissa. For him, she is fundamentally cold. She is determined to defy the hazards of life with her 'ladylike' dignity and the burial of passion:

> As we are a doomed race, chained to a sinking ship... as the whole thing is a bad joke, let us, at any rate, do our part; mitigate the sufferings of our fellow-prisoners (Huxley again); decorate the dungeon with flowers and air-cushions; be as decent as we possibly can. Those ruffians, the Gods, shan't have it all their own way—her notion being that the Gods, who never

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[8] In The Voyage Out, Clarissa Dalloway quoted the above passage from P. B. Shelley's "Adonais" to ridicule her own as well as others' adolescent broodings and sentiments.

> lost a chance of hurting, thwarting and spoiling human lives, were seriously put out if, all the same, you behaved like a lady. (MD 85)

Clarissa's idea of holding oneself upright reflects the great legacy of emotional restraint acclaimed in a culture made of 'ladies' and 'gentlemen.' Her lady-like graciousness is carried through with temperance of feeling and, as Peter Walsh declares, 'the death of the soul' (MD 64). Clarissa, though professing her love for this moment in June, for life, retreats in cold detachment to the secluded room of her own—a room also connected with the past, but with a feeling of safety—as she sits up late at night reading the memoirs of the dead. In Peter's opinion, Clarissa, as a woman, lives more in the past than in the present. The room to which Clarissa withdraws from life and real living is a figurative tomb, pronouncing life's closure as it is only fully embodied in the past. For a woman's life is unequal to the life of a man such as Peter who continues to love and be loved, or even Richard Dalloway who still receives invitations to amusing luncheons: "It was all over for her. The sheet was stretched and the bed narrow. She had gone up into the tower alone and left them blackberrying in the sun" (MD 51). Like a nunnery (her room in the attic), the room wards off the worldly fervour and the ferment of life—its excitement as well as its disappointment. In this room, she encloses her heart and body in the past. The room enables her to remain detached and cool within her heart from the life she loves and from the unexpectedness of living she dreads. It is already a denial of genuine living, a withdrawal from life.

Richter suggests that Clarissa shares with her alter ego, Septimus, the tendency of failure to feel. While Septimus fails Rezia's expectation of providing her with a child, Clarissa, in an undertone, also fails to "dispel a virginity preserved through childbirth which clung to her like a sheet" (MD 34).[9] With the attic room as her fortress against the fortuities of life where she could prepare herself by collecting herself into a point (wrapping herself up with an identity that is fully embedded in the

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[9] Richter 118-119.

past), Clarissa is therefore capable of roaming through London, plunging herself into the open air, feeling the pulsing of life. There is always a room where she can recoil. The room has become symbolically her subjective space. It is a room that protects her from the overwhelming presence of life and yet a room that provides her with strength and security to plunge back into life, occasionally. In the narrative of Mrs. Dalloway, there is an urge to live and feel and a fear for the threat that life and living entail. In secluding herself, Clarissa has chosen Richard who promised stability, continuity, and separate identity. Under his protection, Clarissa is free to indulge herself within the security of a past narrative. And therefore, by choosing Richard, Clarissa has chosen a life in the past rather than an unresolved and still open life in the future. Clarissa is not simply fencing off life itself, but also the treacherousness of life. It is in the past itself that Clarissa lives her present, but actually her life is unravelled through living in the past as she only allows herself to feel and live in its safeguarded stillness. Thus, years after, she still finds herself arguing with Peter, yet it is all in the past and its definitiveness has been affirmed. Perhaps there is some resentment that she has not chosen Peter and lived an adventurous life with him, yet feeding on the past, she simultaneously experiences the pulsation of a passionate excitement recalled into the present as well as the fulfilment of a conclusive ending:

> Take me with you, Clarissa thought impulsively, as if he were starting directly upon some great voyage; and then, next moment, it was as if the five acts of a play that had been very exciting and moving were now over and she had lived a lifetime in them and had run away, had lived with Peter, and it was now over. (MD 51)

It is in death and in past terms that Clarissa ventures to live. The thought of dispersing herself among the world is sustained by a detachment from life itself.

In contrast to Clarissa's ambivalence towards life and her restraint of the feeling that life endows, Septimus is driven to marry Rezia in a panic over his incapacity to feel and as an attempt to reassure himself that he is living: "he became

engaged one evening when the panic was on him—that he could not feel" (MD 95). Instead of death itself, Septimus panics over not being able to feel. He can read; he can reason; but, he could not feel; he could not possibly 'live.'[10] Bound to live in a state deprived of all feelings and sensations, Septimus thus concludes there is no death:

> But he himself remained high on his rock, like a drowned sailor on a rock. I leant over the edge of the boat and fell down, he thought. I went under the sea. I have been dead, and yet am now alive, but let me rest still, he begged…and the sleeper feels himself drawing to the shores of life, so he felt himself drawing towards life. (MD 75)

Failing to feel, Septimus senses his own deadness while remaining alive. Before jumping off the window sill, Septimus reflects that he does not want to die, for life is good; the sun hot. His death is his defiance against Dr. Holmes, Sir William Bradshaw, the patriarchal authority they represent and whose proportion inhibits the free flow of feelings and suffocates the soul into a state of death.

"Fear no more, says the heart" is an impulse driving toward life rather than death as it assuages the inner anxiety about uncertainty and impels one to feel with the heart and the body (MD 43). With these words, Clarissa prepares herself (after her momentary reflection on the news of Septimus' death and on the fulfilment of death) to assemble, to return to the party, to open herself up for another experience. With the same words, Septimus regains momentarily a sense of external reality and re-engages himself with the 'real,' social, world which he fears. Sanity is the capacity to negotiate dialectically a reality mediated between subjective apprehension and objective comprehension. Septimus opens his eyes to reassure himself that there actually is a gramophone—not simply in his mind but as an indisputable external 'reality' through the connection with which he is re-incorporated into society. In conjoining himself to his present physical state, Septimus starts to enquire after Mrs. Filmer and her married daughter and to work alongside Rezia in the making of the hat. The only occasion in

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[10] MD 96.

which Septimus appears to be sane, rational, and happy is also the only moment when he is susceptible to the stimuli of external reality and to the feelings which these stimuli have generated in his absorption in the practical and creative task of hat-making. It is a moment when the opposition between the subjective and objective reality has been resolved in a perfect mergence that enables him to dream and create fully in the present. However, Dr. Holmes intrudes to force a stringent discrepancy. To preserve his threatened sense of subjectivity, and in an ironical submission to the demands of patriarchal proportion, Septimus tragically tries to preserve his subjectivity through the moment of self-elimination: "he plunged holding his treasure" (MD 202).

The words assimilated from the elegy sung in Cymbeline, become a solace allowing one to bear the feelings one is bound to feel whilst alive, through inculcating a sense of detachment and indifference. In echoing the patriarchal values of British society—to withhold feelings even in the face of death—the Shakespearian elegy also serves to criticise the inertia of masculine restraint and hyper-rationalism. One's sense of being and of sanity is sustained by consecutive bodily states and feelings. The stringent repudiation of bodily feelings and emotions advocated by the masculine ideal inevitably thrusts the individual into a thorough disconnection with the body: a kind of 'reason not the need.' For the body is the pivot of the psychological as well as physical existence of the self. In contrast to the conventional idea of madness, the insanity from which Septimus suffers has resulted from failing to feel rather than failing to reason: "He could reason; he could read, Dante for example, quite easily…, he could add up his bill; his brain was perfect; it must be the fault of the world then—that he could not feel [emphasis added]" (MD 96). Its incapacity to receive immediate and concurrent stimuli has thrown Septimus further into a world of his own, an inner world increasingly disconnected from the external one. Woolf reveals her closeness to the neuroscientist Damasio's insistence that "feeling [is] an integral component of the machinery of reason" (Descartes' Intro. xxii). As revealed in the

cases of Capgras syndrome, we recognise the world and people around us not simply through visual images or audio perception but through the connection of *feelings*.

In psychological discourses and in neurology, it is accepted that both the sense of 'being' in the core consciousness or the continuous selfhood of extended consciousness are orchestrated and apprehended through a sense of temporal flow and connectedness. The sense of temporal sequence is vital to the sense of being in existence and also to a sense of being sane. Feeling himself dead, but miraculously returned among the living, Septimus has this obscure feeling of time as he dwells within a world paced with its own rhythm but which does not accord with the 'real' social world around him. When Rezia tries to remind him of the 'real' time accredited by Big Ben, the time of the social order which they are obliged to keep, "The word 'time' split its husk; poured its riches over him; and from his lips fell like shells, like shavings from a plane, without his making them, hard, white, imperishable, words, and flew to attach themselves to their places in an ode to Time" (MD 76). The rigidity of the general public time is absurd and ludicrous and thereby the world that is regulated by it becomes inconceivable and irrelevant. For Septimus, temporality has ceased to be as he continues to live within that moment of death—a moment that will forever be—as his sensory nerves are fixed to it. New stimuli that are taken in reveal not a successive linear development of an ever renewable temporality, but rather they are further absorbed into the context of the moment within which Septimus is situated. There is no Time; every moment is simply a re-referencing of time past. Thus, the more genuine and incorruptible nature of Time reveals itself to him as if Time and temporality are merely states of the mind. The discordance between Septimus's internal non-temporal world and the temporality of the public world forms an unbridgeable gap, leaving Septimus secluded and self-enclosed within a subjective reality of his own which 'society' endeavours to suppress and negate. Resembling Neville in The Waves, Septimus is held up within his moment of deathliness when his friend is killed and his own life is spared.

Clarissa's moments of retiring into an inner self are enacted through her actual retreat into a room of her own. Still, Clarissa's moments are constantly interrupted, by Peter, by Big Ben, by Time itself. Similar to Woolf's own frustrated resistance to temporality in making the moment permanent, Clarissa is also "suspended between life and death in an unfamiliar way" (WD 45).[11] As a London hostess, and wife of a Tory M.P., it is inevitable that Clarissa should conform to the social time of the public. As a patient—for she has been ill and is advised to take an hour of rest after luncheon—she is compelled to heed the proportions advocated by doctors and physicians. Her day is clearly dissected into discrete units to which she is instructed to adhere. However, as an upper-middle class London hostess, she is also given a little licence, a flexibility, to adjust a tempo of her own to the objective time of Big Ben. Like St. Margaret, the clock which Peter Walsh identifies with Clarissa, Clarissa as a hostess maintains a pace, a rhythm of her own and is yet "reluctant to inflict [her] individuality" (MD 54). However, by bestowing upon her the image of a clock, though with a tempo of her own, Woolf suggests that Clarissa nonetheless bows to patriarchal authority. For Septimus, as a man and soldier, there is no escape, no relief, from the strict and exacting command of patriarchal authority. Individuality and subjectivity could not be attained unless by death itself. In pure duration, according to Henri Bergson, no unit of time is distinguishable: each moment succeeds and is bound up with other moments. With each moment merging into another, every moment is qualitatively different from another, yet each moment contains and is contained within another. Past, present and future are blended into a continual process of becoming, and it is within such a process that free will and free acts are possible: "the free act takes place in time which is flowing and not in time which has already flown" (Bergson, Time 221). To be able to feel and sway with the free flow of time is genuine living. But, society forbids it; Big Ben forbids it.

An incapacity to withdraw from the subjective present within the stream of the

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[11] Diary entry dated 18 February 1922.

flowing of time itself, however, would entail that one could never gain an objective view of the passage of time. Perhaps the inability to co-relate the different senses of time is Septimus's ultimate damnation, like the souls in Dante's Divine Comedy. Physically, he is incapable of withdrawing into himself to grasp the units of time within time's multiplicity. Within the pure duration of time, all time has become one. Without the orientation and the proportion governed by Big Ben, Septimus, losing track of time, also loses contact with external reality. As a stream-of-consciousness narrative (though the term is much debated) Mrs. Dalloway flows from thought to thought, from one character to another, displaying the heterogeneity of variant subjective realms as each imparts a reality of its own. With the chiming of Big Ben, a more objective reality is introduced. Each subjective realm relates differently to this objective voice whilst nevertheless acknowledging its authoritative pronouncement of an external reality. But for Septimus, objectivity finds no path in connecting with subjective reality.

In writing Mrs. Dalloway, Woolf stated that she was going to write about "the world seen by the sane and the insane side by side" (WD 51).[12] The sanity of Clarissa and the insanity of Septimus are discernible in their perception of the present and their capacity to differentiate and to co-relate the past to the present—to be able to perceive time as a linear sequence. Although both Clarissa and Septimus are subjected to a past memory, Clarissa is capable of reliving her past by standing beyond the past itself, whilst Septimus is fully encapsulated within the feelings and emotions that are suspended through such suppression. All times jumble together within Septimus, without any discrete articulation. As for Clarissa, though she feels the intensity of the past in the present, and is occasionally driven by her thoughts into a time realm of her inner world that seems forever prolonged, the striking of Big Ben still possesses the power to recall her to a present time embedded in its chronological context.

Bergson once proclaimed that memory is the interface of mind and matter, so

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[12] Diary entry dated 14 October 1922.

that through memory and the language of memory, a distinguishable 'selfhood' is formed—whether it is called 'soul' or 'extended consciousness.' However, this memory, though seemingly an altogether mental property is, ironically, firmly rooted in the body. Furthermore, "our perceptions, sensations, emotions and ideas occur under two aspects: the one clear and precise, but impersonal; the other confused, ever changing, and inexpressible, because language cannot get hold of it without arresting its mobility or fit it into its common-place forms without making it into public property" (Time 129). In this sense, through a refined depiction of the interaction between present perceptions and the mechanism of memory, Mrs. Dalloway comes to present the subtle and blurred line between sanity and insanity.[13]

The insanity of Septimus has often been judged as an example of male neurosis (or in a more conventional term 'shell-shock') as he is continuously held up within the moment where life encounters the horrors and immediacy of death. Yet, being spared of life, unharmed, his mind is still gripped by the moment of contingency and unable to account for the fragility and insignificance of individual life.[14] For Septimus's condition accords with both our own and early twentieth-century ideas about trauma as a condition that cuts across mind and body and was first defined in relation to early railway accidents where intense physical shocks seemed to be accompanied by an hysterical mental state. Survivors of train collisions and railway accidents were left unable to gain relief from their immediate memories of the event. They suffered continuously from what were later named "traumatic neurosis."[15] As the body that has been spared from injury seems to have been halted in the moment of the accident, so the mind also seems to resist further progress and is seemingly held persistently within that moment. In the case of neurosis, Freud distinguishes two main features: "first that the chief causal factor seemed to lie in the element of surprise, in

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[13] Bergson, Matter and Memory: "Memory is just the intersection of mind and matter…the classical problem of the relations of soul and body, will soon see this problem as centring upon the subject of memory" (13).

[14] Thomas Nagel, The View from Nowhere (Oxford: OUP, 1986) 222.

[15] Sigmund Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920; London: Hogarth, 1922) 8.

the fright; and secondly that an injury or wound sustained at the same time generally tended to prevent the occurrence of the neurosis," as if the emotion has run its full course to a definite conclusion of an injury (Beyond 9). After the First World War, as shell-shocked patients remained locked within their horrifying experience on the war field (as they continuously underwent the frightful experience in dreams) and even became aphasic, Sigmund Freud revised his proposal of the pleasure principle and started to conceive, in Beyond the Pleasure Principle(whose English translation was published by Hogarth Press in 1922), that "the goal of life is death" and within each individual there relies 'an ego-instinct impelling toward death' (47).[16]

Between life and death, between the resentment about ceasing to be and a desire to hold onto the moment, Mrs. Dalloway clearly illustrates that inner conflict which Freud had sought to explain in Beyond the Pleasure Principle. Freud, from his speculation on how a child turns his/her uncomfortable experience such as the absence of the mother into a game, suggests that it is by such repetition of lost and found that the child hopes to subject the uncontrollable and the unexpected and to bring it under his/her domination— to turn passivity into an active position.[17] Corresponding to what Freud has sketched, one inevitably comes to wonder whether the suspense one constantly feels throughout Mrs. Dalloway is a sort of self-preparation allowing one to expect the unexpected, so that the attempts at subduing the fear caused by the war are also a preparation for death itself? The repetition of the narration is not just what Miller has said to be a "raising of the dead," but a repetition-compulsion of a suppressed sensation as well as a repetition toward self-mastering. Although society is determined to suppress its memory of the war and eager to get on with life, it cannot eradicate the fright which has been imprinted onto the body as well as on the mind.[18]

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[16] The first draft of Mrs. Dalloway is completed on 9 October 1924. It started off as a short story, "Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street," which Woolf started to write also around 1922.

[17] Freud, Beyond: "We see that children repeat in their play everything that has made a great impression on them in actual life, that they thereby abreact the strength of the impression and so to speak make themselves masters of the situation" (15).

[18] Freud, Beyond 9.

However, through the repetitive narration, the narrative seeks to resolve the learned fright and agony of the mind.

The narrative of Mrs. Dalloway which intends "to criticise the social system, and to show it at work, at its most intense" exhibits a dread of uncertainty and the unexpected that mirrors the strain of society England in 1923, still recovering from the shock of The Great War—the First World War (WD 56). The wake of the war becomes an undercurrent partially disguised by the purposeful mood of after-war-lightheartedness. As in traumatic neurosis, as described by Freud, what one strives most to suppress becomes that which continues to return and haunt; and in this case, it is an apprehensive tension over some inconceivable terror that might any minute befall the fragile world. Something awful is about to happen. Against which, the narrative continues to reaffirm and hypnotise the reader as well as the characters that the war is over, easing the psychological trauma caused by the war. Nevertheless, a soldier's heart badly wounded by the terror of the war continues to vibrate underneath the social rhythms, under all the effort to build up jollity and to overcome the memory of the war, the dead, the past. Insisting on getting on with life, the social system imposes a sense of proportion worshipped by Sir William Bradshaw and maintained through the unrelenting striking of Big Ben on the hour, cutting one's life into proportions.

The war has made the imminence of death so conspicuous that, whilst continuing to live, it would be impossible not to think of death. Over-shadowed by the war, life has therefore become as capricious and unpredictable as possible. Stepping out to buy the flowers herself, Clarissa, with all the feeling of anticipation for her party that night and in a mood capturing all the exuberant vitality of London in June, still cannot prevent the idea of (or maybe a secret longing for) death from permeating her thoughts. Looking into the shop windows of a bookshop, it is the words of Cymbeline that catch her eye. The war dead have been buried and forgotten (except for the reminder provided through Septimus's consciousness). The world continues on

with its own rhythm, indifferently, as if nothing has happened. Even if one's love, one's son, is killed in the war, one still carries on, like Lady Bexborough, to open a bazaar.

Inevitably, Clarissa is led to ponder how the world would go on without her; how she would inevitably cease to be. "[Doesn't] it become consoling to believe that death ended absolutely," asked Clarissa (MD 9)? However, what does it mean to die? Would being forgotten by the world be a death in itself as well—like Septimus who has been forsaken by the world and who, like Rhoda in The Waves, has fallen out of time and the narrative context of society? Without conforming to the institutional structure of society, Septimus and Rhoda are situated permanently as outcasts--which means an elimination of identity and therefore the death of the self. Conceivably, being recognised and remembered with the affirmation of one's subjectivity could, plausibly, be a sort of survival. Thus, if one could not prevent death, one could at least create something to be remembered by, like Clarissa's party (which in a sense resembles the narrative itself, reviving the past into a communal All Soul's Day) that brings people scattered in different part of London together to build up another commemorative event—to create life. Clarissa has said, that among "the ebb and flow of things, here, there, she survived, Peter survived, lived in each other" (MD 9). Coming back from India after five years, Peter Walsh feels this "strangeness of standing alone, alive, [yet] unknown" (MD 56). He feels he has escaped. He has escaped the cruelty of social constraints. However, despite the fact that Peter is often disapproved of by people who know him, his subjectivity and social identity are not nullified in contrast to Septimus's status as a ghost of the war. He is there along with Clarissa as she walks across London. He has survived, as well as Sally, through the memory of Clarissa. And along with the narrative of the party which Clarissa contrives and brings about as an offering to life, Peter, Sally, Aunt Helena and even Clarissa herself, are revived from the past.

The past continues to return to the nostalgic mind of the characters. Everyone

longs for his/her past—a past that was not meant to change—and desires an escape from the dreadful apprehension that something unpredictable is going to happen. The days at Bourton, the days of youth, the days of once in May as it is sung by the battered woman, stand permanently at every moment afresh in the memory. Alternating between a time past and a time present, Mrs. Dalloway imparts the spirit of John Keats' "Ode to A Nightingale." As in the "Ode to A Nightingale," the speaker could merely catch a few glimpses, through visions, through dreams, but eventually through life, of the eternal bliss sung by the immortal bird. Although "[he has] been half in love with easeful death/…/To cease upon the midnight with no pain" (and perhaps the eternal bliss sung by the immortal bird is nonetheless death itself), to embrace death would then make it impossible to appreciate the voice of the nightingale anymore (52-56). For "still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—/To thy high requiem become a sod" (59-60). Longing for death, maybe it is not the terror of not knowing what is to come (as Hamlet has seen) that prevents one from taking eternal rest, but the horror of not being able to feel which Septimus had conceived and which makes him seem suspended from time and from existential being. The words of Cymbeline are reworked and re-contextualised in Mrs. Dalloway as a soothing consolation committing one to live and undergo the intensity of sensation as well as the incertitude of being in time.

Woolf has described in her diary that the novel is as much a story about life as about death. Situating life alongside death, time alongside timelessness, Mrs. Dalloway brings out that eternal struggle between an instinct that impels toward death and that instinct of self-preservation which Freud describes in Beyond the Pleasure Principle. In Mrs. Dalloway, life seems to shift between a sense of suspended stillness and a sense of constant change and renewal. Characters and readers too are led to feel the urge and the excitement of life whilst an impending adversity or calamity threatens to bring everything to a halt. Every moment, life is renewed, and yet at the same time, from generation to generation, life is traced into an 'objective' general pattern. There

would always be a time in May and there would always be a story of love. Yet, in life, the moment that one has expected to be exalted in its brilliancy eventually lapses before one is barely conscious of it. The intrusion of Time continuously betrays and steals away the moment of happiness. The commitment to life is therefore a commitment to change and incertitude. The moment that seems so complete and perfect within itself is accompanied with an apprehension that it will eventually be intruded on: "Nothing could be slow enough; nothing last too long" (MD 203). To embrace the moment in its fullness is impossible in life as the clock ticks away. "There was an embrace in death," thought Clarissa, contemplating the death of Septimus (MD 202).

The words of Cymbeline link the two parallel characters, a London hostess (perchance the 'spirit' of London society) and a war veteran (a ghost of the war who has returned half-dead and half-alive), in post-war London society. Although they never meet, they are gradually drawing nearer and nearer by their shared sympathetic feeling for life—for being.[19] Finally, at the party, Clarissa's offering to life, the news of Septimus' death comes across her path. "[I]n the middle of [her] party, here's death" (MD 201). As an offering to life, Clarissa cannot escape thereafter the confrontation with her inner alter-ego that impels towards a sense of perpetuity and death itself. However, death has already been there, lurking beneath the narrative from the very start and well before it springs to the surface. All along, Septimus has felt that he was already dead; all along, Clarissa has been pondering on death and feeling herself dissolving into nothingness. Identifying the clock of St. Margaret's with Clarissa, Peter Walsh senses the desire buried within Clarissa to disperse, to surrender herself to death as "the sound of St. Margaret's glides into the recesses of the heart and buries itself in ring after ring of sound, like something alive which wants to confide itself, to disperse itself, to be, with a tremor of delight, at rest" (MD 54).

Miller sees Mrs. Dalloway as a narrative enacting All Soul's Day during which

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[19] Briggs, Virginia 130.

the buried dead and the past are resurrected into the present. If so, the narrative itself has already betrayed the pastness of the characters and therefore of Clarissa. In Miller's opinion, the very sentence that asserts Clarissa's being is also the sentence that betrayed Clarissa's pastness. With the 'was,' the narrative present is situated later than the story it narrates. Yet, the 'pastness' is restored and recreated in the present by the narrative. And therefore, time and mortality are transcended. Clarissa's offerings to life are also her means to combat the triviality and bitterness of real life—to exert control over the formlessness of life. Against the diffusiveness of life, the narrative continues to collect, to build up, a party, a hat, a story of the past, something that is tangible and substantial; something that supplants the absence; something that brings out the diversity as well as the reality of all possible subjective worlds. In creation, subjectivity sustains itself in an objective context.

Searching back into the past, the narrative attempts to conjure a substantial reality through recurrence. For, "Apart from recurrence, knowledge would be impossible; for nothing could be referred to our past experience. Also, apart from some regularity of recurrence, measurement would be impossible. In our experience, as we gain the idea of exactness, recurrence is fundamental" (Whitehead 40). By recurrence, the abstract knowledge of mathematics, of nature, and therefore of life, is built. As the former order is shattered by the war, Mrs. Dalloway is driven with an anxiousness to re-construct the pattern of life that would expel doubts and uncertainties. The narrative moves recursively into the past as an attempt to account for the present as well the future. For as captured by the words of Imogen, "since doubting things go ill often hurts more/ Than to be sure they do—for certainties/ Either are past remedies; or timely knowing,/ The remedy then born—(1.6. 96-99). Still, time and temporality withstand and overthrow the effort of the narrative.

The tone of the narrative itself, in the manner of an everlasting maternal figure, croons of a perpetual reality of life that constantly strains between hope and despair; anticipation and apprehension. Despair and anticipation, because of what had once

been known and what history has come to suggest (both happiness as well as disappointment); hope and apprehension, because the future is susceptible to any changes in the flow of time and therefore forever unknown. As the narrative strains between these two opposite forces, it illustrates ingeniously the ambiguity of our conscious states which, although unfolding in pure duration (and therefore always in the act of becoming), are constantly projected into the simultaneity and extension of space (as the passage of time is often projected into spatial extension). Thus, within the moment, the characters are not forgetful of the temporality of the moment. The narrative constantly loops the present moment into a reminiscent narrative of the past and, within the present durée, one relives a past recalled through extended consciousness. This is suggested in the way that Clarissa often feels, along with her memory of Bourton, the unspeakable weight of her present age. In the moment of living her life, she simultaneously sees what she has come to make of it.

According to Bergson, as a result of the habitual tendency to picture time in space, one constantly mis-adopts the law of causality in physics and science to one's inner psychic state. This leads to a failure to recognise that "there is no perceptible difference between foreseeing, seeing, and acting" (Bergson, Time 198). Each moment of our psychical state is blended into the entirety of the past and memory and what they are made of, the self. For, as Bernard has speculated in The Waves, it is impossible to pluck one grain apart from the whole stem, for it is in its totality that it is learnt and recognised.[20] However, it is through the concept of space that one conceptualises the passing, the passage and the quantity of time. As time is projected onto space, each moment instead of succeeding and permeating one another, is displayed as discrete points exclusive of one another, juxtaposed side by side—the duration of the time is therefore missed out in the discontinuity of spatial displacement as in quantum theory. It is along this strand of thought that Russell proposes the idea of the monadic discrepancy of time. Such a conception of the quality of time in spatial

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[20] W 183

quantity leads one to presume that any moment in the past is self-enclosed and therefore each moment of the past stands in a permanent stasis. It is an idea derived from a conceptualised eternal self who is situated beyond time itself, rather than a temporal self living within time. As one lives in time, even the memory of the past would be subject to temporality, varied and transformed each moment anew. The projection of time onto a homogeneous medium of space produces an illusion that the interval of space-time could be reduced and therefore, like astronomy predicting the course of the stars, one might be able to predict a conscious state unresolved. Moreover, because in the past, acts are already accomplished and naturally displayed in the form of discrete moments, one leading to another, in a linear development, one is misled to assume and project such linear causality into the future. Yet, "the relation of inner causality is purely dynamic, and has no analogy with the relation of two external phenomena which condition one another" (Bergson, Time 219).

The past still transforms itself in accordance with the present and the anticipation of the future. The future influences the present as much as the past as Friedrich Nietzsche had once asserted, or, in the words of Bergson, "the whole of our past psychical life conditions our present state, without being its necessary determinant" (Matter 148). A deep nostalgia for an ancient past. It is a past which though irretrievable is permanently enclosed within the present life ("In fact, there is no perception which is not full of memories"), like the grandiose mansion of Orlando that stands and lives upon the deadly bones of his ancestors to which s/he descends forlornly in searching for a meaning (a pattern) of life from the buried past (Bergson, Matter 33). Nevertheless, the past remembered is never the same as it was once experienced, since it is perpetually intermingling with the newly acquired perceptions. As in a kaleidoscope, with each newly acquired position in time, a new formation or shape is formed from the same elements.[21] Any preceding and memorised moment would ferment with new stimuli received by the body, generating new and different

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[21] Bergson, Matter 25.

sensations. The past is continually 'gnawing' into the present and one's present perception is inevitably coloured by the bodily remembrance of the past.[22] In Mrs. Dalloway, the reader is given both forms of time: time as duration as one lives in the process of time embracing all time, and a time separated into monads of self-enclosed moments as the self stands above time and self-reflects on moments of the past. This double aspect of one's consciousness of time enables one to endure time and change whilst also retaining a constant selfhood that, though ever changing, is ever the same. No future course of our mental state could be presumed to follow the patterns formed by the past.

The passage of time could only be perceived retrospectively. And it is only by retrospection that one could possibly map out the turns and changes that consciousness has traversed through time. As the past runs parallel with the present, the narrative, like the battered woman, sings out an exquisite and eternal love, uncorrupted by time.[23] Nonetheless, it is a time of the past. The future to come though is still unpredictable and a foreboding feeling inevitably prevails; the course of the past seems to pacify the anguish and provide the consolation that there is a firm ground among all the hazard and inconsistency of life. Mrs. Dalloway seeks to transcend this irreconcilable opposition through its narrative repetition. Through repetition, it resurrects the dead, relives the past (as argued by Miller); and also through repetition the moment of being seems to be raised beyond the passage of time. Immortality (as seen by Orlando) is achieved through words and poetry which is based upon the capacity of one's consciousness to withdraw from pure duration.[24] For through words, the inner self establishes a link with the world and through this connection, as Clarissa believes, one survives with the world. However, the repetition,

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[22] A metaphor used by Henri Bergson in Matter and Memory: "[E]very perception is already memory. Practically, we perceive only the past, the pure present being the invisible progress of the past gnawing into the future" (150).

[23] "Through all ages … the battered woman … stood singing of love" (MD 89).

[24] O 57. Also noted, Bergson's idea of the dual aspect of consciousness coheres to the stratum of consciousness drawn by Damasio.

both of the narrative itself and what the narrative addresses, also amplifies the limitation of words and language.

Meanings and patterns of life can only be formed retrospectively. And it is in the narrative of the past alone that the tempo of time can be manipulated, accelerated and decelerated according to one's purpose. Even so, the narrative of the past is still subject to the present time and is nonetheless continuously transfigured as one moment succeeds another. Thus, as one sees through Mrs. Dalloway, the narrative of the past, though seemingly transfixed, is by no means determined. The novel draws to no conclusion and ends: "For there she was" (MD 213). With the death of Septimus and the resentment of Clarissa at not being able to preserve the precious gift that was once bestowed upon her, one learns the impossibility of embracing the moment in eternal stasis. As Peter Walsh notably asserts, a past memory will always acquire new scent, new taste, new sensation, through different psychic states and to try to preserve the moment is futile, even through words: "You were given a sharp, acute, uncomfortable grain—the actual meeting; horribly painful as often as not; yet in absence, in the most unlikely places, it would flower out, open, shed its scent, let you touch, taste, look about you, get the whole feel of it and understanding, after years of lying lost" (MD 168).

No past could be relived as it was, but past feelings and emotions might be reinvoked through the living body. Though language and words have the capacity to endure through time, the translation of the moment into words is also the loss of its original nature. To remember is always to create something new. Even Neville, a poet, expresses the impossibility of transcribing moments of being into words. The moment eludes preservation. To remain timeless within an enclosed moment of certainty and happiness is to attain the status of inanimation and therefore death itself (as suggested in Freud's Beyond the Pleasure Principle). To be capable of feeling, to experience, to savour the ecstasy of the moment's happiness, one must remain in being and therefore subjected to the temporality of time with its insecurities and agonies of uncertainty.

Even if one has generally mistaken the idea of the past as a static image, as Bergson suggests, the memory of the past would nevertheless lapse with time and through the repetition of reminiscence, for no past can be uncontaminated by present and future sensation. For that reason, no two moments are alike.[25]

The self evolves with time and its memory, though seemingly unchangeable, has nevertheless escaped through the words attached to it. The inevitability of the moment passing leads Clarissa to mourn the bygone past—the moment which could never be relived. Septimus has thrown his life away, whereas Clarissa has escaped death by leaving the past to die away like "the leaden circles dissolved in the air," an image that is continually repeated with the chiming of Big Ben (MD 204). With the dissolving leaden circles, the moment is therefore dispersed. The happiness which she once felt is lost forever: "A thing there was that mattered; a thing, wreathed about with chatter, defaced, obscured in her own life, let drop every day in corruption, lies, chatter" (MD 202). So Septimus is admired: he has preserved the moment.

Mrs. Dalloway depicts a day and within this day it is a life-time as suggested in Stephen Daldry's film The Hours (as Mrs. Dalloway was originally named): "a woman's whole life in a single day, just one day, and in that day her whole life."[26] The day has brought out her whole life—as each moment of life is superimposed upon its preceding one (or rather as moments succeeding one another and melting into one another). A lifetime is therefore encapsulated within the moment, reflecting Henri Bergson's idea of durée: every unit is a sum of multiplicity ("a qualitative multiplicity"); the moment is a unified whole (Time 226). The narrative is stretched along a dual time scheme: a chronological time of Big Ben as it strikes along, indicating the separateness of each point of time (a time conceptualised through the medium of space) but also a time that has been liberated from a linear, patriarchal

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[25] Bergson, Time: "deep-seated psychic states are radically heterogeneous to each other, and it is impossible that any two of them should be quite alike, since they are two different moments of a life-story" (199-200).

[26] The Hours. By Michael Cunningham. Screenplay by David Hare. Dir. Stephen Daldry. Paramount, 2003.

authority and assumes a timelessness of the female cycle delivered from the dominating power of Big Ben. The feminine cyclical time seems to subvert the paternal authority of the social system employed by Big Ben—the 'sanity' of time and proportion. It is a "Women's Time" that embodies all time: "a monumental temporality, without cleavage or escape, which has so little to do with linear time (which passes) that the very word 'temporality' hardly fits" (Kristeva 16).[27] It is a time of pure duration as each moment interpenetrates another and "each of which represents the whole, and cannot be distinguished or isolated from it except by abstract thought" (Bergson, Time 101). And therefore, within one single moment, there are numerous fragmented thoughts, feelings, past or present, interacting, regenerating, forming and taking shape in practical actions. As Woolf has described in Orlando, "the most ordinary movement in the world, such as sitting down at a table and pulling the inkstand towards one, may agitate a thousand odd, disconnected fragments, now bright, now dim, hanging and bobbing and dipping and flaunting" (55).

Mrs. Dalloway, as the time of a life-span becomes self-contained in a day, in a moment, sketches a time within time, as well as a time devoid of temporality, reflecting what Bergson has defined as pure duration—a being that is ever the same as well as ever changing.[28] The narrative, in the image of Clarissa, gives forth a life as, simultaneously, a process of living, as well as a thing formed through time which one could behold and contemplate as a whole by standing outside: "For she was a child, throwing bread to the ducks, between her parents, and at the same time a grown woman coming to her parents who stood by the lake, holding her life in her arms which, as she neared them, grew larger and larger in her arms, until it became a whole life, a complete life" (MD 46). As Bergson had expounded, it is natural and inevitable that man projects the experience of duration of heterogeneous units of time onto a homogeneous space in order to distinguish each moment from another and to

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[27] Julia Kristeva, "Women's Time," Signs 7.1 (1981) 13-35.
[28] Bergson, Time 101.

construct a chronological linear development. Laying out time upon the London landscape, Mrs. Dalloway illustrates the paradoxical relations between subjective time as it is lived in pure duration (of which moments melt into one another) and the consecutive units of time remembered through spreading out in space: a time of quality as well as a time of quantity; a time which is flowing and a time which has already flown.[29] Corresponding to Bergson's dual experience of temporality, the narrative of Mrs. Dalloway also suggests that one lives in a split consciousness mediating between living in pure duration yet at the same time standing outside, perceiving a panoramic view where moments are juxtaposed side by side rather than interposed as one moment succeeds and develops into another.[30] At one level, one lives one's psychic states as a 'progress,' while on another level, one takes what one has lived through as a thing: "for the psychic state, when it reaches the end of the *progress* which constitutes its very existence, becomes a *thing* which one can picture to oneself all at once" (Bergson, Time 198). Thus in thinking about life, Clarissa often evokes the image of life as a thing that has been bestowed upon one which one needs to tend and grow. At the same time, the narrative also captures those moments when one retires into the inner self and which Bergson regarded as the moments of living in pure duration, disregarding the tempo of an external time.

Bergson noted the importance of putting into words one's sensations and emotions (for we are by nature social beings), and it is through language that these ephemeral feelings can plausibly be substantiated. "The influence of language on sensation is deeper than is usually thought. Not only does language make us believe in the unchangeableness of our sensations, but it will sometimes deceive us as to the nature of the sensation felt" (Bergson, Time 131). According to the picture of consciousness drawn by Damasio, it is possible to venture that language, based upon autobiographical memory, is intrinsically bound up with a consciousness that projects

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[29] Bergson, Time 128-9, 221.
[30] Bergson, Time 102-3.

time onto space. By putting one's subjective sensations and perceptions into words, one inevitably dissects what is felt as a whole by the body. Words and language formulate and conceptualise independent images which (according to Bergson) represent "a late and artificial product of the mind" (Matter 165).[31] However, language is a means of communication that conveys one's inner being to the world as "social life is more practically important to us than our inner and individual existence" (Bergson, Time 130).

Unable to articulate his inner feelings and thoughts, Septimus is destined to be left in a vacuum as no narrative of him could be contrived either by himself or by his society. Septimus is immersed within his "inner and individual existence," cut off from his material surroundings (Bergson, Time 130). His inability to communicate with the outer world is already a symbolic death of the self as a social being. Therefore, feeling both dead and yet bound to live, he reaches in an ironic way what Clarissa has been thinking about—how there's no death. While Clarissa transcends death through memories and relations, through creating life rather than simply being dragged through life, Septimus is confronted with death by his unique, untranslatable, subjective experience and memory of the war which he is impelled to bury and forget. Clarissa has substantiated life through connections, through a narrative of creation: "being laid out like a mist between the people she knew best, who lifted her on their branches as she had seen the trees lift the mist, but it spread ever so far, her life, herself" (MD 10). Her parties that are meant to combine and to bring people together, creating communal experience, are truly offerings to life. Dr. Holmes advises Septimus to take an interest outside himself. But the world outside is the society determined to eliminate his subjectivity and what it embodies—a reminder of the war. Like Evans and all the dead of the war, Septimus is a ghost that the post-war society is anxious to dispel. Incapable of re-connecting with the 'real' world, Septimus is lost

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[31] Bergson further explained: "psychic facts are bound up with each other, and are always given together to immediate consciousness as an undivided whole which reflection alone cuts up into distinct fragments" (Matter 166).

somewhere in the gap between objective and subjective realities.

Being a fictional narrative, Mrs. Dalloway is already an attempt at restoring time as it attempts to re-establish a narrative, a story, in time, in this case, June 1923.[32] It has already been delivered from the scythe of time and achieved a kind of timelessness. Thereby, the dead are resurrected into the present; the 'was' becomes 'is.' The past is brought forth into the present, yet it is only because that past is already a fulfilled process that it can possibly be examined as a whole. "Storytelling, for Woolf, is the repetition of the past in memory, both in the memory of the characters and in the memory of the narrator," comments Miller (Fiction 176). The narrator who has substantiated the past, the forgotten, the dead, into the present is the very "voice of no age or sex" (MD 88). It is an observer standing beyond the passage of time—a pure objective voice of collective memory. Beth C. Schwartz takes this voice of no time as the voice of the Anon, the great poet of all ages that sings of "the anonymous world 'still exists in us, deep sunk, savage, primitive, remembered'" (725). Placing Clarissa in the role of a hostess, she seems to resemble the characterlessness of the narrative voice that, in assuming a non-persona and in denouncing its own personality, brings people together, links one life to another, while allowing them full liberty to express and be themselves. Critics have argued that Clarissa's capacity to know people is a result of her fluidity: "Clarissa's lack of a strong sense of identity has a positive aspect as well, in that it makes her particularly sensitive to others' identities…She felt herself 'everywhere,' rather than gathered into a unified, well-defined personality, and thus able to make contact with the most unlikely people and places" (Johnson 200). Lacking a centre, she is compelled to bring herself to a point—a pivot of selfhood. Similarly, her parties are her effort to create, to combine, to bring people together, building and celebrating life—in the end, a construction by which her internal dispersal can be brought to a point reflected through the gaze of her guests.

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[32] Miller further explains that "the manipulation of narrative voice in fiction is closely associated with that theme of human time or of human history which seems intrinsic to the form of the novel" (Fiction 177).

As pointed out by Miller, the narrative of Mrs. Dalloway has sketched a triple yet simultaneous time zone: the reader's and narrative's present, the day of June when Clarissa is going to give a party, and then a further retreat into the past, before the war, of the summer days in Bourton, through the characters' memories. Through its sophisticated muti-layered time zone, readers are introduced to a time of no time as well as a mind's time that defies any effort of the historians and biographers as Woolf further explored in Orlando. The time-scheme of Mrs. Dalloway endows a central meaning to the novel. Through it, the narrative brings together life and thought which are usually taken "as the poles asunder" by conventional novelist and biographers.[33] As the narrative transcends the traditional social and historical time regulated by Big Ben, it becomes capable of denoting time in the process of passing as well as the passage which time has taken and, within it, the discrete moments held by the characters. Between these two perceptions of time, Woolf brings out Septimus's gain in plunging while holding his treasure, and Clarissa's loss as her moment of happiness slips away with time.

Originally entitled *The Hours,* Mrs. Dalloway is concerned with a time experienced by the mind and the body, rather than a time controlled by the authority of Big Ben. Liken to a female and London version of Ulysses, Mrs. Dalloway takes the form of Woolf's ambition to "Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day...[as] [t]he mind receives a myriad impressions—trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel" (CR 1: 149-150). Big Ben and the London landscape serve as the only links to an external reality or an external time among various, dispersal subjective realities. As time is spread out through a spatial arrangement, Woolf juxtaposes side by side the two conceptions of time: the pervasive mis-conceptualisation of time through space and a time of pure durée that Bergson had presented philosophically in Time and Free Will.

While writing Mrs. Dalloway, Woolf noted in her diary of her discovery: "how

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[33] O 184

I dig out beautiful caves behind my characters: I think that gives exactly what I want; humanity, humour, depth. The idea is that the caves shall connect and each comes to daylight at the present moment" (WD 59).[34] Despite the fact that narrative wanders from one point of view to another in Mrs. Dalloway, individual consciousness is gradually merged into a collective and concurrent flow.[35] And therefore, the narrative exemplifies a communal sensation that "[brings] into [the] mind the turbid ebb and flow/ Of human miseries" which was likewise heard in a time long ago by Sophocles (Arnold 17-18).[36] As each 'I' of a distinct subjectivity merges and gathers into a collective spirit while retaining its own individuality, an objective world is embodied through subjective voices and an external reality is conjectured through various view-points. Mrs. Dalloway successfully sketches a world of "Leibnizian monads: each is the mirror of the universe" (Bergson, Matter 38). But more importantly, it is through the reality of each monadic mirror that the objective reality is sustained and substantiated. As she records "the incessant shower of numerous atoms," by placing the body at the centre of the perceptive images and sensations (in Bergson's terms), she has spun out the invisible thread that connects and brings together the disjoined moments into a confluent wholeness (CR 1:150).[37]

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[34] Diary entry of 30 August 1923.

[35] James Naremore, The World Without a Self 83; 86-7.

[36] Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach".

[37] Bergson wrote in Matter and Memory: "Here is a system of images which I term my perception of the universe, and which may be entirely altered by a very slight change in a certain privileged image—my body. This image occupies the centre; by it all the others are conditioned; at each of its movements everything changes, as though by a turn of a kaleidoscope" (25). William James also adopts the metaphor of the kaleidoscope in The Principles of Psychology.

V

"Time Passes": The Time Being in To the Lighthouse

Only through time time is conquered.

T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*

"Time Passes," as Woolf portrayed through a diagram in the notes that accompany her manuscript, is the bridge that pulls together "The Window" and "The Lighthouse" of the novel, attempting to unify the moments of existence into a universal reality.[1] "Time Passes" attempts to represent something beyond the transient appearance of the world, to catch a glimpse of an unalterable pattern, the 'granite' behind the intangible and fleeting 'rainbow.' It signifies the human effort that seeks endlessly out of itself to arrive at an objective sublime which is ironically a self-obliteration. However, the ego that projects restlessly beyond itself to achieve the beauty and perpetuity of a centreless objective (as in "Time Passes") is also bound within a corporal being. It is in the living body that self, life and their reality are sustained. In its apparent objectivity, "Time Passes" depicts a world situated perpetually in the midst of a continuous flow of time and while "words move, music moves/ Only in time; but that which is only living/ Could only die" (Eliot, "Burnt Norton" 5.1-3).

Although the subjective world of "The Window" and "The Lighthouse" seems transitory, it is in them that real living is realised and sustained. As illustrated in the passage when Mrs. Ramsay serves the Boeuf en Daube, she rises above the present ("hovered like a hawk suspended; like a flag floated in an element of joy which filled every nerve of her body fully and sweetly") and reflects that "of such moments...the thing is made that remains for ever after. This would remain" (TL 114). It would remain, because the moment has been lived through and appreciated subjectively and at the same time has been detached and abstracted into objectification. The wholeness

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[1] Hermione Lee, introduction, To the Lighthouse (London: Penguin, 1992) xiii-xiv.

and the coherency of the moment are apprehended through objective reflection, while it is in the body that its monumental importance and stasis is felt as it stands out among other moments. Yet, it is through contrasting with and building upon this timeless world of "Time Passes" that the ordinary life of "The Window" and "The Lighthouse" is enlivened and the moments of being are enshrined.

The beauty of Mrs. Ramsay, perceived through the 'eyes,' is often stressed in "The Window," which bestows on her an estranged and ethereal quality of being. The extreme beauty and splendour that surpass any subjective boundary seem to be accompanied by an unspeakable sense of sadness as they enhance the transient nature of subjective being with an element of eternal finality. As in a reflection of an earlier episode where Lily and Mr. Bankes stand at the edge of the sea musing on its beauty and on the sense of the eternal completeness of the world in contrast to human mortality: "instead of merriment felt come over them some sadness—because the thing was completed partly, and partly because distant views seem to outlast by a million years (Lily thought) the gazer to be communing already with a sky which beholds an earth entirely at rest" (TL 25).

Mrs. Ramsay is the human embodiment of this duality and of the contrast between eternity and a subjective vitality. "For always, he [Mr. Bankes] thought, there was something incongruous to be worked into the harmony of her face" (TL 34). It is not until "The Lighthouse," with the absence of 'the real thing,' that Lily Briscoe can achieve the vision which allows her to finish her painting of 'the mother and the child' sitting at the window. For she reaches beyond the time gap and approaches a re-configuration of Mrs. Ramsay through a connection involving subjective feeling (rather than an unemotional optical and objective judgement through 'the window' of her own perspective). It is a vision that offers a compromise between a pure objectivity preserved in the completeness of Beauty itself, and the subjectivity that (though transient) upholds a factuality of 'being.' The painting can never be finished as long as Mrs. Ramsay is continuously perceived from the outside and the intrinsic

aspects of feelings and emotions are left unrecognised. To the Lighthouse is not just about apprehending and bemoaning the cruelty and the mortality of 'life' in general, but it aspires to capture the subjective life in its actual process of living and at the same time and through it to transcend the mortality of life by attaining the stasis of the moment.

In a sorrowful tone, To the Lighthouse is said to be a form of personal therapy that enables Woolf to mourn and appease the ghost of her parents. In her attempt to write about the dead, she inevitably confronts a Time that continues to transform the moments of stillness that she attempts to encapsulate.[2] The structural design of To the Lighthouse, contrasting subjective and objective realities, enhances Woolf's vision of something permanent and enduring beyond the transient appearance of the world—the reality of a "visionary" and yet "austere" kitchen table which Mr. Ramsay pursues endlessly in doubts (TL 170). "Time Passes" is the design formulated to embody the insubstantial concept of time and to evince Woolf's aesthetic aim of arresting the moment—to combat the temporality of the subjective moment through the timeless beauty and truth attained through a work of art. In close resemblance to John Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn," "Time Passes" sings out "an unheard" but more "endeared" melody of Beauty and Timelessness that ambivalently intensifies the temporality of being yet at the same time subdues the agony of time:

> So loveliness reigned and stillness, and together made the shape of loveliness itself, a form from which life had parted…Loveliness and stillness clasped hands in the bedroom…, rubbing, snuffling, iterating, and reiterating their questions—'Will you fade? Will you perish?'—scarcely disturbed the peace, the indifference, the air of pure integrity, as if the question they asked scarcely needed that they should answer: we remain. (TL 141)

In the still movement of "Time Passes," beauty and loveliness remain,

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[2] "I meant to write about death, only life came breaking in as usual" Diary entry 17 February 1922. D 2:167.

encapsulated in a perpetual pattern. Yet, the stillness and loveliness of "Time Passes" is unappreciated subjectively and therefore unlived, like the love that is sealed forever on the Grecian Urn. In stillness, the lovers not only transcend time but also subjective boundaries as they continue to convey the excitement and sensation of love to all observers. But, in stillness, the lovers, though raised above time, lose their individual subjectivity. They have become objectified symbols of love rather than simply lovers. The loveliness and stillness of this timeless world diminishes the weight and significance of individual life. The inescapable mortality and sorrow of living is what Mrs. Ramsay has felt close to her heart and is further completed through her death in "Time Passes."

With Mrs. McNab roaming about the semi-uninhabited world, providing a subjective but nonetheless detached remorse concerning the changes which spill over the Ramsays, the nature of "Time Passes" is traversed with contradictory impulses. Being a working class woman and therefore an outsider to the Ramsays' world, Mrs. McNab's existence does not jeopardise the pure objective world of "Time Passes"; instead the insertion of her conscious differentiation between the past and the present increases the contrast between the spatial-temporal privacy occupied by specific human subjectivity and an inhuman, timeless and objective reality. There alone in the unoccupied present of the house, she can still imagine the old days continuing with the children rushing in and out. "Yes, she [Mrs. McNab] could see Mrs. Ramsay as she came up the drive with the washing" and as Mrs. Ramsay tends the garden in that grey cloak (TL 148). The death of Mrs. Ramsay is only remotely conveyed (through an even more distant voice within parenthesis). The detached and depersonalised narrative voice renders Mrs. McNab as an 'eternality' that continues to exist by itself, detached and unaffected. As she lurches and leers and rolls from room to room, singing in a voice "of witlessness, humour, persistency itself...she seemed to say how it was one long sorrow and trouble, how it was getting up and going to bed again, and bringing things out and putting them away again" (TL 142). In spite of time changes

(and the obscured reality of the happening of a war), "Mrs. McNab, [hoarding within her the reality of life], continue[s] to drink and gossip as before," untouched by the 'passing of Time' or individual misery (TL 143). As if a maternal guardian of this atemporal world, Mrs. McNab (also a perpetual yet unconscious present) 'oars about like a tropical fish,' cleaning and sweeping through the 'sun-lanced' air (TL 145).

In featuring the elongated, non-conscious, nights when all lamps are put out, "Time Passes" depicts the definite reality of the material world in spite of individual consciousness and existence: "whatever else may perish and disappear what lies here is steadfast…here you can neither touch nor destroy"—a portrayal of an 'eyeless' world without a perceiving 'I' (TL 138). Yet, through the contrast with the perpetual movement of "Time Passes" (where changes of personal circumstances are presented as so trivial and inconsequential that they appear only in parenthesis), ordinary, everyday, life is uplifted into substantial moments of being, conferring the provisional 'reality' of a subjective universe. The moment that strikes the core of the sensory system shines out and years after, it survives "ringed round, lit up, visible to the last detail, with all before it blank and all after it blank, for miles and miles" (TL 186).

"Time Passes" subverts the significance of this privacy to which each character unswervingly clings. The world continues to exist without an 'I.' In "The Window," the urgent desire of each character to conceal his or her subjective privacy is manifested: Lily will not risk Charles Tansley or Mr. Ramsay appearing from behind to observe her painting, for a part of her is unavoidably revealed on the canvas. But the significance of this privacy is deprecated by the eternal universe. "Time Passes" presents the view from such a reality, independent of human perceptions and deprived of any private consciousness: confounded within the darkness "there was scarcely anything left of body or mind by which one could say 'This is he' or 'This is her'"(TL 137). In the words of T. S. Eliot, it is a darkness of "deprivation/And destitution of all property,/Desiccation of the world of sense,/Evacuation of the world of fancy,/Inoperancy of the world of spirit"("Burnt Norton" 3.28-32). Individual

subjectivity is obliterated. Unlike "The Window" and "The Lighthouse" (where there is the focus of Mrs. Ramsay) with their achievement of 'life' and 'the thing itself,' "Time Passes" (resembling Mrs McNab) has its perspective diffusely falling on nothing. "Time Passes," suggests the existence of a pure objective world in the terms of Bertrand Russell's 'sensibilia'[3]—the plausibility of sense-data devoid of a percipient. Its existence is entirely autonomous, independent of any mental consciousness, and therefore sustaining its own 'reality.' The recognition of the permanent existence of sensibilia dethrones the egoistic 'I' from its central position. The self-important idea of subjective idealism that reality resides in the human mind is thoroughly overthrown.

As Ann Banfield suggests, "Time Passes" portrays the world seen without a self. It is a world that is outside individual time and space, outside any immediate experience that one might imagine—a 'real' world that lies beyond ordinary conceptions and which the philosophers and scientists endeavour to explore through logical reasoning and mathematical calculation.[4] In "Time Passes," the narrative retreats from any human consciousness (especially from the central position of the Ramsays) to illustrate the independent existence of a world beyond and outside percipients. The narrator of "Time Passes," in contrast to two other parts, withdraws from the personal perspective of the characters. As each character goes to bed, each individual lamp that lights the private world is put out, providing the reader with a sense of plunging into a profound darkness. The lamps that once lit up individual rooms seem to symbolise an internal 'I,' the subjective consciousness of a self, that illuminates a subjective sphere, and it is through the illumination of these private lamps that readers peer into "The Window" and receive multiple perspectives on Mrs.

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[3] A term used by Bertrand Russell to depict the existence of the substances unperceived in contrast to sense-data, objects perceived. Banfield, Phantom 70-71.

[4] Around 1898, the Cambridge theory of knowledge, with Bertrand Russell, Alfred Whitehead, and G. E. Moore as the member of the Cambridge Apostles, starts to turn its focus on philosophical Realism—an attempt to reach beyond one's preconceptions and understand the imperceptible world through logic and mathematics.

Ramsay.

"[A] downpouring of immense darkness" with each lamp being put out, signifies the elimination of any observer 'I'—a world of unperceived sensibilia (TL 137). As a selfless world, "Time Passes" mirrors Mrs. Ramsay's wedge-shaped core of darkness where no boundary can be drawn for it is limitless and unfathomably deep. Thus, day passes day, the lighthouse rotates routinely, flowers bloom and fade, even as eyes are shut and characters are absent. "Time Passes" showers upon its readers a series of plausible but unrealised sensibilia. However, in "Time Passes" a universal Real, situated beyond any temporality, is suggested with the thorough obliteration of all possible subjective space. Without a clear perspective to define this unseen world, the narrative of "Time Passes" seems to disperse without focus, rumbling monotonously through an indifferent Nature. Yet, in this indifferent Nature resides the absolute (and depersonalised) objectivity, rigidly fixed as a knot in the centre, carrying the human projection of the hope for "some absolute good, some crystal of intensity, remote from the known pleasures and familiar virtues, something alien to the processes of domestic life, single, hard, bright, like a diamond in the sand, which would render the possessor secure" (TL 144).

Through "Time Passes," with its non-subjective description of the deserted house, the reader's senses are taken far beyond his/her surroundings and private sensations in order to be made aware of the existence of an unoccupied time and space which continues to exist without any actual observer. "Time Passes" is an attempt to delineate the underlying design that escapes subjective consciousness. It depicts an imperceptible world that is unaltered by the egotistic consciousness which tends to project a world rather than to perceive the world as it is. And yet, by placing this notion of the existence of an unobserved but persistent world at the centre of the novel. Woolf, by contrast, has made her readers more aware of the 'subjectivity' of reality and its 'momentary' nature. As the moments of subjective being are transformed into an art work, its subjective quality is objectified and therefore achieves an atemporal

world with no self. Thus, Mrs. Ramsay feels inclined to take a moment while every one withdraws from the dining room, "to stand still after all that chatter, and pick out one particular thing; the thing that mattered; to detached it; separate it off; clean it of all the emotions and odds and ends of things, and so hold it before her and bring it to the tribunal" (TL 122). The inclination shares an affinity with Lily's painting which is also an attempt to seize the moment, to "exchang[e] the fluidity of life for the concentration of painting [or art]," the making of the subjective moment into a detached, objective, eternal entity (TL 173).

Mrs. Ramsay in her beauty is beheld as the embodiment of an objective "Absolute" and "Truth" that defies temporality, as in Keats' phrase: "Beauty is Truth, truth beauty." Passing into non-being, Mrs. Ramsay achieves a final dissolution in death and only then does she attain the essentiality of her 'atemporal' being as 'the thing itself.' She has become an embodiment of the 'truth,' the 'knowledge' of life. Dying in parenthesis, the beauty, the essential thing, the image, is forever preserved within the frame of "The Window" and therefore her essentiality is elevated beyond the corruption of temporality. In her beauty there resides the solution and the 'Real' which Lily has attempted to imagine through 'the phantom table.' After the ten year interval, Lily resumes her position in order to attempt to restore the impression left by Mrs. Ramsay; to re-approach the treasure of knowledge that Mrs. Ramsay seems to carry within her; to reach for the thing itself that surpasses mortality.[5] Gazing into the void, there is no longer a focal object that would mirror and reflect any specific personal point of view, but rather one that absorbs all projections, eliminating the self-projection as well as reflection of the egoistic 'I,' when the urge to question is finally abandoned, along with the wilful demand for answers from life. Only then, the concealed and unperceived Truth manifests itself.

The entire section of "Time Passes" reflects the looking-glass which once beheld and was beheld through a centre of perception, but now gazes blankly into an

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[5] TL 57.

unobserved world (producing a pure reflection of the world uncontaminated by any personal perspective or concern).[6] As Avrom Fleishman has suggested, the air moving through the house in "Time Passes" should be taken as "a medium of pure consciousness" which is not reflected through the mirror of a human mind ("Woolf" 731). "Time Passes" serves as a voice of the impersonalised air, "sounded as if they were floating like flowers on water out there, cut off from them all, as if no one had said them, but they had come into existence of themselves," that underlies the immediate experience of the characters (TL 120). By placing an un-experienced world of sensibilia at the centre of the subjective moments of "The Window" and "The Lighthouse," a time speculated through an objective stance is set off against a subjective time of living. "Time Passes" signifies the imperceptible yet nonetheless solid table that artists, as well as mathematicians, strive to imagine, conceptualise and embody. It illuminates the personal strain between the estrangement of an objective self, perceiving its own temporality, against the atemporal 'Real,' and the inevitable envelopment of subjective being. Achieving an ultimate objectivity is the death of the self as exemplified through Mrs. Ramsay.

The time in "Times Passes" is non-subjective—uninvolved with any psychic state—and is therefore an 'astronomical time' of quantity which, as explained by Bergson, could be reduced according to the homogeneous nature of each unit. The successive moments of durée present a time of quality in terms of subjective involvement. Despite the fact that there is a time-gap of ten years, characters pick up immediately what they have left behind ten years ago as if only the dream of a single night has intervened. The lapse of time is passed unconsciously. Lily begins painting the canvas which she has been working on ten years ago. Her thoughts of where she left her paints the previous night also enhance the confusion of the actual amount of time that has lapsed through "Time Passes." Mr. Carmichael resumes his sun-bathing position on the lawn. The expected expedition is finally carried out as promised.

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[6] TL 141.

Without "Time Passes," one can hardly tell that there are ten years in between these two days of consecutive motion. With the unreality of "Time Passes," Mrs. Ramsay seems at once genuine and real as well as distant and inaccessible to Lily, as Lily tries to reconnect, to reconstruct and rescue her internal images of Mrs. Ramsay that have been obscured by her initial subjective interventions and her own personal history of the past ten years (which has been left out of the narrative).

As the narrative voice soars beyond subjective engagement, obliterating personal experience and cancelling out private boundaries, "Time Passes" provides a duality of connectivity as well as separateness. Between the two (non)consecutive days, an emotional gap subsists among the surviving characters beneath the apparent continuity. The life of the characters between these ten years is left blank. Although the return to the house awakens familiarity, it also prompts an even more poignant awareness of how circumstances have definitely changed. The world seems to roll on in all forgetfulness of the ten years in between, as if one wakes from a dream with feelings from the dream still lingering but the content of the dream obliterated, bestowing a double sense of familiarity and estrangement. Feeling lost and disconnected, "as if the link that usually bound things together had been cut, and they floated up here, down there, off, anyhow," Lily Briscoe cannot feel genuinely the changes and losses in the Ramsay's family as she stands in that house which seems to be the same: "How aimless it was, how chaotic, how unreal it was…Mrs. Ramsay dead, Andrew killed; Prue dead too—repeat it as she might, it roused no feeling in her" (TL 160). The actuality of the real world seems instead dreamy and unreal compared to the concrete imagery and feelings of yesterday that still persist in the mind and in the sensory nerves of the body. The detached and unconnected familiarity of the scene bestows upon one a sense of "extraordinary unreality" (TL 161).

By contrasting public time and time in the mind (and body), the narrative brings forth the nature of life, of the vacillation between objective appraisal and subjective

absorption.[7] The opposition between "Time Passes" and the two other sections elucidates an ambivalence towards the idea of a universal time and a centreless world of a pure objectivity. Yet through such universality, whether "Time Passes" actually sets flow the time stream or freezes it becomes controversial. For the fast flowing of a universal time deprived of all human consciousness as it continues in a perennial course gives the effect of suspended stillness. "Time Passes" endows an infinite world which is impassive to human change, as if change only occurs through subjective involvement. As Mrs. Ramsay has apprehended, it is through the entirety of the moment that stands without further transformations, that the movement and the changes of her world are brought out through the contrast: "Her world was changing: they were still. The event had given her a sense of movement" (TL 122).

In a sense, it is through "Time Passes," the time-interval, that the passing of a universal time is made explicit, yet without any real events taking place. Like a dream, "Time Passes" presents a world of no time as each temporal moment is identical to another. The text seems to convey what Bertrand Russell calls "a pluralistic timeless world of Platonic ideas" that exhibits a constant "reality" unsusceptible to change (qtd. in Phantom 63). Time units accrue, yet being no different from each other, as the objective sense-data seem to remain the same, one simply replaces another in a simple accumulation of temporal quantity, instead of quality, that makes one day no different from another.[8] As "Time Passes" controversially conveys a sense of the stream of time in an eternal stillness, the complexity of time passing within and without individual consciousness is simultaneously depicted. With "Time Passes," the narrative manifests the subjective/objective duality of the human mind suggesting that, although it is through bodily senses that knowledge is first conceived, an objective,

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[7] Ann Banfield, "'Time Passes': Virginia Woolf, Post-Impressionism, and Cambridge Time" Poetics Today 24.3 (2003) 479.

[8] As mentioned in the previous chapter, Bergson sees inner duration as qualitative multiplicity therefore no any two moments are alike and could be reducible. "Time Passes" seems to resemble the astronomy example Bergson has given to illustrate the difference between an inner time experienced and a time of the universe whose course is predictable through logic reasoning and therefore the extensity of time is reducible.

though perhaps intuitive, sense of the world and its reality (that is nonetheless stimulated by the sensory input) could still be attained beyond one's immediate perceptual experience.

Ann Banfield, adopting Russell's concept of time passes as 'a still sequence of timeless positions,' sees "Time Passes" as that which makes To the Lighthouse a Post-Impressionist work rather than an Impressionist one: the design enlivens the still moments of "The Window" and "The Lighthouse" by committing them to a temporal sequence. Banfield contends that by introducing temporal elements into the Impressionist short stories, a three-dimensional effect is therefore effected which is closer to Post-Impressionism. Although both Impressionist and Post-Impressionist painters attempted to seize the moment, the "Post-Impressionist constructed a geometry in Impressionism's sensible world, combining 'vision' and 'design'" to depict not just the moment but the moment within its temporal and subjective context ("Time" 471).[9] Both the moment's arrest in stasis and the fleeting nature of the moments among the stream of time are presented. The moment that is seemingly perpetuated through feelings is now endowed with a transitory demeanour.

As suggested by Banfield, "literature's counterpart to the geometry of spatial relations were the temporal relations of Cambridge time philosophy" ("Time" 471). With the introduction of temporality, the novel achieves a three-dimensional effect. Both "The Window" and "The Lighthouse" signify those specific temporal points when time is actually lived, while "Time Passes" represents the link between these two moments of being which is substantiated through a contrast to the numerous undifferentiated moments of non-being.[10] For, "'Time Passed' (here the exact amount could be indicated in bracket) and nothing whatever happens" (O 68). Only Mrs. Ramsay's death is announced in parenthesis as if it is an incident that exerts no

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[9] Abstract to "Time Passes: Virginia Woolf, Post-Impressionism, and Cambridge Time"

[10] "The moment is random also in being one of an infinite number of possible moments. Separated by moments of non-being, like the darkness-encircled lights...They are collections of sound surrounded by silence" (Banfield, Phantom 117).

influence on the scale of life or the course of time. If it is a non-existent interval, then one is tempted to ask: what is 'Time'? Universal time is a time without temporality. And also, would there be time without a perceiver?

The time portrayed in "Time Passes" is not directly experienced, yet it maintains an undeniable 'reality,' contrasting with Berkeley's idea that what is, is perceived. The character's subjective experience of the passing of time is not directly approached until in "The Lighthouse" when Lily starts to reach back in time and mourn for time lost. However, with the insertion of "Time Passes," the narrative strategy also affirms that it is not by living through the time-interval itself that the lapsing of time is brought to the consciousness of the characters, but through the attempt to reach beyond the time-interval (which coheres with Bergson's idea that only by standing without time could the linearity of the time's course be perceived or as it is said by Eliot, "To be conscious is not to be in time") ("Burnt Norton" 2.40). The time passed is carried within the moment and recognised only through its pastness. Therefore, "Time Passes," in depicting a world of sensibilia which exists without a self—a world of perpetuation—suggests an un-intervening time which exerts no influence upon the presence of the existing sensibilia. Insofar as this is the case, time in "Time Passes" is itself an unperceived sensibile and therefore never to be experienced in its immediacy. By the exhibition of the trajectory of an imperceptible time in its act of passing, a 'reality' of time, independent of human consciousness, is conferred.[11]

Through the technique of free indirect discourse, Woolf portrays a world dissected into variant private universes engrossed with a time and space of their own as each character takes up a different point of view in perceiving the world. These various perspectives are each a projection of an exclusive private world. Banfield has pointed out how private and public opposition is introduced by Russell as a substitute

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[11] In History of English Thought, Leslie Stephen writes: "Unless you can perceive the realities as they are not revealed to our perceptive faculties—that is to say, unless you can discover unperceivable perceptions—you are not in the presence of facts, but of phantasms" (qtd. in Banfield, Phantom 73). See also Banfield, Phantom 40 for sensibilia and sensibile.

for as well as a commentary on the nature of subject and object, mind and matter, and that, though the dualism remains, it "depsychologises one side, reducing the distance from one to the other" (Banfield, Phantom 73). With such division, the private world of the mind is no longer an unintelligible and unapproachable world of different substance that cannot be speculated through the logic and the concept of the causal law of physics and mathematics. For, the variance lies in the difference of the received sense-data, and a conjecture of the psychological state, therefore, could be made through the recognition and interpretation of the sense-data alone. Again with the analogy of 'a table,' Russell suggests that although the table would be perceived differently from its variant aspects, a generality of the table could still be inferred through 'a set' of all those particulars.

Between physics and psychology, the difference lies in their means of approach: "physics treat as a unit the whole system of appearances of a piece of matter, whereas psychology is interested in certain of these appearances themselves" (Russell, Analysis 83-4). If, as suggested by the idea of neutral monism, there is no substantive difference between mind and matter, psychological states could then also be inferred by a conditioned accountability and generalisation of a universal regularity as in physics. By 'depsychologising' (and therefore depersonalising the psychical causal law), the difference in psychological states could then be taken as a result of receptive differences of outward stimuli rather than as a variance of intrinsic subjective quality. Yet, even so, a thorough knowledge of a private, subjective room still remains impossible: though we may empathise with another's pain or pleasure, the feelings felt are particular to the subject itself. Following the logical conjecture, a real table could be attained through a refined collection of all particulars. Lily reflects, with reference to Mrs. Ramsay, "One wanted fifty pairs of eyes to see with...Fifty pairs of eyes were not enough to get round that one woman with" (TL 214). Even through the various eyes of "The Window," the subjective realm of Mrs. Ramsay remains unfathomably deep. The subjective rooms and private points of view are not simply "a point at

which sense-data are gathered and given to an observer" (Banfield, Phantom 72). The received sense-data cannot stand as the entire condition of a state of mind, while the outward actions are unduly representations of a whole mental realm.

Although largely influenced by Russell, the privacy which Woolf bestowed upon her characters is not solely defined in relation to "observation's purely structural position, one already there before an observer arrives" (Banfield, Phantom 72). The private world of Woolf is a world where sense-data are received through an immediate interaction with the body and therefore prompt a sensation that is intertwined with personal memories of past sensations (which Russell did also recognise as he tried to examine the impact of the past and memory, although he insisted that there is no intrinsic difference between the data of psychology and those of physics). Thus, the subject is not simply a passive receiver of sense-data; instead s/he is actively engaged in a mutual correspondence of receiving, interpreting, and projecting, and it is this process of subjective engagement that constant eludes objective assessment, contrasting Russell's idea that "psychology groups together those having the same 'passive' place"(Analysis 256). The sensation kindled by the sense-data is never wholly an objective reaction that could be induced through any formulaic calculation but rather a thoroughly subjective, 'dynamic' state derived out of the body's memory of its personal history. It is a world of private sensations and perceptions which are neither simply a mental nor a bodily product, but rather a composite of the two, and it is for this reason that the private world often eludes logical reasoning and scientific prediction. By dividing sense-data from sensations, Russell makes possible a "subjectless subjectivity" by dismissing the factors of the subjective characteristic of the observer.[12] While not denying the subjectless subjectivity presented through "Time Passes," it would be inappropriate to consider the 'private' experience of time

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[12] Banfield, Phantom: "It is this *logical possibility* of the detachment of sense-data from sensation and, *a fortiori*, from the subject of sensation, which is crucial" (69). Also, "In this extra-mental 'subjective' space, the physical and the subjective are conjoined in 'physical subjectivity or 'physiological subjectivity,' for Berkeley a contradiction but for Russell a logical possibility....The result is a theory of knowledge with at its centre the strange notion of a subjectless subjectivity" (70).

and time's passing under the context of a physical-psychological state.

Time passing in a series of 'private' moments of stillness is but a time of objective stance as conferred through Russell's mathematical approach and elucidated by Neville's epic moments, while Bergson's durée is a novelist's recognition of the temporal self that is in a perpetual transition from moment to moment but is nevertheless fundamental to a sense of selfhood. The continuity of the process itself sustains the sense of an eternal stasis as in "Time Passes." Although Bergson's durée is a time lived through subjective engagement, its passage and passing is only unconsciously perceived. Russell's numeral line of time passing (as Bergson has argued) is but a time known only retrospectively as one stands beyond the moment. As Banfield suggests, the moments of being are then less an experience of time than an experience of no time. Living within temporality, time is therefore unperceivable as the "music heard so deeply/That it is not heard at all" ("The Dry Salvages" 5.27). Insofar as the core self is but the momentary feeling of being in existence that varies from moment to moment, it is nonetheless often mistaken as a stance of perpetual stillness.

No moment could fully enclose itself as a totality, since every moment is always a transition from a past to a future in the changes of bodily conditions. In contrast with what Russell has suggested, no moment could be entirely 'private' from another, for "If all time is eternally present/ All time is unredeemable" ("Burnt Norton" 1.4-5). Without the intermingling of an objective sensation with other personal sensations that attach to peculiar tastes, sounds or words, the Proustian involuntary memory triggered by a madeleine, dipped in the tea, would be impossible. It is through the autobiographical memory of the sensory systems that the past and what has been forgotten continue to be preserved along with the living being.

Even with all the effort to pursue a purely objective world, the unexpected would still arise from some concealed compartment and forgotten memory within oneself. Looking through "The Window," the constant shift between the perspectives of

different characters indicates that these characters hardly share a similar universe and each one of them perceives the world differently through a window of his or her own. Mrs. Ramsay sitting by the window or at the centre of the table becomes the focal and framed object to which each character seeks to relate and define itself in detachment. As a woman, Mrs. Ramsay has been objectified, but still her subjective world remains impenetrable. Already, like a work of art, in her beauty which, nonetheless, can be perceived in its wholeness, Mrs. Ramsay is the human embodiment of the 'profundity' of Nature and a concealed Truth:

> Was it wisdom? Was it knowledge? Was it, once more, the deceptiveness of beauty, so that all one's perceptions, half-way to truth, were tangled in a golden mesh? Or did she lock up within her some secret which certainly Lily Briscoe believed people must have for the world to go on at all. (TL 57)

"The Window" exemplifies a jigsaw puzzle where the achievement of a panorama is dependent upon building up all the scattered bits and pieces and, therefore, no character situated in the picture could possibly achieve a full view of the self and of the world around it unless by elimination of the self. "The Window" delineates a Leibnizian monadological universe: each mind mirroring a universe of its own reality.[13] In "The Window," each character carries along with them a personal history and as they are absorbed within their memories, they embody a private world illuminated by their own intrinsic light. These characters might be placed within the same physical time and space; nevertheless, each of them, through the reflection of their perspective, sees the world differently. The public time which brings them to sit together around the same dining table is never the actual time in which the characters are mentally situated. Each of them has the tendency to experience the outer world according to his or her preconceptions (built out of past experience and belief). It is not until those sudden moments in which they seem to cast off their past, their

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[13] Banfield, Phantom 72.

preoccupations, and their personal concerns, that living the moment as it is becomes possible.

But physical assemblage does not necessarily lead to mental attunement. Each character continues to live, more or less, within a private temporal world of his/her own. While Mrs. Ramsay is serving dinner, she is thinking about her life, about her effort to integrate, about her past. Lily, though, seems to be aware of the dinner conversation and participates in it, strays away from time to time into her own meditations on her painting. She starts with an attempt to understand Mrs. Ramsay's profundity, turns to pitying Mr. Bankes, and ends up meditating on the design that she should apply to her canvas. Charles Tansley, self-conscious about the baseness of his dress, never stops regretting the time he has lost by participating in this "silly, superficial, flimsy" dinner party which is merely a waste of time and for which he seems so unfit (TL 93). Throughout the entire dinner, he is trying to justify his own achievements despite his humble clothing. He is eager to assert himself, driven by the obsessive consciousness of his family background. As Mrs. Ramsay has observed, it is always the 'I' that matters, but with everyone clinging onto 'I,' convergence is impossible: intentions are misunderstood. In both "The Window" and "The Lighthouse," events are dissected through the perspectives of different characters. The dinner barely holds its guests together. And yet, "Nothing seemed to have merged. They all sat separate" (TL 91). Sitting round the dinner table, few are attentive to the occasion itself—even the hostess, Mrs. Ramsay herself, feels "being past everything, through everything, out of everything" (TL 91).

The dinner party encloses not just the moment itself, but, resembling Mrs. Dalloway, it actually contains the pasts of each individual. All of the past is gathered up in that moment. The present is not restricted to its very moment alone, but is rather an accumulation of various moments dissected by the various perspectives adopted by the characters in responding to different private times and worlds within themselves. No present is experienced simply as it is, and Russell's argument of "subjectless

subjectivity" is thrust into doubt. Although Russell would have suggested that this is because a different person, each time, has taken up a different sense-data and therefore a different sensation has arisen, the problem of Russell's explanation would be his disregarding of the involvement of the autobiographical memory of bodily experiences. The dinner produces differences not simply because each has taken up different sense-data, but also because of the impact of their different histories. Perhaps, though unperceived, the reality of the sensibilia is undeniable, yet Russell's "physical subjectivity" could still not have determined nor substantiated the subjective sensations and perceptions of an individual.

In "Time Passes," subjective division is thoroughly abolished. Individual selfhood has been deprived of brinks and edges. Without the engagement of human perspective, "Time Passes" presents a non-human, vegetable world of trees and flowers "standing there, looking before them, looking up, yet beholding nothing, eyeless, and so terrible" (TL 147). Before "Time Passes," the sinking into the wedged-shape core of darkness already anticipates the eternal present without any temporal order. The present can only be sensed as it is when a character is capable of reaching down into the core self or soaring above the autobiographical self where no personal history nor fixed social identity is there to obscure the present. "Time Passes" provides a general account of the world that continues on even if there are no beholders. The world comes into a unified wholeness without differentiation.

As Russell argued: with each different person in the room there would be a different universe.[14] Each of these universes might intersect with another, but they are never identical. Everyone not only tends to project a world of his or her own which is private from any other, but also tries to conceal inner feelings and "inventing differences, when people, heaven knows, were different enough without that" (TL

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[14] Russell, Logic and Knowledge: "[E]ach particular that there is in the world does not in any way logically depend upon any other particular. Each one might happen to be the whole universe" (qtd. in Banfield, Phantom 112).

13).[15] Consequently, it makes it hard for one character to probe into the mind and universe of another, and even more impossible for each of them to truly understand another. It is impossible, as Lily has observed by watching Mrs. Ramsay sinks into a world of her own, to follow her into "that strange no-man's land" (TL 92). Complete unity and understanding with one another seems to be impossible, leading Lily to wonder: "What device for becoming, like waters poured into one jar. inextricably the same, one with the object one adored…it was not knowledge but unity that she desired" (TL 57).

The voice of the character dominates the narrative, yet the voice of the narrator becomes inseparable from those of the characters. Instead of providing an omnipresent and omniscient narrator with a voice of its own, who is able to give us an objective description of the external circumstances, Woolf has the voice of her characters heard directly by the reader, enabling the reader to perceive and think with them. According to J. Hillis Miller, what the central narrator in Woolf's novels is able to perceive and describe is the same as that perceived by the characters: "The narrator, it appears, is a collective consciousness, dependent on the consciousnesses of the various characters for its existence. The narrator is without life, personality, opinions, and feelings of its own, and yet is doomed to see all the lives, personalities, opinions" (Miller, Tropes 157).[16] In depicting the individual subjective world, the reader is restricted to each of the presented subjective points of view as well as being bombarded with diverse judgements and opinions. Every description has its specific point of view. Every perception is merely partially true. However, in all Woolf's works, there is always the attempt to bring them together in order to create the resonance of a shared perspective amongst individuals. By narrating her story through the subjective points of view of her characters, Woolf dissects the sphere of her novel into a series of seemingly

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[15] The image of projecting a world of one's own is adopted from Thomas Pynchon's The Crying of Lot49 (London: Vintage-Random House, 2000).

[16] J. Hillis Miller, Tropes, Parables, Performatives: Essays on Twentieth-Century Literature (New York: Havester Wheatsheaf-Simon&Schuster, 1990).

separated private worlds which, according to the time-concept of Russell, are private from any other time and space—"each monad, rooted in one perspective, has 'a room of its own'" "in the private 'here' and 'now'" (Banfield, Phantom 111; 102; 113). Through each different perspective, one gets a different impression of the personal traits of the characters. There is always that contradictory picturing of each character—Mr. Ramsay is a hero, a tyrant, as well as a man struggling against his ordinariness; Mrs. Ramsay is both the protecting mother as well as a beautiful enchantress who is also "tyrannical, domineering and masterful," she 'whose wishes must be obeyed' (TL 65; 32).

Fleishman has argued that it is through the accumulation of these different perceptions that one is able to approach the 'real':

> The essential characteristic of the technique represented by Virginia Woolf is that we are given not merely one person whose consciousness is rendered, but many persons, with frequent shifts from one to the other…The multiplicity of persons suggests that we are here after all confronted with an endeavour to investigate an objective reality. (Fleishman, "Woolf" 718)

Within the general public time, there are numerous private spheres that are impenetrable by others. By presenting the inner thoughts of different characters, readers are made aware of the conflicts and struggles which exist between the characters—how each of them strives to understand the mind and feeling of another and how such a desire is often frustrated. Even the narrator seems to fail to grasp the first-personal, subjective world of each character. Fleishman adopts McTaggart's notion of how the universe consists of selves, and how "an ideal condition in which selves will come perfectly to know each other and thereby to love each other...will become the universal unity in which each individual will have perfect existence" (Fleishman, "Woolf" 727). Such a notion bears a similarity to what Clarissa has said: "which perhaps was the reward of having cared for people; they came back in the middle of St. James's Park on a fine morning" (MD 7). Or, as Lily has questioned

similarly: "could loving, as people called it, make her and Mrs. Ramsay one?" (TL 57). Through intimacy and love, Lily seeks for the knowledge to transcend individuality and to feel and know the subjective world of others. Yet, as Lily has observed, those moments of transcendence, that pass beyond the subjective self so that a unity and wholeness is formed, are so ephemeral. For these moments come and go so unexpectedly and so quickly that no language or words could be formed in time to embody them and what one comes to remember is merely a dim, indistinct, feeling.

By posing the temporal human perception against the vast eternity of unoccupied perception, Woolf suspends time from its incessant flow and creates successfully that sense of a 'moment of being' (as Russell has argued every moment is self-enclosed within its own spatial and temporal state). It is a still moment of being, where a centre, a knot, a meaning, is formed in contrast to various moments of non-being. Yet, by rendering the narrative of her novel through subjective worlds, the reader is introduced to a time within time where all time melts into one and yet no time is reducible, echoing that eternal time paradox in Eliot's Four Quartets. The accumulation of time is reflected instantly through the flux of feelings and thoughts as with the new experience of a new moment a new mergence of the present and past is formed. Furthermore, the passing of time is experienced by becoming aware of the difference between each time point. But, if time is actually suspended within those still moments of being of the characters, then there will not be any agony of the intrusion of time, for within each still moment is an atemporal world where no past or future is perceptible. For "within, the moment has no temporal order," there is no past or future, but only a complete present (Banfield, Phantom 117). Instead of being simply a transition from past to future, every present moment is fully itself. To move from one definite private moment to another, like the opening of Mrs. Dalloway, is only possible in durée, where all time is carried within each moment, positing a continuous transition.

If time is like the numerical line which is composed by numerous dots, then

within a specific moment, it would be impossible for one to perceive time in its linear picture, not to mention the impossibility of being conscious of what comes before or after. As Lily attempts to retrieve her perceptions of Mrs. Ramsay (whom she feels to be distant and unapproachable), she is both in the present as well as the past. Apparently readers are made aware that the time gap between the two days of "The Window" and "The Lighthouse" is in fact a ten years gap, even though each character's life within these ten years is absent from the narrative. Nonetheless, the disjointed flow of emotions and the ambivalence of distant and familiar feelings disclose the present of the veiled feelings and emotions hoarded in the body through the absent years. "Time Passes" is instead the readers' experience of the passing of time from an external perspective like that of the narrator's, not the direct experience of time passing of the characters. For the time of "Time Passes," as depicted through an external point of view, is not the character's experience, but the reader's. By condensing all years passed into one night of sleep, a contrastive repercussion is created. In a sense, it provides one with a sense of how 'unconsciously' time has lapsed. The time between these years, like the time passing in one's dream, is not experienced by the sleeper, and presumably, the non-experience of time does not exist at all. As the apparent stillness of "The Window" and "The Lighthouse" is opposed to the indication of time flowing in "Time Passes," Woolf brings out the two simultaneous yet contrasting aspects of time.

Bergson speculated that it is only through retrospection that time is mistakenly seen to be a consecutive sequence of independent moments that could be beheld separately: time flown, rather than time passing; a thing rather than a progress.[17] Russell tried to relate mathematical ideas to the concept of time and insisted that there are numeral points or numbers between any two points or numbers. Paradoxically, the passing of time may be experienced as durée, or as a series of infinite still moments. For as Lily has recognised, ten years later when she tries to retrieve her memory of

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[17] Bergson, Time 198.

Mrs. Ramsay, there are moments of stillness: "In the midst of chaos there was shape; this eternal passing and flowing…was struck into stability. Life stand[s] still here" (TL 176). These moments of stillness stand out from the medley of one's memory. Perhaps the stillness of the moment is not a result of the nature of time but rather a construction of language as it encapsulates the fleeting sensations and feelings into stabilised words and meaning.

According to Russell, time is built through numerous separated atoms rather than as an identical spot within which moments succeed and permeate one another and bestow the spot with different qualities. However, as Bergson has pointed out, to understand time as a chronological extensive line would be the result of mistreating time by approaching it through a spatial concept. In stressing the intensity of a moment, Woolf never actually aims to show the absolute stillness of the moment as argued by Russell. The moment of being, instead of being fully present, is rather a moment when past, present, and future are struck into one point and this is how a temporary stillness is achieved as a sense of totality—a moment of being enclosed in a time of no time as well as all time where no temporal orders could be perceived.

The debate about whether this is a Bergsonian notion or a Russellian one continues. Fleishman, however, seeks to raise the attention of Woolf's readers to McTaggart's influence on Woolf, especially his notion of time and the illusion of time. According to McTaggart, "there are as many time-series as there are selves who perceive things in time… there is, on our theory, no time-series, for nothing is in time. There is no series of events, but a timeless series of misperceptions which perceive a series of timeless existents as being in time" (qtd. in Fleishman, "Woolf" 729). Woolf, in combating the continuous transformation of pure durée, does envision the possibility of sinking into oneself, dispersing all subjective quality accumulated throughout the years, and being in a state of pure subjective existence—the wedge-shaped core of darkness where "there was freedom, there was peace, there was, most welcome of all, a summoning together, a resting of a platform of stability. Not as

oneself did one find rest ever, in her experience, but as a wedge of darkness" (TL 69-70). Without presenting and noticing the interval time gap, there is no time at all. "Time Passes" specifies how time elapses when characters are still absorbed within their own worlds. The universality of "Time Passes" enhances the quality of subjective temporality. It is through the two days of "The Window" and "The Lighthouse," where actual events take place, that the actual flow of psychical time is narrated; while "Time Passes," though designed to indicate the enormous time gap that exists between two days, is in contrast presented through a monumental Time. Unlike the other two sections where time has been spread out as it is lived, within "Time Passes," time is condensed: ten years becomes one night of dream. "Time Passes" possesses the characteristic of being one's dream, because during one's dream one is unconscious of the passing of physical time. In both "The Window" and "The Lighthouse," there hardly needs be mention of how much time has passed or what time it is because there are external elements that provide the context of a public time, yet in "Time Passes," phrases like "night succeeds night," "day after day" are constantly used to indicate the passing of the time. The explicit indication of the passing of time makes it reasonable for one to suspect that without these actual indications of time passing, there wouldn't be any experience of the passing of time. Temporality has ceased as all moments become identical. Within this stillness, one experiences eternity as well as death.

Woolf has said that she intended to write about death, yet life kept intruding into the narrative. The attempt to seize the moment which one really lived and to suspend it from the incessant flow of the time stream would be Woolf's ultimate objective. However, she was also aware of the impossibility of transcending the flow of time; the impossibility of inhibiting the stream of thought. She also encountered the frustration of trying to withhold these fleeting moments. The irretrievable moments have become the lost objects that occur in most of her novels.[18]

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[18] Banfield, Phantom: "Woolf's universe is a plurality of occupied and unoccupied perspectives, the

If Banfield treats "The Window" and "The Lighthouse" as still pictures of an Impressionist portrait, then she must have neglected the fact that time is only noticeable with real events and accomplishments. According to Banfield, the idea of one's experience of time passing which is employed by Woolf is not what most critics have assumed as the duration proposed by Bergson. Instead, she suggests, it should be the idea of a series of still moments claimed by Russell and G. E. Moore: "Woolf adopted not Henri Bergson's philosophy but G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell's realism. Time passes not as durée but as a series of still moments" (Banfield, "Time" 471). Woolf's portrait of time passing is neither fully a Russellian idea of a series of still moments nor, simply, a Bergsonian one of durée. Instead, she depicts a time that possesses both characteristics according to one's state of consciousness. Through the distinction between public and private time, Woolf discloses the complexity of the experience of time as well as a time beyond experience. Within the flux of time, nothing seems absolute and defined. If one experiences time not as durée but as a series of still moments, even the possibility of returning to scrutinise former moments would be utterly ruled out, not to mention the impossibility of withstanding temporality from intruding into the moments of being. If each moment is self-enclosed, then the autonomy of the thinker to conceive each moment is being reduced, because it would not be the thinker who has conceived the moment, but the moment simply occurs. And yet, in such a sense, thoughts conceived would not necessarily be consecutive, so no nexus between the self and its thoughts is available. On the other hand, if the past were stored in a perfect chronological order with clear distinction from one moment to another, then when one is transposed into that moment again one would be able to re-experience the moment wholly and statically; yet, as Proust has shown through his fictional narrative, and as Bergson specified through his theoretical arguments, the effort to reconstruct one's experience of the past is always fragmentary.

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objects which fill it are always unobserved by someone. This is the meaning of another set of recurring images in the novels: that of lost objects" (134).

The past stored within one's mind is never how it had been actually experienced. One can never stay completely and perfectly stable within a specific time point. As both Lily and Clarissa have experienced, one's mental stream travels from one moment to another, from one emotion to another.

Within each moment, there are indications and residues of other moments. It is impossible for one to exhaust the entire moment of the past, because there will always be a new stimulation to the senses that continues to transport one from one recollection to another. The moment of being can seem to be a stillness (transcending the subjectivity of the autobiographical memory as the self dispersed into a core sense of feelings) among the actual time flow. Russell suggested that each event is self-enclosed and is private from any other time and space, yet the self-enclosedness of the private time and space does not necessarily presuppose that time passes in a motion of immobility. The moment passed would be irretrievable and therefore private to itself. Banfield's adoption of Roger Fry's example of the Chinese painting scroll that extends horizontally in length is not adequate to support the argument that each perception is a still picture of the moment and one's experience of time is rather as an accumulation of still moments not as durée.[19] The unity of the entire painting though is achieved finally through individual apprehension of successive segments, yet the analogy disregards the continuation of the bodily flow that carries through and unifies the seemingly dissected moments. If there were moments when one is struck by a vision, or overwhelmed by an immense emotion that seemed to suspend the flowing of one's mental time, would one conclude that time is naturally experienced in such fashion? Even if one is captivated by momentary visions or perceptions, these visions seemingly to freeze in stillness often fade away with time. And often what causes them to fade is that our mind has already made a transition from one sensation to another. One might still question that the fading of the vision itself is in fact an indication of the passing of time in consecutive moments. However, the moment fades

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[19] Roger Fry "An Essay in Aesthetics," (1909) Vision and Design 35.

away gradually, instead of being substituted directly by another perception. The two concepts of the passing of time, instead of contradicting each other, are rather two different facets of one's experience of time and time passing. Both Bergson and Russell are partially right, whilst Woolf is able to highlight, through her narrative technique and design, a much more complete but complicated experience of the passing of time.

In resemblance to the creative process of Lily Briscoe, the structure of To the Lighthouse takes up the form of a painting. Centred upon Lily's striving for vision, To the Lighthouse combines the pursuit of eternal truth and beauty with an everyday narrative of family life. Lily attempts to transcribe her perceptual impression of Mrs. Ramsay onto the canvas, hoping to capture not only 'life' and 'the thing itself,' but also her own personal strife and yearnings towards embodying it—to bestow the reality of both Mrs. Ramsay's and her own subjectivity on the canvas. The difficulty of painting and creating is transformed into a problem of how to compromise between the subjective and objective reality that is analogous to an emblematic representation of the novel's subject matter: "Subject and object and the nature of reality" (TL 28). Occupying a central position, "Time Passes" mirrors the central line that Lily Briscoe finally draws down her canvas at the end of To the Lighthouse. Banfield describes this as existing to specify that sudden intensity of her temporary vision of the 'real' which creates a unity composed of the sensory real and material facts. No sooner is a candidate for the real proffered, than it is transformed by questioning its reality into something strange, unreal, and yet so insistently present one wonders whether its strangeness is its reality. As specified by Roger Fry about the unity of a work of art, "In a picture this unity is due to a balancing of the attractions of the eye about the central line of the picture," emphasising a subjective, perceptual, unity (Fry 34). By the form of a visual artwork, the perceptual moments resulting from "any turn in the wheel of sensation" are "crystallised" and "transfixed" in a stasis of a colour, a geometry form, which no words can possibly translate (TL 7).

Woolf's aesthetic theory and her ideas about artistic presentation are closely related to those proposed by Roger Fry, who was introduced to the Bloomsbury group in 1910. Both seek to "articulate a theory and practice of art which moves beyond Impressionism and conceives of art as a form of knowledge which proceeds beyond the limits of sensory perception" (Waugh, "Beyond" 12). However, the knowledge which Woolf sought does not depart from sensory reality. It is not a knowledge that eliminates feeling and emotion; rather it is a knowledge engendered from personal sensory perception and individual feelings and emotions but propelled towards an understanding of universal 'truth' external to one's immediate experience. The irregularity or unnatural positioning of objects, which Cézanne adopts in his pictures, endows life and vitality with stillness, bestows irregularity upon commonness, and brings forth the fabric hidden behind the apparent image. The compositional strangeness de-familiarises ordinary perceptions and opens onto an extra-ordinary yet unperceived "reality." It substantiates the idea of surpassing the limitation of one's perception and enabling one to attend to what usually passes unnoticed. By involving some irregularity within his painting, Cézanne attempts to challenge conventional sensory perception and to visualise the hidden and insensible real.

Building up her forms and colours upon her canvas, a clearer vision is restored to Lily Briscoe as she detaches herself from representational composition: "beneath the colour there was the shape. She could see it all so clearly, so commandingly, when she looked: it was when she took her brush in hand that the whole thing changed": egoistic feelings and emotions intervene, and an impersonal detachment is no longer possible (TL 23). Getting beyond the habitual perceptions and attaining to a hidden but supporting pattern, one is forced to recognise one's own temporality. For the recognition of the objectivity of sense-data involves the apprehension of what Russell calls a "subjectless subjectivity," or "an unborn soul, a soul reft of body" as in Lily's term, and therefore the death of the self (TL 173).

Being surrounded by Cambridge Apostles, Woolf was much accustomed to and

influenced by their reading of epistemology—the problem of knowledge. The idea of whether there exists an imperceptible but an ever-lasting 'real' world that could be known was the central focus of their philosophical discussion. The turn to the theory of knowledge coincided with the rise of philosophy of science as a discipline in the first decades of the century.[20] Russell spoke of "the gulf between the world of physics and the world of sense" and the desire to negotiate philosophically "the transition from perception to science" (qtd. in Banfield, Phantom 5). While Russell, G. E. Moore and Ludwig Wittgenstein tried to reach beyond, towards the imperceptible (that is either blocked by the 'I' or beyond its perceptional capacity) through philosophical arguments and mathematical calculations, Roger Fry, E. M. Forster, and Woolf also tried to contemplate through the aesthetic, "the hidden pattern," and through art to convey simultaneously a perceptible world as well as an imperceptible 'reality' (MB 85).

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[20] Banfield, Phantom: "Philosophy was then the foundation, strengthened by logic and mathematics. Scientific knowledge of the external world was only expressible logically and mathematically" (5).

VI

Self, History and Art: The Cubist Impression of The Years

for history is a pattern
Of timeless moments.
T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*

The Years, written after Woolf's most experimental novel, The Waves, has often been considered as a return to a conventional realist narrative. In fact, The Years, like A Room and Orlando, exemplifies and illustrates the limitations of conventional realist or 'materialist' narrative. Whilst in The Waves an experimental method and style of narration has been devised to convey the 'soul' or subject-in-process, ostensibly The Years re-incorporates individual being into a realist social-historical framework. With The Years, Woolf aspired to write an "essay-novel" that is to "take in everything, sex, education, life etc." (WD 183).[1] She intended it to be bold and adventurous, a more explicit narration of the sensual female body and its relation to feeling and emotion, heretofore prohibited from the public genre of fiction: the 'special' friendship, for example, between Sally and Nicholas (who likes men instead of women) provokes this reaction in Peggy: "a thrill ran down her thigh…and that thrill she knew meant bitterness" (Y 239). In The Years, thoughts are no longer exclusively in the mind alone, but deeply felt in the body. And the feelings in the body amplify and initiate further thoughts.

While composing The Years, Woolf reflected: "Why should the *Ps.* [The Pargiters] make my heart jump; why should Flush stiffen the back of my neck? What connection has the brain with the body? Nobody in Harley Street could explain, yet the symptoms are purely physical and as distinct as one book is from the other" (WD 188).[2] It is through the close inspection and narration of the reality of the body in feelings and emotions that 'truth' is disclosed: Woolf's original aim for the novel, "to

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[1] Diary entry 2 November 1932.
[2] Diary entry 15 January 1933.

give the whole of the present society—nothing less: facts as well as the vision" is therefore fulfilled (WD 191).[3] In particular, and as observed by Julia Briggs in Virginia Woolf: An Inner Life: "She [Woolf] was refining and complicating her analysis of cultural change to show how the Victorian idealisation of motherhood had also been a source of restraint and oppression, and, in particular, of sexual repression" (271).

"The Years has a somewhat diffuse surface" suggests James Naremore in his article "Nature and History in The Years"; "the novel is strikingly unorthodox, and in every respect serves to undermine the assumptions of traditional 'realist' fiction" (247; 246). Instead of regenerating past time through passages depicting the years that have gone by, the novel is cut into sections of linear time but presented through a Cubist technique which suggests the way in which life is compressed into atomic sections of memorable events or, in Woolf's own words, moments of being. The Years gives a strong impression of the linear chronological passing of time, in its title, structure and even its plot. Yet, the tone of the narrative is laden with emotions, and the reader encounters a series of pictorial presentations strained with emotions and feelings of various kinds. The past recurs constantly through the bodily remembrance of an earlier event evoked by a re-encounter with similar objects, sounds, or scenes from the past. Although one feels the overwhelming presence of the past, the past still remains caught in an obscure vagueness. Yet, 'remembering poetically' (in contrast to what Søren Kierkegaard has proposed) preserves the memory in an unforgettable, unnameable and yet non-deferrable axis of life capable of being related and adopted in different circumstances and in different ages.[4] Perhaps, it is through this method that Woolf achieves her aim, to "get the depth without becoming static" (WD 191).[5]

Resembling Henri Bergson's argument in Matter and Memory, The Years's focus

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[3] Diary entry 25 April 1933.

[4] Søren Kierkegaard, Either/Or ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987) 292-293. Also Mark Sandy, "'The Colossal Fabric's Form': Remodelling Memory, History, and Forgetting in Byron's Recollections of Ruins" Durham Modelling the Self Lecture Series 2007.

[5] Diary entry 25 April 1933.

is on the subjective perspectives that vary along with the changing of a body interposed between the external world of matter and an internal world of images and conceptions. In Matter and Memory, Bergson sought to break through the irreconcilable dualistic constructions of realism and idealism to conceptualise a new understanding of the relation between matter and mind, defined by Hewet in The Voyage Out as the entire conception of a novel: "the way one's seen the thing, felt about it, made it stand in relation to other things" (204). The conflict between realism and idealism is spelled out by Bergson as resting on altered perceptions. On the one hand, the notion that what is perceived is a quality of the thing in itself and that "all the images unfolding on one and the same plane [are] indefinitely prolonged" as they are attuned to a fixed law (Matter 26). Or, on the other hand, the sense that a quality is endowed by the mind alone through the system of perceptions. But more importantly, Bergson argued in Matter and Memory, "In most cases…memories supplant our actual perceptions, of which we then retain only a few hints, thus using them merely as 'signs' that recall to us former images…hence also springs every kind of illusion" (Matter 33). Such pronouncement fully acknowledges the indelible role of the body in constructing a self-history and therefore a subjectivity. As present perceptions continue to be modulated by the imagery of the past, the narrative of The Years, through a series of perceptions saturated with personal experience and memory, continues to dwell on the problem of 'subject and object and the nature of reality' which has fragmented the world and the self.[6] As Avrom Fleishman has pointed out in Virginia Woolf: A Critical Reading, "the essential themes of Woolf's vision of life," in this novel especially, includes "the fragmentariness of human existence under the conditions of mortality, the ideal of a life in which the flight of time is filled with meaning and brought into formal order, and the impossibility of attaining that ideal—the necessity of sinking back into that fragmentariness" (199).

Instead of representing selves free to weave their way towards a solid

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[6] TL 28

establishment of subjectivity, the characters in The Years are positioned by their appointed role within family and society whilst seeking discontentedly to move beyond this social confinement. But still, the memory of the past remains at the centre of each personality. 'Scraps, orts and fragments' of the past continue to haunt the narrative. In The Years, subjectivity is presented as if it is established and substantiated through the interpersonal relationships and yet aspects of the characters' intrinsic qualities still remain unknown and uncertain: "we do not know ourselves," not only answers the puzzle over the Great War, but also serves as a reminder of the disparity and apartness existing between individuals. The impossibility of knowing oneself makes it also impossible to understand the minds of others.[7] The Years is thus a fictional narrative that aspires towards an integral knowledge of the subjective apprehension of a self-centred world and an objective reflection on that self's own particularity and contingency within a world viewed from outside the centre of self. The Grecian wisdom of 'know thyself' gradually takes over as a recurring motif amidst the multitude and disparity of life.

Whereas in The Waves, socio-cultural history is barely glimpsed, in The Years, it is a foregrounded theme that highlights the struggle between the subjective orientation of the self and a consecrated social identity. Despite the fact that the articulation and the recognition of 'self' is largely bound up within the social-cultural language in The Years, still the characters constantly feel obscurely that a definition of self is beyond the designation of language and of social context. Numerous revelations in the novel emerge out of states of inexplicable feelings. While Peggy fails to convey her vision in words, North finally grasps, in the light of a sense of feeling, the meaning which Peggy attempts so clumsily to express. A weight of social oppression is felt throughout the novel as individual characters strain between a desire to be true to their own personal will, whilst also striving to fulfil social and familial obligations. The frame of a family saga provides Woolf with the means to depict the intimacy as well as the

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[7] Y 206

alienation between individual members within a family.

The characters themselves ferret through 'orts and scraps,' suggesting endless hidden facets which are both indiscernible and inexpressible. They never resort to self-explanation or self-justification as in The Waves or Mrs. Dalloway, unravelling the path of thoughts and the course of the past. The narrative often leaves matters in their folded state (whether it is an act, a phrase, or a sudden reminiscence), sometimes because the state exceeds the capacity of the characters' minds to comprehend; sometimes because thoughts have wandered off into other directions; while sometimes the characters simply refuse to delve into reasons for things. Thus, Eleanor leaves her reading of Dante for some other day as if the meaning of the words, "For by so many more there are who say 'ours'/So much the more of good doth each possess," could only be grasped through a knowledge of the whole and in their integral and compact state, the words surpass comprehension (Y 156). However, without being dissected and analysed, the words reserve their poetic vision and, therefore, like other objects of the past, continue to hover over the mind of Eleanor. Fleishman argues that though these words of "medieval organicism" of which "the individual is fulfilled and ennobled only insofar as he participates in a community transcending the individual" seemingly slip through Eleanor's comprehension, the ideal they encompass nevertheless "affects her attitude toward her impending old age" (Virginia 186-7).

In the Cubist mode, the past in The Years does not spring forth in its full picture as in Mrs. Dalloway. The Years is full of untold stories, unintelligible emotions that subtly reflect a state of being of which nothing is ever fully known; no meaning is fully drawn. Although there is often a flicker where one assumes one had understood, meaning, seemingly at hand, actually escapes everyone's grasp. Life, like the words of Dante which Eleanor tries to read, "did not give out their full meaning, but seemed to hold something furled up in the hard shell" of an ancient archaic language, signifying an unintelligible wisdom (156). Perhaps, as Edward has suggested, it is the beauty, the word itself, not the meaning, that should be appreciated, as he refuses North's request

to translate the words of Antigone from Greek into English. Meaning simply flits through one's mind with the swiftness of a kingfisher of which one might only catch a glimpse of the shadow left behind as it vanishes. As Eleanor closes her copy of Dante with the words lingering in her mind, she thinks how she will return to the book, to the lines, one of these days. Moments of encounter, with all the sensations and impressions thereby initiated, are generally ungraspable, leaving the characters numb. Presumably, only by revisiting the moment could its meaning be accommodated to the mind. The dead and the lost, as Marcel Proust wrote in Swann's Way, continue to loiter in the present, "held captive in some inferior being, in an animal, in a plant, in some inanimate object," awaiting to be recognised (57). The forgotten past and the unknown meaning of life (like a half open door, half revealing, partly concealing): one could merely envisage the hidden from what is manifested, filling in from the suggestive details.

Unlike the co-responsive inner narrative of the mind(s) as in The Waves (or as in Mrs. Dalloway) where individual consciousness appears to be communicative and transferable, The Years places its focus upon interpersonal as well as intrapersonal privacy and then attempts to recognise and transcend such privacy. In its Cubist presentation, The Years, perhaps attempting to represent in narrative form Bertrand Russell's private moments, pictures a world constructed out of numerous private planes and angles. The narrative exemplifies the sensation of people "trying to express completely different views of the world in general at one and the same time" (Y 231). While each feeling or sensation retains its unassailable reality, each is somehow private and unavailable to the others—other moments of life as well as other people. Yet despite the tendency of subjective consciousness to remain enclosed within its own private and subjective setting, each consciousness is nevertheless highly aware of the existence of other private worlds. In The Years, the image of two people sitting in a cab together, instead of inspiring the androgynous vision of coordination in A Room, simultaneously evokes and stresses the sense of affinity as well as disparity between

individual subjective privacies: "They were two living people, driving across London; two sparks of life enclosed in two separate bodies" (Y 245).

From The Waves to The Years, the reader is given a full drama of the formation of the subject from proto-self and core consciousness to a social self embedded within the context of personal extended consciousness as well as the inheritance of national and family history. The Years starts off with each character taking up an emblematic social role (as a father, a husband, a son, a mother, a wife, a daughter). Each character is allocated a place through familial ties and human relationships so that each of them, though adhering to his/her social role and maintaining the social honour of the family, engenders an inner discontent over the social constraint— contending that they are more than the role that is assigned to them. Right from the opening, the characters are all waiting for a relief from their familial or social obligation. Everything has to wait. But still, as Colonel Pargiter has reflected, even with the death of the wife and the mother (the great maternal figure of the Victorian age), he, as a father of a large family, would not be free to be himself: "there was the house; then there were the children" (Y 5). The self is given no chance of being itself, whatever that is.

Numerous internal narratives of the subject remain covert, either suppressed by social decorum or simply lying inarticulate within the individual mind. With such depths of inner conflict, attempts to ease or resolve the issues are inevitably aligned with lies and concealment. Jane Marcus has suggested, "They are all 'pargetters,'" alluding to the name Pargiter (56). "The pargetter may be one who embellishes the outside of a house…or one who covers up the truth or tells lies" (Marcus 57). Lies and concealment abound in the novel. Even within the family, they are simply "different people…boxed up together, telling lies" (Y 163). In spite of the yearnings and impulses to express and communicate, the fear of failing to spark empathy or achieve understanding leads each of them to withhold their tongue (as in Colonel Pargiter's frustrated desire to tell Eleanor about his having a mistress; Rose's feeling of a sudden urge to share with her cousins all her stories which she has never told). "They're all

afraid; afraid of being laughed at; afraid of giving themselves away…We're all afraid of each other…afraid of what? Of criticism; of laughter; of people who think differently" (Y 303). The privacy of the subjective realm that they seek restlessly to confide, remains largely intact. And the privacy that persists, withheld in silence, continually undermines any possible social and familial solidarity.

The Years is more of a detached aesthetic presentation of the subject as a social being in the world, whereas The Waves enacts the inner subjective narrative of the emergence of consciousness and subjectivity. In spite of the discrepancy between The Waves as the inner narrative of a subject split in various features and The Years as the projection of dispersed subjective perceptions and realisations onto the external object-world, both novels reveal, through their depictions of the nature of life, the impossibility of a well-planned, organised, life-narrative. Indeed the narrative itself self-consciously embodies a sceptical attitude towards the plausibility of a 'true' story or narrative (such as that promised by Eugénie to her daughters, concerning the 'truth' about the note in the bouquet): not simply that it is impossible to know about the future, but even that the past eludes full comprehension. Self, life and the world are rather presented in "orts, scraps and fragments," caught between a belief in an external reality and a transcendental idealism of the perceptive mind (BA 111). But even with an objective point of view to stand outside oneself perceiving one's own subjective stance, still the objectivity that inescapably depends on the subjective existence of the subject remains partial and incomplete.[8]

Among all these characters, not one story is fully revealed, not even the story of Eleanor—"something remain[s] unknown," although undoubtedly "there's 'I' at the middle of it…a knot; a centre" (Y 229; 269). The Years, with its narrative structure, foreshadows the fragmentary reflection of the present time consummated in Between the Acts. So many elements consist of oneself, and within oneself there exist various narratives. Even the subject itself is bewildered by its own life and the meaning of

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[8] Thomas Nagel, The View from Nowhere (Oxford: OUP, 1986) 208-31.

being. The inner, mental, discourse of the subject, as described in Orlando, "is dark, mysterious, and undocumented; so that there is no explaining for it. Volumes might be written in interpretation of it" (47). The fragmentation and inconsistency among all the self-narratives suggests that this central knot is a 'luminous halo,' evolved from feeling rather than logical reasoning. Although the subject continues to contrive a self-narrative reifying itself, the core self is nevertheless beyond the determination of narrative. Bergson proposed a theoretical conception of a pure perception whose reality is fully in the perceived object itself, unadulterated by any subjective discourses. He therefore ventured to suggest that in the course of life, the subject learns to regulate its perceptual stimuli in accordance with its body and therefore acquires a subjective propensity which is not available in infancy.[9] Although various fallacies lurk in Bergson's argument, still, his conviction of the central position of the body and his belief that subjective perceptions arise from the body, shed further light on the subject/object relation. The body remains as the kernel ground of subjectivity, more often a sense of feeling rather than a narrative of anything definitive.

The narrative of the mind is engendered from an interaction of the body with the external world. Thomas Nagel has argued that our tendency to form an objective reflection on our present subjective circumstances greatly affects the original egoistic presumption of the subject, conceiving itself as the centre. In mapping its own position in the world through an objective point of view, the subject perceives its own contingency in a centreless world and therefore is prompted into a pursuit of the meaning of its being-in-the-world—the meaning of its life.[10] But still, this objective view is nonetheless part of the subjective self: "The real problem is with the external point of view, which cannot remain a mere spectator once the self has expanded to accommodate it…The objective self is dragged along by the unavoidable engagement of the whole person in the living of a life whose form it recognises as arbitrary"

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[9] Bergson, Matter 46.
[10] Nagel 214.

(Nagel 216). Consequently, no integral vista—either of world or of self— could possible be formed, but simply a chopped, Cubist patchwork opening on to an irreducible exterior reality. The narrative itself resembles the strips of newspaper cuttings which Captain Pargiter collects in his old age. Even the credibility of the news is undermined and fragmented through individual judgements on it.[11]

Besides the fact that 'the Real' remains beyond the comprehension of the individual human mind as it is enclosed within its own cubical world, the mind's intriguing narrative of memory also secludes one moment from another, leaving the self with barely the possibility of forming an integrated view of itself. Often, the character is overwhelmed with a sudden surge of emotions that coerce them into an action which they cannot justify. With an inner urge, Rose comes to introduce herself to her cousin Maggie. Even she cannot understand her impulse of wanting to meet Maggie and visiting her. While lunching with her cousins, Rose could not explain why a fragmented picture of the past springs to her mind: "She saw them sitting round a table; and a detail that she had not though of for years came back to her" and curiously "Her past seem[s] to be rising above her present (Y 122; 123).

Coming back to England after a decade of absence, North professes his discomfort at the feeling of "half-knowing people and half being known" (Y 229). But the fact is they have not truly known even themselves. Like Sally's fragmented statements, the narrative continues to contrive and rebuild out of momentary impressions. No true report can be expected from Sally who constantly distorts the actual incidence or links one with another, so no true narrative of facts can be sought. The narrative of The Years serves as an illustration of the impossibility of knowing oneself, not to mention the mind of the others, as proposed through Eleanor and Nicholas's discussion of the future of the human race and society. The suggestion of the existence of other subjective worlds reveals the enclosure of one's subjectivity and the awareness that there are worlds beyond subjective understanding. The story told

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[11] Y 113.

and known is but one among many. The narrative is therefore dispersed among all the characters as if to suggest that these are simply a small portion that stand for a vast volume of other existing life-narratives that have been shut up in drawers, lost in memories, or simply remain 'inconceivable' and 'imperceptible.' Yet, though perhaps unobserved and unrecognised, they nevertheless continue to exist in a world where no 'eyes' or 'I' could possibly penetrate, positing a world without a self.

In The Years, Woolf continues to adopt a similar structure to The Waves, as each section is introduced by a descriptive yet seemingly neutralised interlude presenting an external world that seems indifferent to the strife of each individual life. It is against this impersonalised objectivity that the subjective stances and dispositions are accentuated. The objective and external world of the interlude (like Percival in The Waves) functions as a mirror reflecting all facets of life and allowing each subject to connect and identify their own subjective reality differently with the external world.[12] In The Years, an objective universe is pasted into a Cubist presentation of divergent subjective space so that an objective reality is suggested through the substantiation of each private perspective. Often, in each episode, a few scenes between different characters are depicted, yet all of them seem to be constrained by a congenial spirit set by the interlude within which "a whole new mood has to be caught, plumb in the centre" (WD 246).[13] Thus, in an uncertain spring of 1880, there is the Abercorn Terrace waiting, in a maelstrom of evasive emotion, the death of the mother. The narrative shifts abruptly to Oxford, where Edward is at the threshold of his life, working for his fellowship and falling in love with his cousin Kitty. A similar potency is observed with Kitty who is also strained between living a life for herself and her obligation and social status as an Oxford don's daughter.

Instead of having the subject substantiated through the determination of its surroundings, a real world exists independently by itself and is inferred through an

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[12] Harvena Ritcher, Virginia Woolf: The Inward Voyage (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970) 99.
[13] Diary entry 2 October 1935.

induction of each subjective reality which fails individually to encompass the entirety of 'the Real.' The existence of others continues to suggest a reality beyond the subject's possible perceptions. In other words, a sense of objectivity is achieved in The Years not by elimination of the self, but instead through an embrace of all subjective worlds, diminishing the significance of each individual existence. With the deployment of the interlude, Woolf integrates individual stories into a wider communal experience of the fragmentariness of being in a temporal world. As personal and particular narrative is offset against a neutral discourse of no age and of no bodies, particularities are therefore generalised into a universal discourse of life. For, with the introductory interlude that precedes the narration of the individual characters, readers are provided with the modern cinematic technique of focusing down from a general over view of the world to one perspective among others. The narrative therefore sustains itself as merely one particular story among many others. Eventually the novel ends with philanthropic concerns in a new world, the possibility of improving the human race: "when shall we be free" and be able to live differently is the question posed by Eleanor, Nicholas and Peggy. (Y 217). By such means is the meaninglessness of the contingent individual life partially transcended.

Life as a product of society is reflected through the socio-cultural settings (and as shown through Orlando, it is the epoch that bestows on him/her a certain social imago and formulates his/her social identities). The Years is as much a personal and family history as a national and social history of Great Britain from 1880 to the early 1930s. Jane Marcus has commented that The Years resonates around the *leitmotif* of death and rebirth. However, an undying death and a continuously deferred rebirth echo throughout the novel. For although with the passing of the ages, new possibilities seem to promise themselves, yet the strife of life and the constraints of the social-historical background do not seem to be relieved. As 'pargetters,' they "[plaster] the cracks in the house of British culture in one way or another, most of them knowing full well that it will fall despite their efforts" (Marcus 56). Perhaps, of all the

characters, it is Eleanor who is finally reborn into a new life by the burial of the past. After dozing off temporarily during Delia's party, the momentary bliss lingering after awakening revives her belief (that seems to be at a point of crisis given the impending threat of another world war) in life which is, in her words, "a perpetual discovery" as well as "a miracle" (Y 280).

Although lives are not altogether constrained by history, lives are largely shaped by it and the novel constantly reminds its readers of the march of history: Irish Home Rule, Parnell, the suffrage movement, the threat to civilisation caused by the Great War, and the rise of Fascism. For in an age of change and transformation, the characters seek a life that might lead them beyond the present context and offer anchorage without stagnation. They constantly flout social taboos and with each breach of social convention, a shock is roused: "For a second a sharp shiver of repugnance [might passes] over [one's] skin as if a knife had sliced it," but with a closer inspection, one realises as Eleanor does, "it touch[es] nothing of importance" (Y 217). The delicacy in regarding the bodily related issues is constantly challenged. With such sensual description of the body on hearing a social taboo, Woolf exposes the social obsession with, as well as the repression of, matters of the body and sensuality. With "it touches nothing," the sentence provides simultaneously a connotation of a bodily felt revulsion against the idea of homosexuality but at the same time the relief from a sensual apprehensiveness which comes to nothing. For as the information about Nicholas's homosexual tendencies touches nothing of importance, the premonition of gender orientation is transcended alongside other social taboos and cultural profiles. The socio-historical context might be suggestive but it does not contain 'the life,' 'the thing itself': life constantly eludes human's presuppositions about it. The subject is constantly testing its autonomy and capacity and expanding the given confinement. With each different context, an alternative facet of the subject is elicited. As Woolf has suggested in "Mr. Brown and Mrs. Bennett," a novelist, or any seeker of life and its untold stories, should first look at 'the life,' 'the

thing itself.' Liberated from 'materialist' confinement, the autonomy of 'life' is recognised and restored. The subversion of the confining material context is most explicitly dramatised in The Years, of all of Woolf's novels. In contrast to the 'materialist' attempt to encapsulate the 'soul' through given historical circumscription, the narrative, in recognising the autonomy of 'life,' enables it to live as "it wishes to expand; to adventure; to form—new combinations" (Y 216). In The Years, Woolf continues to sketch a narrative where it is possible to reflect "what [one is] feeling and to express it broadly and simply"—broadly as all facets of life might be encompassed, and simply as it might stand as a scaffolding for all life—transcending its individuality in a communal apprehension without sacrificing or negating the reality of each divergent subjective space (Y 219).

If The Years is the life story of Eleanor (of the Victorian daughter) then, as Eleanor herself asks, what is her life: what is the life of a Victorian daughter? She has no life. Her life has been other people's lives, like any other angel in the house. Eleanor, in the eyes of her fellow Londoners, is "a well-known type; with a bag; philanthropic; well nourished; a spinster; a virgin; like all the women of her class, cold" (74). The portrait of Eleanor in The Years is of a life effaced by Victorian family conventions, a position jokingly referred to as 'housekeeper' by her own father. This is the life of the daughters of the Victorian paterfamilias which Woolf analyses in explicitly psychoanalytic terms in Three Guineas which, begun on 28 January 1937, was written consecutively with The Years. In fact, Woolf had considered writing The Years and Three Guineas as one book.[14] Eleanor, resembling Mrs. Ramsay, however, is also another prototype of 'life.' She is "the thing itself." With the death of her father, a life of her own may commence: "Sir William was getting into bed next door, his life was over; hers was beginning" (Y 156).

Through a formal cubism that juxtaposes different layers of subjective

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[14] "lumping The Years and Three Guineas together as one book—as indeed they are" (WD 284). Diary entry 3 June 1938.

perspectives and apprehensions, The Years presents an objectified history incorporated through diverse private spheres—not simply the private subjective sphere between individuals but also the private moments that set themselves temporally and spatially apart from other moments within an individual life. The collision of variant subjective settings inevitably evokes a strong sense of disorientation that continuously recurs throughout the text, leaving the subject (and the reader) in a surreal wobbly sense of time, space and, above all, its own relation to the world around. The novel begins with the dim and oppressive gloom of Victorian family life, where, at the death-bed, time seems suspended. The returning question of "where am I?" is first prompted by Mrs. Pargiter as she wanders back to the present world, awakes on her sick bed and becomes conscious of her bodily presence in a 'semi-real' world apart from her dream. The recognition of the present does not prevent her mind from wandering across temporal orders. Mrs. Pargiter's mental world is feebly presented through her fragmented statements as one impression leads to another. Delia, along with the reader, could only conjecture at what she has been thinking. While Delia sits by her mother's bedside, she too wanders into a fantasy world of her own as she longs for a life that might only begin through the death of the mother.

Gaps between the years, the moments, are left open as if they are the chasms and gorges of life cleaved through by the washes of time. Still, memory knits the fragmentary impressions into a whole, despite any spatial or temporal segregation. Accordingly, a sense of continuity amidst discordance is reconstructed. Most often of all in The Years, it is only through these fragmentary moments of life and the bits and scraps of ill-connected memories that the invisible threads of the seamstress's art of memory is revealed and, along with it, the disclosure of 'the spirit'—a more intrinsic and continuous aspect of character. With such fragmentation, the linearity of chronological time is utterly subverted. A peculiar sense of time is portrayed through the cubist fragmentation. Time in The Years seems to consist of a series of moments semi-secluded from one another, while each of these moments occupies a certain

extensity. It is not what Bergson has described as durée, yet its extensity is beyond Russell's monadic moments. As in a Cubist painting, within each cube, there is another world and context of its own.

Instead of linear development, The Years stresses the discontinuity of and disparity between individual moments. Gaps are perceived through the transition between scenes, feelings and emotions and this produces a sense of disorientation in the reading experience. Moments of life, instead of harmonising with a sense of successive development, are juxtaposed side by side. The narrative, although it conforms to historic-biographical conventions, also discloses the discontinuity of thoughts and the disparity of lives, and exposes the inability of the material and public settings to account for the spatio-temporal experience in the mind. Time might press on, yet feelings and thoughts continue to linger, holding back any real mental procession. The prolonged hours or fast-beating tempo of time in the mind continue to counteract objective time by the clock. As stated in Orlando: "But Time, unfortunately, though it makes animals and vegetables bloom and fade with amazing punctuality, has no such simple effect upon the mind of man. The mind of man, moreover, works with equal strangeness upon the body of time" (68).

From moment to moment, swayed in an unbound realm of atemporality, the reader is also often disorientated as each character asks incessantly "where am I." Perhaps the question is put to Time itself or temporality, or to the fundamental rhythmic pulsations that form the ground of reality and towards which the characters might plausibly orient themselves. With an undying death, and with feelings stupefied and rhythms withheld or halted, there seems to be no true being for the lives suspended around the death-bed: "It's hopeless…" Delia abruptly utters, spelling out their status as women, daughters, in a late Victorian age (15). Even the definitive ending of death does not seem to be liberating—at least not to the Victorian daughters. Instead, the entire narrative is conveyed through a sombre, Victorian, mood. Burdened with emotions from the past, the narrative of The Years seems unable to move on with

the passage of time and catch up with the present moment, but is stuck irresolutely in a distant past (like the tree that would not stand up and yet refuse to lie down) reflecting the plight of all the female characters it addresses.[15]

The effect is of a temporary halting, caught between two worlds, between the restraints of conventionality and tradition and the bombardment of new prospects, new techniques of a new era in which women are promised a life of their own. Yet, as the novel is brought up to the present of its own writing, Peggy, a member of the younger generation, still holds relentlessly to a critical view of the advance of science and technology. Unlike Eleanor, of the old generation, who looks towards the future and is reluctant to remind herself of the oppressive domestic life of the eighties, Peggy, instead, beholds "that past of the eighties…so beautiful in its unreality" (Y 244). The future does not pronounce any promising feature as the narrative winds up in a condition of diffusion with uncommunicative languages, interrupted conversations and speech unfinished. Peggy, being a 'professional,' 'new,' woman, has nevertheless lost her faith in the future. Instead, she seeks constantly to enclose herself in the safety of past and memory: "She liked getting Eleanor to talk about her past; it seemed to her so peaceful and so safe" (Y 238). By telling the individual struggle of the Pargiters (especially its daughters of three different generation), balancing their reflected social imagos and their intrinsic subjective disposition, The Years becomes the embodiment of Woolf's ideal biographical writing that should be "subtle and bold enough to present that queer amalgamation of dream and reality, that perpetual marriage of granite and rainbow" in transcribing both the personality as well as historic facts (GR 155).[16] Consequently, the novel ends with Eleanor's vision of a plausible wholeness within the present. Through the recognition of the simultaneity and the possibility of life here and now, past and future, in the present, the halting between neither-nor is surpassed: "she felt that she wanted to enclose the present moment; to make it stay; to

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[15] Y 55

[16] "The New Biography"

fill it fuller and fuller, with the past, the present and the future, until it shone, whole, bright, deep with understanding" (Y 313).

In reaction to Edwardian 'materialist' techniques, Woolf allows private time to dominate her narrative. Public time is mirrored and known through the private time within. Thus, the different conceptions and experiences of time and time passing are thoroughly interwoven, giving a real, subjective, sense of being in time. In the passage where Kitty holds a dinner party in London, the reader is invited into Kitty's subjective perception of time. The distinction between the public time of the clock and the private experience of time passing is clearly drawn in the terms of Einstein's idea of relativity, as Kitty and the reader practically feel the ticking of every second and share the anxiety about catching the train on time. Frustrated by the thought of not being able to bring the party to an end so that she could retire in time, the ticking of the clock, minute by minute, is amplified through Kitty's anxiety and restlessness. And with the actual narrative time exceeding the time traversed in the story, time in the mind expands and decelerates, making a minute feel more than it actually is. Yet, with the decelerating and the prolonging of the moment, the tension of time is poignantly characterised.

However, as the scene changes from London society to the Northern woodland, the temporality of time is transformed as the train is transported through space: "She seemed to be passing from one world to another" (198). In contrast to the vastness of the Northern land, the time of the body and the mind now flowing with the fast pace of the train seems to travel beyond actual time. "Past and present [become] jumbled together" as she trails through fields and towns toward the north. Scenery changes from one place to another rapidly and within so little time. And yet her thoughts and emotions still remain at the London Party of which every minute detail seems to replay itself. Nevertheless, when she arrives at the great castle estate which appears, so enduringly and everlastingly, to transcend time: "A deep murmur sang in her ears—the land itself, singing to itself, a chorus, alone. She [Kitty] lay there listening.

She was happy, completely. Time had ceased" (Y 203). Time has ceased with the diminishing of individuality as the 'I' is conglomerated into the general, historic, context of the nature. The castle, the wood, nature, "existing by itself, for itself," would forever be passing from one generation to another. As every observer, every possessor, is merely a passer-by (Y 203).

New technology and new territorial expansion impinge on the individual's established sense of time and space. With the introduction of public transportation and mass communication that links up diverse private spheres disparate in space, the sense of time and space are fragmentarily shattered. Spatial and temporal distances and apartness are significantly diminished and the sense of simultaneity is greatly increased. Instead of linear development, moments of incidents seem to spread out on an homogenous spatio-temporal plain. Such change in spatial and temporal conceptions culminates with the First World War whose nature, in the opinion of Gertrude Stein, is "in fact the composition of cubism" (qtd. in Kern 288). The war seems to be everywhere and yet nowhere at all (as its scattered war fronts invaded almost every corner of Europe and as it continuously elongated into an inescapable apprehension of the present cut off from past and future, standing discontinuously by itself). Following Stein's comment, Stephen Kern speculates on how the First World War was a Cubist war for "the strange newness and overwhelming force of experience clamped the soldier in the present as if bracketed from past and present" (292). The Great War remains as an incomprehensible interval resisting adaptation into the original context of life. Indeed, David Jones entitled his account of the war, published in 1937, *In Parenthesis*.[17] The immensity and the pervasiveness of war has shattered the world, leaving behind no way to integrate the war and its horror into a coherent stream of temporal experience.

The movement of modern art from Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, to Cubism coincides with the modern experience of time and space as it attempts to

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[17] Stephen Kern, The Culture of Time and Space: 1880-1918 (Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 2003) 292.

address the re-evaluation and the re-adjusting of human relations, spatial and temporal, with the world around. Modern art is no longer about photographic reproduction of a material world, but rather how that world is seen and felt through the body and its sensations and emotions. The investigation into the unconscious as well as the nervous system of modern psychology and neuro-psychology suggests that what one actually senses and apprehends of the external world is far from any faithful mimesis (though one's experience is seemingly a unified whole and an exact reproduction of what is out there). The mind, as Damasio has asserted, hides facts as well as revealing them. Foremost, the mind hides the body from our perceptual screen and the influence of one's bodily condition on one's perceptions of the world.[18] Although concealed from conscious awareness, the body provides the frame of reference: "*My body* [author's emphasis] is that which stands out as the centre of these perceptions; *my personality* is the being to which these actions must be referred" (Bergson, Matter 47). Moreover, what is actually experienced by is always contaminated by pre-experiential or post-experiential adjustments.[19] What one perceives is neither panoramic nor authentic, but simply focusses various perspectives shaded and contaminated with the feelings and emotions provoked by memories, thoughts, or immediate incoming stimuli—and therefore no present can be apprehended as itself, while the intensity of the internal feelings seemingly prolong the present moment in consciousness. A thorough distinction must therefore be made between the present of a material world of impersonal sense-data and the present of the internal psychical state of sensation. Such a distinction between a subjective apprehension and an objective speculation enables one to reach an understanding of how time might be perceived, experienced, and depicted through the controversial argument of Bergson's durée and Russell's sequence of atomised stillness. The Cubist presentation of temporality in The Years

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[18] Damasio, Feeling 28, 42.

[19] In Consciousness Explained, Dennett names the post-experiential revision as Orwellian alluding to George Orwell's novel Nineteen Eighty Four and the rewriting of actual history conducted by the Ministry of Truth; the phony instalment as Stalinesque, which "stage[s] show trials, carefully scripted …with simulated evidence"(117).

simply reinforces the actuality that to live is to alternate between these two senses of Time.

Time, though, may be experienced in an atomic manner as thoughts and emotions trail behind, unconscious and forgetful of the actual bodily present, hoarding and savouring an impression or tracing a frail link as one hopes to fish up what one seeks. But even then, the actual passing of time prevents one from holding and containing any moment. The moments are often intruded on by the passage of time breaking up the linkage of thought and leaving behind traces of lost tracks. "The popular idea that time is made up of discrete parts as sharply separated as the boxed days on a calendar continued to dominate popular thinking about public time, whereas the most innovative speculation was that private time was the real time and that its texture was fluid" (Kern 33-4). Preserving the atomic feature of the experience of time, Woolf, by inserting the sense of Bergsonian durée, created through her narrative an effect that these atoms, instead of being completely self-enclosed, are inter-connected and inter-penetrable. Thus, one memory flows into another, sensations aroused by internal thoughts interchange with external stimuli. For as William James observed, quoting J. S. Mill, "If the constitution of consciousness were that of a string of bead-like sensations and images, all separate, 'we never could have any knowledge except that of the present instant...Each of those momentary states would be our whole being'" (1: 605-6). Thus, time is presented and experienced through both modes of flux and atom (as if suggesting that time should also be conceived in the manner of wave-particle duality). Again and again, the characters return to the same former experiences, one leaping to another, looping various moments into a perceptive whole, endlessly re-constructing the pivotal theme of their lives. The hammering voices in Siegfried bring Kitty back to years ago when she went to a friend's house, having tea with the family, fantasising about a kiss by a young man with wood shaving stuck in his hair and loving the fact that the Robson family treat her not as an Oxford don's daughter but as a young lady who also takes history lessons—a theme of

Kitty that continues to return. Even in "Present Day," she remembers in her old age that there is someone whom she has loved once in Oxford. Similarly, Rose cannot grow out of her anger and terror of the day when Martin refused to accompany her to the Lamley's and she came across the man at the pillarbox who leered at her. As years pass, every new episode seems to reify an initial experience already manifested in "1880."

Each sentence, gesture, impression or memory is suggestive of a prodigious volume of obscured and latent context which is only half-revealed through the sensory impressions of the characters. As the unvoiced narratives accumulate underneath, characters and even readers are often lost within the labyrinth of the silenced, internal narrative. "They all had lines cut; phrases ready-made" which bound people as well as separate them (Y 226). For ready-made phrases signify a shared context and yet, with the convenience of ready-made phrases, people conceal their true feelings and their true selves. Right from the start, family jokes are evoked to ease family life, with the Pargiters sitting together feeling, differently, unable to share: "That was the worst of growing up, she [Eleanor] thought; they couldn't share things as they used to talk—about things in general—they always talked about facts—little facts" (Y 25). Personal lives are withheld from other family members and perhaps even from one's own conscious self as if reflecting the Freudian concept of the unconscious suppression of an inner truth. The social conversations and interchanges are taking place not simply on the external level but also within, as each consciousness yearns and strives for a full knowledge of the others' underlying, unspoken intentions and thoughts. The narrative, as it depicts the subtlety of social interaction, enacts the daily subjective consciousness that is constantly probing and scrutinising the minds of others. Habitually, by extending one's consciousness to another, characters surmise each other's unspoken thoughts and as often as not find themselves being misled by the unfaithful wordings of others. Convoluted within the intricacies of the hide-and-seek of individual consciousness, the Truth is further obscured.

Characters, in assuming their roles and identity within the family and society, withhold within themselves copious narratives of private and untold stories. On being asked by Peggy, years after, what Mrs. Pargiter is like, Eleanor, in answering "Not as I remember her," avoids assigning to her mother the character which she has remembered as a daughter (Y 238). Eleanor has recognised the fact that, behind the mother figure, she knows there are other subjective identities with which she could not possibly be acquainted. Perhaps like the painting, the original feature and the actual character of the young girl with the red hair is gradually covered up by the dust of everyday family life. A fragmentary impression or memory is, as described, a half-open door that suggests a hidden passage into subjective space by means of reminiscent narrative. Nothing seems to reveal itself in itself and everything, as one thing melts into another, is only partially known—even one's past is irretrievably lost among all the inter-knitting of memories. For, "Memory is the seamstress, and a capricious one at that. Memory runs her needle in and out, up and down, hither and thither. We know not what comes next, or what follows after" (O 55). Peggy is much amazed by the talk of elderly people: "Old age must have endless avenues, stretching away and away down its darkness, she supposed, and now one door opened and then another," prompted with the ring of a bell (Y 243). The existence of all the probable yet unknown and un-narrated narratives is most prominently exposed in The Years. In a world full of sounds and noises, the narrative of The Years writes out an impassable and unfathomable silence between human relationships. In The Voyage Out, Terence Hewet envisages writing a novel of silence. The narrative of The Years, saturated with the hubbub of life, ironically bestows an even more conspicuous form to the silence in life.

Through individual memory of the characters' perceptual worlds, a socio-cultural history of Britain is delineated. Instead of being her most conventional realist novel in its historic form, The Years, with its apparent conventionality, ironically subverts the conventions of the historic novel as history and life are

expounded through personal and emotional involvement. History has ceased to be a clean-cut fact of linear development, and memory is hardly stored in chronological order. Contrarily, history and external reality are blurred by tears and excitements. Historical events leave their marks on the mind as an undefined bracket involving sundry facets that are only vaguely learnt by a circulating yet unintelligible mood. The objects of emotions are not always present. Emotion, as expounded by Martha Nussbaum, has its own cultural and biographical context. And therefore, though not fully told, through the display of a present emotion, a trace of some hidden story or inherited past may be detected. Whether expressing anger, joy or sorrow, such emotion might prompt a larger wave, swelled with the long forgotten sensation of the past. Personal concerns submerge the grandiloquence and significance of historic events. The death of Parnell is experienced through Eleanor's anxiety for her sister Delia. Similarly, instead of a stately concern, Colonel Abel is more interested in the effect of the event on Delia, thinking that it will bring her to her senses. The news of Parnell's death continues to hover over the pages, recreating a resonance in the London society. Abel brings the news with him on visiting his brother's household. On mentioning the news, Abel feels Eugénie's emotion is "out of all proportion to its object," leading Abel as well as the reader to wonder what is linked to this news and this emotion (Y 87). Perhaps, the sad story of Parnell and Kitty O'Shea links her own story of the note in the bouquet—a story that has never been fully narrated but nevertheless leaves its ripples in the minds of the younger generation.

In The Years, historical facts are felt and transcribed through the characters' perspectives. On hearing North setting off to his military service in some regiment in 1917, "A picture came before her [Eleanor] eyes—the picture of a nice cricketing boy smoking a cigar on a terrace"(Y 208). And then another picture formed in hazy reminiscence how she learnt about the war when "She was sitting on the same terrace" (Y 209). With these mental pictures, a complex emotion toward the war is summoned: "Not if I can help it! overcome by an absurd but vehement desire to protect those

hills"(Y 209). The siren of air raids wails in the background as Eleanor dines with her cousins in the basement, drinking to a New World and a better life that they anticipate after the war. Historic and social changes unfold in terms of family life and individual activity and circumstance. Patches of thoughts and scraps of memories are all that one seems to get out of life. 'Self' and personal meanings seem to be a configuration of shreds of feelings and emotions.

In the 'realness' of these moments of being, the ordinary, everyday, life comes to seem rather unreal. Often after moments of intense reflection, as if one suddenly transcends the subjective standpoint and sees through the absurdity of the ordinary life which takes its reality for granted, one is thereby bewildered and similarly comes to doubt 'how real is reality?' as questioned by Slavoj Žižek. Nothing is for certain real or unreal. All seems rather a result of different perceptual viewpoints. Woolf continues to trifle with the ambivalence of dream and reality in the scenes of Kitty attending different social occasions among different social classes. The tea with the Robsons has an affinity with Alice in Wonderland. There she [Kitty] is, large in her figure, attire and social status, in this little house of the working class. Kitty feels herself absurd and out of place at the tea table of the Robsons, rather like the appalling revelation when class distinction is so consciously felt in Katherine Mansfield's "The Garden Party" (1922). Seemingly, she has intruded into a 'fantasised' world of unreality, yet through the encounter of difference she comes to perceive a truer reality. This unfamiliar world has revealed and projected back to her the farce of her own world: "But for a moment all seemed to her obsolete, frivolous, inane. The usual undergraduate in cap and gown with books under his arm looked silly. And the portentous old men with their exaggerated features, looked like gargoyles, carved, medieval, unreal" (Y 54). Standing upon the threshold, she has forgotten where she is. The familiar Oxford is estranged in a whole new perspective. Her sense of reality is upset, as she stumbles across a world of others that is as real and undeniable as her own. And between this feeling of real and unreal, one could hardly recount what had

truly happened. The fact is lost in time; only feelings and emotions abide.

As the characters carry on with their daily life unconsciously, anything which stirs up their emotions with something unexpected, something unusual, might bring up a sudden illumination that changes their view of the world to the extent that they no longer recognise where they are. "Where am I" is constantly asked as readjustments between the private and public world, past and present, are demanded. The delayed time and the lingering of emotions often leave characters in a state of confusion, unable to relocate themselves in the present circumstance. The Years successfully creates all sorts of estrangement and de-familiarisation. "Where am I?" is a question that questions the linearity of time and the separateness of the unit of time, as emotions and memories seem to lump together different times and spaces. Disjunctions and dislocations are even more strongly felt when one stumbles across the boundary of classes.

In The Years, Woolf is also attempting a more fully rounded view of history and the experience of history which includes feelings and emotions. If in Orlando, Woolf mocks the conventional 'factual' recording of the historians and the biographers, in The Years she endeavours to realise her ideal of life-writing. Modern art has come to contradict the Cartesian culture of ocular-centrism and instead brings to focus how the world is never apprehended without the engagement of feelings and emotions. The internal turmoil of Van Gogh is fully captured through his paintings; and whereas Cézanne endeavoured to combine the transition of multiple perspectives in four dimensions into one unified whole, Cubist painters such as Picasso, chopped up the surface of the canvas in projecting a pictorial depiction of fragmented perspectives and atomised sensations.[20]

When it comes to the value of art, Roger Fry begins his argument by distinguishing the two different kinds of life, a double life, that one leads: "one the

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[20] Kern 142.

actual life, the other the imaginative life" (24).[21] In actual life, one is subjected to instinctive reactions that limit perception to the most imminent or threatening aspect concerning biological survival or immediate interest. A pure perception is therefore only achievable through the imaginative life, where panoramic views are not compromised by any imminent need to act and respond—a fully open horizon that enables one to engage but with a more contemplative and disinterested detachment, to scrutinise the subtle interaction between the world perceived without and the sensation that arises within. As Fry continues to argue, in the imaginative life one tends to become aware of some details in a kind of cinematographic projection that nevertheless escape one's consciousness in actual life. He confers on art the property that it provides this experience of pure perception. Art, or graphic art in the case of Fry's argument, illuminates those aspects of life of which the individual has always been unaware by estranging and detaching the individual from his/her customary habits. Thus, a work of art, though it imitates the actual world, nevertheless opens our eyes to a world concealed within the actual world that one lives without knowing and sees without seeing. Art is the effective agent that cracks one's perceptual habits and brings the peripheral perceptions into a focussed experience of apperception.[22]

Roger Fry's view of the merit of art seems to be in close correspondence with what Martin Heidegger has defined in "The Origin of the Work of Art": that an artwork opens upon a horizon within which it is possible to perceive what has hitherto been concealed in nature. Heidegger here quotes a well-known remark of Albrecht Dürer: "For in truth, art lies hidden within nature; he who can wrest it from her, has it."(195).[23] Art, in Heidegger's opinion, sets up a world and sets forth earth. It enacts the happening of the truth and therefore brings forth unconcealment: "beauty is one way in which truth essentially occurs as unconcealment" ("Origin" 181). In other words, art demonstrates a world that has been formerly hidden from one's perception

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[21] Fry, "An Essay in Aesthetic," Vision and Design 22-34.
[22] James 1: 89.
[23] Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art" 143-212.

and it is by secluding the special elements from its ordinary world and enforcing the presence of that which has been hitherto overlooked by its spectator that makes a work art. Van Gogh's painting of a pair of peasant's working shoes connotes not simply the shoes themselves; being equipment made and used in a special context, the projection of the shoes brings forth the entire context of its being. According to Heidegger, selecting a pair of shoes and concealing most of the other details within the context of the pair of shoes, Van Gogh actually discloses a whole world of being concealed behind the shoes.[24] The image of the shoes eclipses other aspects of their context, becoming therefore a full embodiment of that context. In short, art brings experience to focus by estranging us from the circumstances that one has become so used to that one is simply blinded by one's customary habits and daily routine. Art is an attempt to wrest the hidden pattern of truth, of life, of being, that Eleanor, the main character of The Years, has come to feel as everything seems to repeat itself: if "there [is] a pattern; a theme, recurring, like music; half remembered, half foreseen...a gigantic pattern, momentarily perceptible?" (Y 270-1). Objects from the past continue to reappear and to draw up a particular image, stimulate a stored sensation and bring back what has been forgotten. Remaining in the background, each of them stands for a part of the past so strongly felt yet vaguely remembered.

The art of painting should not merely be "an art of imitating solid objects upon a flat surface by means of pigment" as Fry redresses the statement of an eminent authority (22). And most plausibly, for Woolf, it is through such anti-representationalism that modern realism departs from the Edwardian, 'materialist' realism of John Galsworthy, Arnold Bennett, and H. G. Wells which she had ridiculed in "Modern Fiction." Life, as maintained by Woolf, in its elusiveness and insubstantiality, as feelings generated from within, is impossible to approach and

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[24] Heidegger "Origin" 180-1: "Setting up a world and setting forth the earth, the work is the instigation of the strife in which the unconcealment of beings as a whole, or truth, is won...Truth happens in Van Gogh's painting. This does not mean that something at hand is correctly portrayed, but rather that in revelation of the equipment being of the shoes beings as a whole—world and earth in their counterplay—attain to unconcealment."

delineate directly. For material appearance does not necessarily epitomise life and the feeling of living. In order to present life, Woolf required a method that engenders life and a structure enabling life to stand breathing and flowing. Woolf, though often taken as a writer who is more interested in the inner world of the characters than the outer material and social world, aspired to paint through words not simply an ekphrastically regenerated presentation of the social world of Britain, but rather a world engaged with personal feelings and emotions—a world of life and self in living. What Woolf's narrative manifests is an attempt to capture life in its transient and ephemeral qualities. Her aim is not simply to transcribe the world into words but to transmit the pulsing of life, both its feelings and emotions. And therefore one could say it is a world felt and experienced through the body.[25] The narrative of The Years, given the form of a historical novel or, as Woolf originally planned, an 'essay-novel,' has come to paint a history, not of recorded facts, but of personal memory. As Wilhelm Dilthey once said, "All understanding is historical because man is a historical being": the historic and social context that lurks beneath is lifted into the reader's consciousness through indirect methods of presentation (qtd. in Kern 45). The history is embodied through the characters and their consciousness of living.

Characters in The Years are endlessly searching for a clarification of what they come to feel, but the narrative always touches on and then abandons the moment, leaving its reader to the emotion that is simply suggested and never fully defined. Sentences are left unfinished, words unspoken. And yet, the unfinished sentences hook into one's curiosity with their vagueness and 'stick' in the mind in an eternal pose.[26] Even more perplexing are those speeches which Nicholas has scarcely begun uttering and which are always being interrupted by others' conjectures about what he is about to say. The speech is never delivered. Characters long to communicate what they have

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[25] Richard C. McCleary, Preface, Signs xvii: "only my body provides me with a way between the possible and the necessary toward the real."

[26] As it is exemplified by Eleanor saying "'D'you know the feeling when one's been on the point of saying something, and been interrupted; how it seems to stick here,' she tapped her forehead, 'so that it stops everything else?'"(Y 239).

thought, but all the while are baffled by social conventions, personal relations and by the failure of words and language to communicate. Conversations, thoughts, all are fragmented and in their fragmentations, return interminably. Nothing is fully conveyed. All understanding, even those between family, friends and relatives, seems to have been derived from a vaguely known stock impression. For all the years that pass, Eleanor still perceives in North that brown-eyed cricketing boy smoking a cigar on a terrace. Still, Rose has always been perceived as a "firebrand" embodying vehement emotions: "Rose of the flaming heart; Rose of the burning breast; Rose of the weary world—red, red Rose" (Y 121).

Fragmented memories recur. Every scene and people's sayings tend to repeat themselves, giving a perpetual present of the past. Each fragment as it encapsulates a story of the past is a path, a door, a tunnel, "stretching away and away down its darkness" (Y 243). The Years draws on the techniques of Cubism as fragmentary impressions and sensations are pasted and imposed upon one another; it is through these fragments that the reader, for the first time, is able to pore over what has been taken for granted and to inspect what has long been unconscious, like Sara's broken, repetitious, but suggestive phrases and songs that subvert any original structural and textualised significance. Sara is often compared by critics to the role of a fool in a Shakespeare play who in all his/her silliness hides a wisdom that transcends superficiality. The abruptness of Sara's remarks echoes the Cubist structure of the narrative. She seems to sing out the links to that theme and pattern of life which Eleanor has sought. If meanings are hidden beneath the camouflage of an arbitrarily arranged coherent appearance, then it is by breaking through the apparent coherence could the concealed, obliterated, meanings be unearthed.

Roger Fry had long been frustrated by the taste of the British who seemed obstinately unaware of what he sees as the kind of beauty and art revealed in Post-Impressionist paintings. He argued furiously against the common desire always to view art interwoven with its historical context: the idea that it is the history that tells

the viewers what is art, rather than the pictures themselves. The first Post-Impressionist exhibition of 1910 had shocked the public, yet it seemed only through shattering the original conception that one could possibly come to see the deficiency and shortcomings of the institutional conception. Post-Impressionist paintings challenge not only the conception of art and beauty of the Victorian and Edwardian society, but also the attempt to enclose motion, movement and time on a two-dimensional canvas. In producing a three-dimensional effect on a two-dimensional surface, a structure that would introduce the experience of time is required. Post-Impressionism is a re-construction of experience like Sara's abrupt behaviours and utterances.

In The Years, there is a sense of worlds within this world. Unlike her previous novels that give light and shade to the different worlds experienced by different characters, in The Years (rather like Jorge Luis Borges' The Garden of Forking Paths (1941)) Woolf portrays worlds behind worlds as one passage through to the past leads to another. Readers, like characters, ferret through the 'criss-crossed' passage of thoughts.[27] There seem to be endless doors that open up to different pasts within Eleanor, observed Peggy. As years pass, innumerable sensations seem to store up within one. The sensations, as they topple down upon one another, break up the chronological orders of their happening. As one sensation leaps to another, a past, a stored image, is brought back to mind accompanied with all the emotions that were then felt. Nevertheless, The Years stands out amongst Woolf's other novels, because it attempts not only to represent the worlds within the world of memory and the various perspectives on the world seen through different characters, but it also explores how the world appears to be so different to the same person at the same moment simply through a different suffusion of feelings and emotions. It is as if the person exists simultaneously in different times and spaces at the same moment, as suddenly dawns upon Rose when she is having luncheon with Maggie and Sara, or as Eleanor suspects,

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[27] Y 263.

"there must be another life…here and now…in this room"(Y 313).[28] Woolf's tunnelling process has come to dig out not simply the individual honeycomb, but absolute turns and bends within that always remain half-revealed until the character is startled by a hidden memory as it springs to consciousness.

Disguised in its fictional form, The Years bears a strong resemblance to A Room as the fictional yet realist technique ironically subverts the reality of social conventions. The Years was written around the time that Woolf was composing Three Guineas, but although Woolf aims at exposing the flaws in the social system, she was dubious about the value of didactic writing. By simply exhibiting and transposing her readers into the position of her characters, she leaves the judgements and conclusions for readers to draw themselves. Although the real material and social world is not directly portrayed in the works of Woolf (compared to those of the Edwardian 'materialists'), nevertheless, the social material world is often embedded within her narrative and felt through her characters. Classes and financial circumstances preoccupy Woolf. They are the crucial elements and themes that make up her characters and stories; they are her stories. Yet, "she tried to find a way of writing fiction that would allow her, [her voices, her ideas, even her judgements], to be present without seeming to be. Her most ambitious attempt to solve this problem was The Years" (Zwerdling 45). By bringing to focus the particulars instead of the general and the superficial, Woolf's narrative presents us with a sense of detachment; the narrative provides frames without enclosing one's point of view, and continually exposes the unrecognised. Woolf's narrative has a multi-layered structure of reflections upon reflections as if there always is another over-layer of consciousness. The narrative cleaves through the interwoven context of personal as well as socio-cultural history and creates an open space to reveal and suggest what has been hitherto concealed within customs and familiarisation.

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[28] "it made her feel that she was two different people at the same time; that she was living at two different times at the same moment"(Y 123).

Conclusion: Between the Acts of Feelings and Thought

> Thoughts are the shadows of our sensations
> —always darker, emptier, simpler.
>
> Friedrich Nietzsche, The Gay Science

Woolf's writings are primarily ontological narrative experiments concerning the understanding and presentation of states of being. Imbued with the philosophical ideas of the British empiricist tradition's inquest into the nature of reality, Woolf refined her own empirical pursuit of the co-relations between narrative and the formation of subjectivity, since self-meaning and self-history are configured in narrative forms whilst "knowledge is literary" (Russell, Knowledge 15). Woolf founded her life-writing on a transcription of feelings and emotions and how these feelings and emotions conjugate into a self-knowing state of being-in-the-world. Against the prevailing Western convention of glorifying a logical and rhetorical mind capable of abstract reasoning, Woolf continued throughout her career to readjust what she saw as the skewed masculine concept of reason in order to emphasise that the feelings of the body are often persistent, undeniable and greatly influential on beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. Perhaps Bernard, the novelist in The Waves, has failed to achieve a final 'refrigeration' that perpetuates and concretises the flickering of momentary vision, yet in his improvised spontaneity, a real sense of life is fully conveyed. The feelings of the body underpin verbal thoughts; conversely verbal thoughts come to fortify and substantiate the internal flux of the body into a concentric flow of self-understanding and self-definition. Greek philosophy once strove to conjoin both the mystic instinct of inspiration and the logical reasoning of the sceptical examination, the *elenchus*, which aimed to rectify the unchecked errors of intuitions: "Instinct, intuition, or insight is what first leads to the beliefs which subsequent reason confirms or confutes...Reason is a harmonising, controlling force rather than a creative one"

(Russell, Knowledge 31). In fictional narratives, Woolf persisted in trying to display the adversarial nature as well as the complementarity of reason and feeling. To attain the Truth and to create genuine lives, Woolf, like Bernard, (though they are both consistently threatened by the fastidious masculine gaze that disapproves of the fuzzy fringe of unregulated selfhood and sentiments), proclaimed "the double capacity to feel, to reason" (W 57). In order to preserve her inner fountain of creativity, Woolf resisted a psychoanalytic therapy that might institute the rule of a stringent and impervious reason that throttles and inhibits creative flow. In Between the Acts, Judith L. Johnston observes that the Oliver men continue to serve as the source of patriarchal judgement and suppressive power over the Oliver women: "Father and Son embody the principle of mastery justified by reason. With self-confidence, they ridicule sentiment, passion and poetic expression in the Oliver women" (261). With one curtain fallen and another rising, the novel imparts not desolation, but an envisioned 'utopian' rationality achieved not so much by suppressing Nature as by acknowledging the human as a sentient being.

In satirising the inequality between men and women, Woolf drew on social discourses as well as scientific precepts about knowledge of the human mind and character that continued to ignore or underplay the importance of the body. For despite some acknowledgement of the significance of intuitive inspiration in conducting reasoning, science and philosophy have continued to view the world of the senses and feeling as an illusory world that the pursuer of truth must avoid through the imposition of a strict and rigorous logic. In the works of Henri Bergson, G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell, one perceives that modern scientific pursuit of a philosophical understanding of the world that is anchored in the problem of the realist/ idealist dichotomy and of the mind/body split. Following the British empirical tradition stretching back to David Hume, as well as the Cambridge epistemological movement

in the twentieth century, Woolf proposed through her narrative experiments that both ontology (the understanding of being) and epistemology (the understanding of the external world) should begin with the fundamental problem of the mind/body relation and should simultaneously challenge their gendered reconfiguration and appropriation. Through the imaginative world of the novel, Woolf sought to expose the fictional nature of narrative, propelling a paradigm shift in the presupposed hierarchy between mind and body; men and women; culture and nature.

The world is learnt and conceptualised through the body and its innate concern with its own survival. The human mind's propensity to be both susceptible to the influence of the body and capable of surging beyond its organic confinement towards a self-abolishing objective stance fascinated Woolf. Presumably, in her illness, Woolf was given the opportunity to experience this extraordinary capacity of the mind (to be simultaneously bounded by the body and yet free to roam beyond any circumference of the bodily present) which she had found hard to circumscribe in any given literal expression. Thus, like her 'mad' but 'insightful' heroines (e.g. Isa in Between the Acts), she continued to violate the law-of-the father (that institutes life rather than allowing the free flow of living) and to break through the masculine sentence. Like, Isa, Woolf also fragmented sequence in order to encapsulate the poetical flow and the sense of being as it flickers through the mind in response to the feelings of the body.[1] With the proposition that bodily feelings underpin a sensible mind, Woolf not only contested the injustices of patriarchal society and redeemed women from their submissive status as sacrificial, self-obliterating objects who simply support and amplify male megalomania, but she also provided a new conceptualisation of the understanding of consciousness and the making of the subject.

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[1] See also Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Writing beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985) 31-46.

Lacking a poetic maternal figure among the cultural history of literature to look back and think through, Woolf planned to read all the great English literary works chronologically, not in order to admire the grandiosity of the patriarchal 'canons' of the British cultural and literary history, but rather in an attempt to discover the veiled common voice of Anon, the voice of no age, of no particular civilisation.[2] Although eclipsed by the resounding authoritative voice of the patriarchal and the imperial culture of aggressiveness, the silenced voice of Anon is a voice that transcends all crisis and threads throughout history with ballads and folk-songs, crooning a collective memory of life that extols the bodily pulsings and feelings and justifies its essentiality in life. Although, as in Claire Kahane's opinion, the Woolfian narrative voice "weaves a network of language through [the] stranded subjectivity" of each individual who fidgets at the idea of his or her affinity with other human beings, the Woolfian narrative never seeks to erase subjective differences as it strives after a congenial ground of being (224). When contemplating another new piece of work, Woolf noted in her diary: "Why not *Poyntzet Hall* [which became Between the Acts]: a centre: all literature discussed in connection with real little incongruous living humour: and anything that comes into my head; but 'I' rejected: 'We' substituted: to whom at the end there shall be an invocation? 'We' …the composed of many different things…we all life, all art, all waifs and strays—a rambling capricious but somehow unified whole—the present state of my mind?" (WD 279).[3] Such an aspiration reminds the reader of the honeycomb image of an apparent disparity and inherent connectivity which successfully contrived in Mrs. Dalloway. Past and present are compressed into one day and people of all ages and all backgrounds congregate in Between the Acts. Inter-subjective similarities and differences are therefore intensified:

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[2] See Brenda R. Silver, " 'Anon' and 'The Reader': Virginia Woolf's Last Essays," Twentieth Century Literature 25.3-4 (1979): 356-441.
[3] Diary entry 26 April 1938.

"Their minds and bodies were too close, yet not close enough. We aren't free, each one of them felt separately, to feel or think separately, nor yet to fall asleep. We're too close; but not close enough" (BA 41). The jerking and uncomfortable intimacy makes the audience of the pageant fidget as they sit together. For, each is so similar, yet each desires to withhold its own subjectivity despite the attraction of a consoling communal unity. In contrast to James Joyce, who sought ironically through the archetypal symbols of culture for the means to reclaim his own egoistic identity as Author, Woolf sought in the bodily unconscious a dissolution of the egoistic 'I' and an invocation of the feminine Muses outgrown from the bodily feelings to retrieve a truer state of being that incorporates the mind in the body.[4] And through the 'restoration' and acknowledgement of this shared subjective state of being, a true communal inter-subjective being (instead of an impassive conformity demanded by the civilisation) might possibly be attained.

Presumably, the voice of No Age that collects individual existence into a communal experience is the silent voice of Nature as well as the bodily voice of life within each individual that slips through the nets of the logical and objective rhetoric of science. Even when Nature is finally captured within the abstract symbols and mathematic tables of science, still the scientific means remains inefficient in conveying the subjective appraisal of Nature and of life—the most fundamental phenomenon of being. It is a voice that transcends all historical narrative and discourses of linear development that aims at an ending and definitive encapsulation. The advocacy of Behaviourism (that refutes the subjective property of consciousness) would simply be the reductionism of the historians and biographers (as depicted in Orlando) who take only the accounts of the external, observable, facts and deny the

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[4] Judith L. Johnston identifies the two nurses as the 'comical disguises' of Proust and Joyce. See Johnston 260.

subjective life within the mind to which no objective measurement can be applied. So although Woolf showed affinities with the Cambridge epistemological project, her understanding of knowledge is finally separate from that of logical atomism and logical positivism and Bertrand Russell's scientific philosophy that concerned only with well-attested facts and seeking to eliminate whatever cannot be reasonably justified or scientifically proved. Woolf did not altogether denounce the idea of objective truth; on the contrary, she was seeking an equivalent means through 'art' to resolve the lasting conflict between objectivity and subjectivity. She was drawn towards Roger Fry's idea that objective Truth is also attained and conceived through the subjective pulsation of the body. Although Beauty and aesthetic harmony are perceived subjectively, objective transcription of such beauty and aesthetic harmony are achievable through a work of art.

The silent voice and beauty of Nature might only be subjectively felt and apprehended through the poetic means of unbound 'senses' and liberated 'sensibility.' When Neville in The Waves is captivated by the sudden disclosure of beauty, he is compelled to leave it in blankness and emptiness in order to protect it from being altered or contaminated by the inadequacy of Logos: "Let it exist, this blank, this beauty, and I, for one instant, steeped in pleasure" (W 60). The arresting poetic moment is also a most subjective moment. Or, as Mrs. Swithin of Between the Acts has construed while beholding the beauty of the landscape: "We haven't the words—we haven't the words…Behind the eyes; not on the lips; that's all" (BA 35). Perhaps, inevitably one doubts as Bart (who is a personification of a rationalist and often derides his sister's religious and superstitious belief), "Thoughts without words,…Can that be?"(BA 35). Still, one has to acknowledge the unreliable nature of narrative texture. Words and narrative as means of transcription will always construct a 'simulacrum' of the Real.

In a style of the Grecian tragedy that adheres to the three unities of time, mode and place, Between the Acts dramatises the impassable fate of the human race under the majestic power of 'Mother Nature.' The Freudian return of the repressed is but a return of Nature herself that humiliates the egoistic pride of the human being viewing itself as a rational, autonomous and self-created Nietzschian 'superman' or Freudian 'prosthetic God'—an insane wilfulness of obstinate belief in the capacities of science and human rationality. The great civilisation built upon human intelligence is utterly disrupted by the warfare brought about by human discontent with the ways that his sovereign freedom seems compromised within a socially bounded civilisation. Between the acts of the two world wars, the hubris of human intelligence that has long regarded Nature with contempt, is now thoroughly deflated. The pageant-play, with all its uncertainties, stands as an inner subversion of the outward 'uniform' of Between the Acts, echoing an undertone of the narrative that alternates between the suppressed love and hatred for the socio-familial confinements of civilisation. The reader feels with Isa the predicament of the married woman within the marriage institution. Her attachment to her husband now is solely founded upon a family relation as he is the father, the protector, of her children. Corresponding to what Freud has argued in "Civilisation and Its Discontents" (1930), Between the Acts illustrates the intrinsic antagonism between the fundamental drive to secure oneself through culture and civilisation from a precarious Nature, and the desire to seek pleasure with no restraints. Familial comfort and distress fluctuate within the Olivers. The passion which Isa feels for the gentleman farmer can only be savoured in the tacit rhythm of the body. With all the resentment against the infidelity of her husband, still she needs to comply and adhere to her role as a wife, mother and hostess of the Pointz Hall. The sanctified familial space of the drawing room is not only derided by Isa's unfaithful passion for Mr. Haines but also by their talk of the cesspool. In the recurring undertone of a sexual

injustice imposed upon women (either through the reported rape corresponding to a factual instance, or the allusion to the legend of Procne and Philomela that violates familial taboos), Between the Acts is not just a satire of patriarchal civilisation, but also a tacit protest against the essential injustice of the female role as a sexual object or nonentity in a patriarchal family.

With a further glance through each 'act' in history, the contingency of life is exposed through the pageant-play. Johnston observes Woolf's effort to retrieve "alternative cultural roots" of the native Anglo-Saxon civilisation in contrast to the Apollonian culture of Athenian Greece (262). "Miss La Trobe's historical pageant[,] recapitulating British literary and imperial history[,] challenge[s] the myth perpetuated by Cambridge; that is, the humanist myth of a continuous cultural lineage from Greek to Roman to Norman to British empires" (Johnston 259-260). Oppressive masculine violence and imperial forces, like the imminent eruption of another war, remain as a consistent undercurrent to the apparent merriment of the pageant. Although Johnston sees the 'bossy' Miss La Trobe as an 'energetic leader' resembling Hitler, who "impose[s] her vision on others," Miss La Trobe's pageant-play is rather an extension of a fragmented feminine writing whose words induce subjective connections and responses and repel a set, uniform, meaning: "They all looked at the play; Isa, Giles, Mr. Oliver. Each of course saw something different" (Johnston 264; BA 126). Without a definite meaning, the play preserves its integrity without being depreciated by the insufficiency of the signifiers. In its wholeness, it continues to hang in one's mind. Instead of 'imposing her own vision,' Miss La Trobe aspires to evoke and encourage the individual subjectivity that has been long buried in the conformity of the socio-cultural context.

In an ironic contrast to the masculine 'madness' in science, rationality and the imperial force to 'create a better world,' all the main female characters (Isabella, Mrs.

Swithin, Mrs. Manresa, and even Miss La Trobe, an emblematic advocator of illusions and imaginations) in Between the Acts have a touch of wildness or perhaps of madness, with their shared and spontaneous responses to the rhythm and feelings of the body (adhering to the conventional image of an 'insightful' madness capable of perceiving the unseen and knowing the unbeknown plan of the supernatural as expounded by Michel Foucault). They are bodily and earthly bounded as they are more susceptible to momentary feelings and emotions. Unlike the men of science and reason who venture to subjugate Nature with abstract tables and formulas, they resonate in body and feelings with Nature and through them is revealed a hoarded 'Truth' of Nature which is yet inexpressible in words. They are the children of Nature, of superstitions, of wildness. To Nature, they implore support and illumination; and to Nature, they attribute the reality of life and their 'senses' and 'sensibility' of 'reality.'

The dispersal of the subjective space is brought together into a communal experience by the supreme Nature herself. In an attempt to "try ten mins. of present time,…She wanted to expose them, as it were, to douche them, with present-time reality" (BA107). Yet, Miss La Trobe continues to feel threatened by the audience who are relentless in retaining their distancing, objective, position and resist giving up their subjective privacy to become interwoven into the narrative acts of her play. Each of them strives obstinately to protect their own individuality and defies the generalisations of theatrical contrivance which would make them into the stock characters of their age. Instead of being woven into the dramatic narrative, the audience forces disillusionment upon Miss La Trobe: "'Reality too strong,' she muttered. 'Curs'em!' She felt everything they felt. Audiences were the devil" (BA 107). Eventually, the illusion which Miss La Trobe has conceived but failed to transcribe through her theatrical deployment is bridged and attuned by Nature. The outpouring of the sudden shower engenders within each individual a subjective as well

as communal engagement with 'the present' and through it, the dream-world of the play cleaves perfectly to the reality of the audiences. Now the audience is brought into the play itself as its enacted present is also framed by the theatrical context of the pageant. They are made to be simultaneously subjectively involved as well as consciously aware of their subjective present. In short, they have become the spectator of their own present. In Nature, a harmony is restored. Rigorous rationality, in debarring nature and denying feelings, creates the split within the self and the ultimate breach with others and the Real. In recognising a Nature beyond the mastery of the human, a harmonised unity is therefore achieved as the egoistic imposed differences are resolved. As Mrs. Swithin gazes vaguely into nature, she construes: "Sheep, cows, grass, trees, ourselves—all are one. If discordant, producing harmony—if not to us, to a gigantic ear attached to a gigantic head…we reach the conclusion that *all* is harmony, could we hear it" (BA 104).

Feelings and sensations are themselves the theme of Between the Acts, mirroring Isa's aspiration that it is the mood not the plot that the artistic narrative form is conveying. Although Kahane suggests that "in the foreground of this novel are 'acts'," it is the moods straining between the acts that the narrative is contriving and communicating (224). With a dab of Cubist multiple points-of-view, the novel, though diffusive and without any central character or a central and well-knitted plot, is constrained by moods—undefined but dominating moods of love and hate; of being bounded and being free; of security and uncertainty, that portend the essential state of being in a world where one exerts no control. Even the pageant-play itself is repeatedly disturbed by the incontestable reality as an amateur outdoor production: words are either unheard or even forgotten by the young actors; real scenery intrudes into the fictional settings; and the gramophone stutters, estranging the audience from the dramatic illusions. Yet, "Did the plot matter," wonders Isa as the words of the

actors fail to reach her, "The plot was only there to beget emotion. There were only two emotions: love; and hate. There was no need to puzzle out the plot" (BA 56). In the stream of feelings and emotions, one thing leads to another as if a life is built in contingency without the intervention of the subject's intentionality. One thought jumps to another; one scene cuts abruptly to another. Everything is in a flow of continual formation, while nothing seems to be consecutive. As if mirroring the factual anticipation of another war, the moods continue to amass in silence towards the forthcoming outbreak of the suppressed reality, alluding to both the confrontation between the husband and wife (Giles and Isa) and the war to come. Even the novel itself ends symbolically with one curtain fallen on the past and present and another rising, placing itself as a transitory stage towards a forthcoming future. As Nature continues to intrude into the narrative, nothing seems to be certain and yet, in its precariousness, a general pattern of life is nevertheless drawn: "all were circled" like the recurring questions in the muddling thoughts of Mrs. Swithin (BA 17). Between the acts, there is a suspension of moods in time which comprise a 'Truth' of Nature and of 'Being.'

Instead of denying the illusory world of the subjective imagination as in The Voyage Out, Woolf's last novel is a literary tribute to a subjective reality that underpins objective apprehension. The narrative, with its monotonous repetition, as of a lullaby crooned to put to rest one's egoistic consciousness, carries its characters as well as readers as it digs and delves deeper and deeper into a collective consciousness of a pacified subjective emotional world. Separations and distinctions are but a result of the self-absorbed, egoistic, 'I' who, in its attempt to subjugate Nature, is unable to resonate with the Real and the Other outside. This 'I' sustains itself by delineating boundaries and excluding 'the Other.' Whilst deep down in the 'wedge-shaped core of

darkness' within, it is 'limitless' and 'unfathomable.'[5] The full embrace of the inner void pacifies ontological anxiety about nothingness. There is no fret, nor worries, lying at the bottom of the sea. Self-attainment follows the sweeping dissolution of 'I.' Through the subjective impressions of the female characters, the narrative constantly achieves the silent but suggestive voice of Nature. In silence, the trees, the swallows, the nature "[dance], like the Russians, only not to music, but to the unheard rhythm of their own wild hearts" (BA 41). Music, as pure and abstracted symbols deprived of all literal meaning, becomes the only possible means to imbricate the intrinsic subjective flow. In its abstractness, music stirs up our feelings. "Music wakes us. Music makes us see the hidden, join the broken" (BA 73). In the silenced Nature, the fragmented narrative is united and the rhythm of the heart made perceptible.

As the nurse who murmurs to the children, rolling words on her lips, murmuring fragments of a sentence: "not shaping pellets of information or handing ideas from one to another, but rolling words, like sweets on their tongues; which, as they thinned to transparency, gave off pink, green, and sweetness," Isa has also been playing with and musing on words all along (9). Not in searching for a meaning, but instead with sounds, rhythms, imagery, she is building up a sensation, a feeling which will live (although, in the fashion of all feminine writings, it might be bounded up among the sheets of paper which she disguises as her accounting book). Meanings inhere not in the words themselves. It is the inner stream of feeling and emotion that bestows meaning on words. Thus, the rhythm of the words prompts a feeling and the feeling in return furnishes the words with meaning.

By playing with the "words" and acting out instabilities and controversies, Miss La Trobe has broken through the stringency of the symbolic order. She stirs in the audiences their unacted parts as in the words of Mrs. Swithin: "What a small part I've

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[5] TL 69-70.

had to play! But you've made me feel I could have played...Cleopatra" (92). Words no longer designate identity, alternatively, in free associations, they fish up buried sensations and hidden selves. As words are stripped of their signification in Between the Acts, meanings, instead of being conveyed as irrefutable and fixed through verbal signifiers, are construed through the rhythms of nature in its silence and emptiness. Combining with Nature, the deferral of the signifier is transcended: what is signified is now fully imbricated within the signifier itself. The meaning that is self-contained within pure symbols is a meaning unfathomable, and every word as it exists in its own totality should be appreciated as it is—"Words without meaning—wonderful words," for they are infinite and perpetual; they are the pure poetic form (BA 125). Woolf achieves an ultimate breakthough of the sentence and sequence of the masculine order.

In Between the Acts, words which are cut loose from their contexts become pure symbols of their own, embracing a wide range of possibilities and bewildering their beholders. No longer could the words be truthful and faithful to their employer, and meanings are only attained through the exchange between individual interpreters and their own appropriation of the symbols and words. "Thank the actors, not the author...Or ourselves, the audience," recalls Roland Barthes' famous declaration of the death of the author as the signifiers seem to spring free, assuming an autonomous spirit of their own (BA 120). What Miss La Trobe appears to aim for in her theatrical narrative is, in fact, an obliteration of authorship. Like Woolf, she contrives a narrative space which, instead of being constricting, is liberating. As the audience is invited into the creative process, the fictitious nature of narrative is fully fulfilled. For as the idea is embodied through the pageant-play in Between the Acts, there are numerous unexpectednesses added to the formation of the play as it is played out—the malfunctioning of the gramophone, the unplanned act of nature itself, and above all the introduction of a real village idiot as the court jester—blending the real world into

the illusion of the play and subverting the boundary between the real and the unreal as in a postmodern Disney World.[6] Without a definite boundary between the real and the unreal, the illusionary effects of the play become unassailable and carry further beyond the play and its narrative. It has transcended its own unreal foregrounding. The outdoor production, with the meagreness of the facilities, brings also to the forefront the backstage that is supposed to be hidden from its audiences. Therefore, actors seem to carry along their original identities into the play, as well as retaining their symbolic meanings when the play is supposed to be over:

> Was that the end? The actors were reluctant to go. They lingered; they mingled. There was Budge the policeman talking to old Queen Bess. And the Age of Reason hobnobbed with the foreparts of the donkey. And Mrs. Hardcastle patted out the folds of her crinoline. And little England, still a child, sucked a peppermint drop out of a bag. Each still acted the unacted part conferred on them by their clothes. (BA 116)

Thus, unexpected effects are added to the production and the play starts to assume a life of its own, free from the domination of its author and director.

Miss La Trobe feels frustrated, as Woolf often felt, since her creation continuously eludes her original layout—"Her vision escaped her" (BA 60). When they are attempting to transcribe the dead, life intrudes. Words have lost their supreme power to locate and signify and meanings are woven and formed through the course of interaction. As a psychoanalyst might put it, personal meaning is created by the playing out of object-relations. Therefore, nothing is definite or conclusive, not even one's subjectivity; not even a planned plot. For, real life backfires as satirised by the controversial allusions of Where there's a Will there's a way, the Restoration comedy within the pageant-play. As a result of the inconclusive nature of being in the world,

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[6] Jean Baudrillard, Simulacra and Simulation, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: U Michigan P, 1994).

there is always novelty to enjoy as well as uncertainty to fear. And yet, a stream of feelings and emotions seem to collect the dispersed experiences, reveries, thoughts, perceptions and knit out a continuous story of the self. At the end of the day, no meaning has been grasped and no understanding has been achieved.

Within the solid structure of the three unities, Between the Acts is presented in a series of loosely connected scenes, fragmented conversations, and segmented feelings but as if, underneath this apparent dispersal, there is a pattern, a granite-like order that connects and solidifies (whether it is Nature or man-made institutions). The refrain that indicates an interval, "dispersed are we," seems to point simultaneously to how one is separated from another as well as how dispersed and disjoint one is within oneself (59). Yet, although a split is registered, the Woolfian subject is by no means identical with the Lacanian concept. Unified subjectivity cannot be expected through the law-of-the-father. Instead, unified subjectivity is sundered with the primary acquisition of language as the subject attempts to distinguish the 'I' from the Other in an objective reflection upon itself. The self-reflexive characteristic of language is the fundamental infringement on the subjective unity of mind/body. The Lacanian mirror-reflection that creates a split between an outward unity and the inner disparity is actually an upshot of an already existing self-reflexive mind alienated from the bodily ground concealed from consciousness. Thus, Woolfian narrative suggests a prior unity which exists underneath the apparent disparagement of a linguistically formulated consciousness. It seeks to attain, through the dissolution of the 'I,' either a complete immersion in core consciousness or a creative liberation and transcendence from the linguistically formative 'I.' The 'shilling' spot at the back of one's head (an image often adopted by Woolf) will always subvert any unified, panoramic, view of oneself from a self-reflexive perspective, but an inner felt unity is nevertheless sustained through an integral flow of feelings. Miss La Trobe does not re-present the

present selves of the audience by holding up a perfect mirror. Instead, she "smash[es] to atoms what was whole," by having the imagery of the audience reflected through cracked mirrors, tin cans, old jars (BA 109). In "Scraps , orts and fragments," one becomes aware of the superficial unity fictionalised through the linguistic context. With the distortion of the symbolically constructed texture of consciousness, a more truthful presentation and apprehension of the subjective entity could finally be attainable (BA 112). Beneath the "scraps, orts and fragments" which all one can perceive of oneself, there is an underpinning sense of the feeling providing a pre-reflexive and pre-verbal unity.

Words have lost their definition. Yet, even though they can only represent the bits and scraps of what one seeks to express, it is only through words and their formulation that a subject might achieve a substantial understanding of itself. Verbal representations may not be necessary to the core consciousness of a subjective being, yet without verbal representations, it would be impossible to achieve the personal meaning of a self and a life.[7] Between the Acts, though, is filled with unexpressed emotions and inexplicable feelings. A search for meanings, for a reason and cause, is constantly at work. The emptiness at the heart of life which Clarissa has commented upon is amplified by the failure of the symbolic language; the subject is unable to create a personal meaning to form a solid self-identity. The void at the centre is often supplied with verbal interpretations and images. Although emotions and feelings always elude any possible apprehension of words in their abstractness, without words, emotions and feelings seem entirely ungraspable. And as emotions and feelings continue to pile up, the silence of the inexplicable becomes even more dominant. Nonetheless, with an affirmation of the importance of language in the formation of

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[7] Nancy Chodorow writes in The Power of Feelings, "Psychoanalysis is a theory about how we create personal meaning, our unconscious psychic reality, through what I am calling the power of feelings" (13).

self and personal meanings, there also rises anguish for the differentiations and divisions brought along by the adaptation of verbal language. Enchanted by words, Isabella (Isa) never tries to pin down the meaning of her fragmented phrases. She keeps them afloat, leaving them as they are. She is therefore capable of achieving a similar inner equilibrium and self-dispersal as Mrs. Ramsay's wedged-shape core of darkness: "In some harvestless dim field where no evening lets fall her mantle; nor sun rises. All's equal there. Unblowing, ungrowing are the roses there. Change is not; nor the mutable and lovable; nor greetings nor partings; nor furtive findings and feelings, where hand seeks hand and eye seeks shelter from the eye" (BA 93). This self-annihilation of female subjectivity (as Elaine Showalter has called it) is in fact an embrace of an unlimited self.

But to surge beyond the texture of language and to embrace the essential state of one's being which is, in fact, nothingness, is a self-threatening posture. Even the acknowledgement of the intrinsic void will rouse a threat to the existing (linguistic-structured) ego. The history of Western philosophy is itself a reflection of the ontological struggle between the recognition of an inner void and the primal desire to invent and fabricate substantial meanings and definitions. Terry Eagleton summarily writes: "In Hegel's eyes, pure being is utterly indeterminate, and so indistinguishable from nothingness. For Schopenhauer, the self is a 'bottomeless void.' For the anarchist Max Stirner, humanity is a kind of 'creative nothing.' For Martin Heidegger, to live authentically is to embrace our own nothingness, accepting the fact that our existence is contingent, ungrounded and unchosen" (209-10). The subject is forever transforming and adjusting itself to its object-relations in the world, but still the transformation circulates around a concentric yet unnameable core. Both Orlando and Between the Acts are narratives of history which seek a definition of life as they come to address the transience of subjective life in contrast with the

monumental time of no time. Nature is protean as well as perennial. Its "repetition [i]s senseless, hideous, stupefying," for "if there is nothing unforeseen, no invention or creation in the universe, time is useless again" (BA 42; Russell, Knowledge 24). However, in a historical narrative, a pattern is formed, a plausible meaning takes shape.

Time passes; things change. Still, Orlando remains intrinsically the same Orlando who waved a sword against the head of the Moor in an Elizabethan attic room, the same Orlando who needed to attach him/her self to the oak tree in an Elizabethan aristocratic estate. It is by enduring these alterations of social conventions and by exhausting the protean nature of the 'self,' that Orlando is led to distinguish the very basis of him/her 'self.' Orlando longs for a firm root to attach him/herself, yet s/he is also fascinated by the endless possibility of the self as if it could take up any shape. The tendency of the self to camouflage itself underneath social codes is fully exhibited and the changes in social climate (as well as the weather) allow hidden features of the 'self' to reveal themselves. The world is subjected to change as well as what one identifies as one's 'self,' yet through all the variations, Orlando still holds his/her belief in the oak tree that distinguishes itself by underpinning the processes of temporality: "Nature, who has played so many queer tricks upon us, making us so unequally of clay and diamonds, of rainbow and granite, and stuffed them into a case, often of the most incongruous" (O 55). Once again in Orlando, Woolf is struggling against the transient nature of the rainbow-like 'fact' which appears to be so real but inconsistent, and the firm and reliable yet unattainable base of a granite-hard 'Truth.' With the publication of the poem "The Oak Tree," an assertion is made about an ontological Truth only arrested, poetically, through aesthetic achievement.

The affinity between Orlando and this posthumous work is also observed by Gillian Beer in her essay "Between the Acts: Resisting the End." The absurdity of life

and the precariousness of nature are greatly magnified by their light-heartedness as in a black comedy. The apparent fictional framework inverts the original concept of fiction and fact as it exposes the fictitious nature of any narrative. And yet the pre-supposed fictional nature of the narrative protects it from being self-negated and self-subverted. All historic discourses are but a fictional narrative constructed out of nothingness. In digging and delving, Woolf goes beyond the personal struggle between the ego and id, groping, like C. G. Jung, for a deeper root that grounds creative life and subjective consciousness as well as the diverse manifestations of the individual. She probes deeper into the realm of sub-consciousness where words and languages are no longer the appropriators of one's feelings and thoughts.

Particularities are oftentimes generalised and with such generalisation the subject is solidified by a sustainable general law.[8] Generalisation is a primal attempt to understand the world and its ways. Though one pageant is different from another, each year a similar chord strikes and on hearing "the first peal of a chime of bells,... you hear the second; as the second peals, you hear the third" (BA 16). One thing leads to another and before one realises it, a shape is taken up, a pattern woven and a life formed, leaving the subject feeling trapped and unable to exert any power of control. The song of the chorus in the play within the play of Between the Acts, echoes the battered woman in Mrs. Dalloway, singing out the recurring nature of the world which is on the edge of being disrupted by the war: "Digging and delving (they sang), hedging and ditching, we pass...Summer and winter, autumn and spring return...All passes but we, all changes...but we remain forever the same" (BA 84).

One is constantly searching for patterns to follow, for a general concept to

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[8] "As Nietzsche long ago said, a species that refused to overgeneralise, investigating each particular object precisely before any generalisation would probably have perished long since. And even in contemporary terms, it appears that a firm and overgeneral bounding off of the self from the disgusting servers to reassure the self about its own solidarity and power" (Nussbaum 204).

understand the world. And still, no matter what understanding the individual has grasped, s/he is often betrayed by the treacherous of life, cheated out of life, out of meaning, by its failure to conform to the pattern imposed on it. Different traditions of superstitions and religions jostle each other in the pages of Between the Acts: as if in a transitory stage of uncertainty one could only rely on belief and faith to reassure one of order and regularities. Such beliefs coalesce into interpretations for the mystery of life. But although the subject is constantly readjusting itself to the uncertainty of the external world, a core sense of its being (in association with memory and especially the memory of the body) which is impregnable yet intangible, persists and upholds a consistent selfhood that might lead one from one note to another. Random as the external stimuli are, the individual mind picks up separate impressions in response. This particular day of a village pageant of Between the Acts shares a similar spirit with Mrs. Dalloway as past and future are brought together as well as people from various parts of society. The present day of the pageant and its audience are interlaced with the rest of the history that is presented. The pageant connects and creates a communal experience among its audiences: they may not meet again, yet the experience they have shared will allow each to live on within the other. A thread is formed among them.

In all its playfulness, however, silence oppresses throughout the novel. Perhaps this really is the novel of silence envisioned by Hewet in The Voyage Out. Instead of verbal communication, the novel is built upon the vibrations of the body and its immediate interaction with sense-objects. The narrative mimes the sensual and emotional ripples of the body in resonance with received stimuli. Although the present is burdened with the past and the future, it is enlivened by the body. Isa feels herself trapped within her current circumstances, unable to love and hate fully, but all of a sudden this feeling subsides and what is substituted for it is an acute consciousness of

her bodily need for water. Words seem to reach an ultimate abstraction, no word has a definite meaning, yet each word stimulates the inner circulation of sensations.

"Ah, but she was not merely a twitcher of individual strings; she was one who seethes wandering bodies and floating voices in a cauldron, and makes rise up from its amorphous mass a re-created world" (BA 92). The inner voice of the creative producer of the pageant, Miss La Trobe, in Between the Acts is no less applicable to Woolf herself—the ultimate creator behind the scene. She too, like, Miss La Trobe, endeavours to bestow upon her reader the sense that "Glory possessed her [or him]"; that "her[/his] moment was on her[/him]—her[/his] glory" (BA 92). In 'scraps, orts fragments,' she endeavours to project onto her reader a reflection of their real present being, contrived out of an elaborated narrative. There, both Woolf and Miss La Trobe's stories of life are rather performed and enacted not only through the prescribed characters and settings, but rather through the temporality and the reality of the actual living of their readers or audience. It is in the real life of the reader and the audience that the liveliness of the story resides. Although still writing in words, Woolf has gradually moved beyond the meaning of words in Between the Acts. In its fragmentation, Between the Acts, which was published posthumously, has achieved a poetic stasis out of which a Truth of life which no neatly formed narrative could possibly delineate, might emerge.

As an educated man's daughter, Woolf had enjoyed a free-access to her father's library. Although university education was still out of her reach, she was, like Katharine in Night and Day, furnished with the privilege of being born and brought up in a family of well-established literary and writing traditions. However, within such a traditional family, the restraints of the patriarchal institution on woman were even more conspicuous. In the image of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay, her father was always demanding sympathy and sacrifice from the Stephen women, whilst her mother

acquiesced in the patriarchal institution and conformed in sheer virtue to the image of 'angel in the house.' In narrative, Woolf started to invent a new subjective space that might bequeath to women a new identity and therefore new possibilities. Resisting compliance with masculine versions of rationality and patriarchal bias against the emotionality of women, Woolf insists on the co-relation of the body and the mind. The material body continues to serve as the fundamental ground for the mind and, as she attested in A Room, a well-nourished body is indispensable to a 'sensible' and creative mind. Both Woolf's ontological pursuit and feminist claims are therefore strengthened through the re-conceptualised mind/body relation. Pre-empting the contemporary neurological stance, Woolf professed through her narrative experiment that feelings and emotions underpin not simply the constitution of selfhood but also that of reason and creativity.

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