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On Going A Journey Through The Works of Virginia Woolf

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To Jason K. Lewis and Elizabeth Frank:
One for leaving me with a
forever wandering imagination,
and the other for teaching me to accept it.

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PREFACE

The soul of a journey is liberty, perfect liberty, to think, feel, do, just as one pleases. We ourselves behind much more than to get rid of others. It is because I want a little breathing-space to muse on indifferent matters, where Contemplation

May plume her feathers and let grow her wings,
That in the various bustle of resort
Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair'd, —Milton, "Comus," 378-380

that I absent myself from the town for a while, without feeling at a loss the moment I am left by myself. (William Hazlitt, 'On Going A Journey')

This project is written in the style it is trying to describe: the ineffable drive Virginia Woolf had to "zigzag" in her texts. While she wishes to convey Laurence Sterne's "preference for the windings of his own mind to the guide-book and its hammered high road" ('The Sentimental Traveller' 409), his seemingly aimless narrative ramblings also throw into relief Woolf's own fears with formlessness in their shared endeavor to paradoxically encapsulate "wonderfully prolific" real life, which "passes through such strange places and along with it a train of adventures…" ('Sterne' 281). When reading Woolf's works, one must pursue a journey with an author who is not entirely comfortable with her own mental map; she wishes to communicate life, yet is not entirely comfortable with serving it a certain way. Furthermore, her critical essays serve as supplements for the traveler to learn from. They provide helpful insights that illuminate understanding in her fiction. Only when one takes a step back from her works, allows them to blend together, will the puzzle-piece-map begin to take shape. One must be warned, however, that a zigzag will appear.

With William Hazlitt's and Laurence Sterne's help, this project embarks on an uncharted journey through Woolf's works. No map or table of contents is provided.

POINT OF DEPARTURE

Before going on a journey the question of a guide-book naturally suggests itself. Your need is not altogether simple, and, though many profess to supply it, few, when put to the test, are found to succeed.

(Virginia Woolf, 'Journeys in Spain')

Reading Woolf's fictional work is like going on a journey, as William Hazlitt famously put it, through the high mountains of discontinuity and consciousness. Woolf's novels suggest that for one to read her work, one must be transformed into a sympathetic companion who has the "perfect liberty" to think and feel a certain way, yet must follow a meticulously mapped narrative terrain; feelings and sentiments may run freely, but only within the landscape and time frame the author provides. Woolf wishes for her readers to un-pack her text, disassemble what one thinks of a "conventional" literary category, to only re-pack it for assembly and shipment. Readers must strip away conventional categories in order to access Hazlitt's "breathing space" that is synonymous to a freeing of the mind. She opens space and time through the very act of writing, which journeys away from a conventional, mimetic mode of representation and discovers an abstract mode of representation that she envisioned would create the proper illustration of emotion. In doing so, she declares her independence from tradition. Time and place become suggestive forces that limit her novels and prevent the spilling of interiority from splattering all over the pages; the two concepts are buffers against an unmapped route taking charge, which would inevitably lead the unsympathetic reader into narrative no-man's land.

Woolf's fiction is composed with sudden shifts and changes in direction, suggesting an author who zigzagging towards a new type of novelistic endeavor. While

her language is primarily evoked on late nineteenth century early modern poetics, her form is entirely unique with its zigzag shape, refuting definition, being indefinable and ineffable. Her narrative style is swift; condensed and compressed, fussily worded and punctuated. Yet even so, it suggests layers of meaning. It is indicative of the movement of a mental process through space and time that not concerned with consistency, but rather interested in mobility. Her process is that of intense volatility. As readers, when we reach a point of closure, we are forces to seize the opportunity, not so much out of being bored, but because of being out of breath. One will wish to reflect upon the "propriety, after all, of using the word adventure" ('The 'Movie' Novel' 290), or journey, but has little time to do so. Having no idea what is to become of Woolf's characters when they speed off towards the end of their novel-space, readers are left wondering if they, too, are to do the same.

ITINERARY

He is, after all, telling a story, pursuing a journey, however arbitrary and zigzag his methods. (Virginia Woolf, 'A Sentimental Journey').

Woolf's essays on Sterne display her discontent with fiction's formal narrative and exhibit her ambivalence towards his expansiveness of character and form. She is both excited and anxious that he leaps formal boundaries – "the thick-set hedge of English prose" ('Sterne' 281) – that she herself tentatively zigzags over in her own works. Woolf also appropriates Sterne's frequent tropes of travelling throughout her analyses, a metaphor that traverses the terrain of both writers' products and processes:

> he touches upon the emotion, and passes on to show us how it travels through his mind, and what associations cling to it; different ideas meet and disperse,

> naturally as it seems; and the whole scene is lit for the moment with air and colour. ('Sterne' 285)

It is because of Sterne's particular process that he is able to create his particular product. Sterne's process demands that an active mind be present in order to gather the various "associations," or images and symbols, that "meet and disperse" within the text. He is aware of how emotion is processed in the mind, and curiously seeks a method that will be able to demonstrate and encapsulate the flux feeling of when associations rapidly come and go.

Woolf sees Sterne distributing himself far and wide, gliding over feeling and gathering sentiments like trinkets of travel, only to scatter them again through his free-flowing form. Sterne's narrative exertions are configured as an invigorating walk that "opens the heart[…and]forces the blood[…]to run freely" (*Tristram Shandy* 303) through characters' expanded consciousnesses, much like how Woolf "opens" the novel by unpacking it, always, however, for the sole purpose of repacking it when the journey concludes. While Sterne travels light on his dashes, tripping from one clause and through to the next, Woolf is burdened by the long dash creating the weight and awkwardness of individual phrases. She admires Sterne's seemingly unmapped routes, but is herself preoccupied with the need to "enclose the whole, and shape infinite strange shapes" (*Letters I)*, aware of the strict formal decorum of eighteenth and nineteenth century literature forbears, mimicked most closely in her first novel, the grand narrative *Night and Day*.

Woolf is, then, a sympathetic critic in the Hazlittean sense: Sterne is the "distant object" ('Why distant objects please', 1822) that excites her interest but requires an act of exertion to fully engage with. Sterne's contemporary Adam Smith argues in *The Theory*

of Moral Sentiments (1975) that "sympathy" is a working of the "imagination" that "[carries] us beyond our own person" (9), placing the author and reader alike in the dual role of participant-observer. Sympathy moves beyond being singular and becomes a dual participant role. Paradoxically, sympathy is an 'organic' unconscious identification with another and a conscious imaginative exertion. Hazlitt suggests that it is the imagination's *voyage*, or zigzag, between subject and object rather than the destination that comprises the *process* of sympathy:

> It is not the[…]glimmering[…]speck in the distance that rivets our attention…it is the interval that separates us from it, and of which it is the trembling boundary[…]we imagine all sort of adventures in the interim.
>
> ('Why Distant Objects Please' 358)

The movement from subject to object revises the former, synonymous to Woolf's essays on Sterne being read as a reworking of her own authorial purpose. The uncharted territory between Sterne and Woolf is analogous to the unstable reciprocity, or "trembling boundary", between writer and reader, with character and form zigzagging back and forth between them. While "sympathy" is an immediate reception of sensations during the walk or journey, "sentimentality" as considered reflection is what the traveler takes home. Both Sterne and Woolf require sympathy from themselves and the reader as fuel for the journey, while sentiment harvests that sympathy when one looks over the travelogue, distanced from the experience itself.

The imagination that takes place within this moment of separation can be seen in *Mrs. Dalloway* when Clarissa peers outside her window and watches her neighbor moving. Once the woman moves beyond her peripheral vision, Clarissa begins to imagine what the woman is doing, literally making it up as she goes along. Clarissa, one could argue, takes pleasure in observing the woman because of the

fantasy she is allowed to create because of the distance the two have between one another; she can, in a sense, 'know' and 'believe, how ever false the premise is. There is no shared sympathy because Clarissa has never even met her neighbor; her musings are pure fantasy.

Woolf is attuned to Hazlitt's concept of necessary distance between the self and the object of sympathy, for if one places oneself in the position of another "we might perhaps dissolve utterly" (*DIII,* 97). Woolf and Sterne thus struggle to reconcile narrative journeying as a project for both the artist and critic, roles they zigzag between: the touristic pleasure of a meandering, flee-flowing novelist style must be checked by the travel critic's strictures of form and propriety. The desire to wander unimpeded carries with it the risk of getting lost in narrative's no-man's land, in turn leaving the unsympathetic reader behind; Woolf in particular is so ambivalent about her narrative wandering because formal waywardness would enable verisimilitude, mimetically enacting psyches that amble through conscious and unconscious planes.

Sterne more readily relishes and advertises the participant-observer dialectic, exploiting it as a humorous disjunction. His seemingly disarming spontaneous style is, though, a form of self-defense, dramatizing his critical obligations in the text as a way of pre-empting and rebutting criticism outside of it: in a siege, zigzag formation protects against enfilading by the enemy. When *Orlando* is first drafted as "a writer's holiday," to be written "at the top "of her "speed," Woolf feels "the need of an escapade" and wishes "to kick up [her] heels and be off" (*DIII* 177); in effect, Woolf is parading her very *difference* as a writer of fiction, suggesting, perhaps, that

she never even had the confidence or desire to write a traditional nineteenth-century novel.

EXCESS BAGGAGE:
The Word/Phrase (and narrative device) "Zigzag"

DEFINITION:
1. Noun: a line, course, or progression characterized by sharp turns first to one side and then to the other; one of a series of such turns, as in a line of path.

2. Adjective: proceeding or formed in a zigzag: *What beautiful zigzag stitches!*

3. Adverb: with frequent sharp turns from side to side; in a zigzag manner: *The child ran zigzag along the beach.*

4. Verb (used with object): to make (something) zigzag, as in form or course; move or maneuver (something) in a zigzag direction: *They zigzagged their course to confuse the enemy.*

5. Verb (used without an object): to proceed in a zigzag line or course.

POSSIBLE FORMS:
ZIGZAGGING, ZIGZAG, ZAGGED, ZAGGING[1]

In each of Woolf's fiction from 1919 through 1931 below, the word "zigzag" and its other possible forms appears at least once. When observing the occurrences of the individual passages, a certain clarification unfolds that suggests Woolf's growth as an author, particularly in her ability to 'tame' her mental roaming in order to facilitate a proper balance of suggestion in her imagery. The following passages are meant to draw attention to the overarching themes that zigzag their way in and out of her texts. They are meant to help the reader get into the 'role' of a sympathetic companion on this narrative journey.

PASSAGE 1: *Kew Gardens* (1919): "The figures of these men and women straggled past the flower-bed wit a curiously irregular movement not unlike that of the white and blue butterflies who crossed the turf in ***zig-zag*** flights from bed to bed. The man was about six inches in front of the women, strolling, carelessly, while she bore on with greater

purpose, only turning her head now and then to see that the children were not too far behind. The man kept this distance in front of the woman purposely, though perhaps unconsciously, for he wished to go on with his thoughts.

Note: In *Kew Gardens*, "zig-zag" describes a "curiously irregular movement not unlike that of the white and blue butterflies who crossed the turf in zig-zag flights from bed to bed." During this appearance of the word, Woolf introduces the reader to her concern about distance and proximity: the man was about six inches in front of the women."

PASSAGE 2: *Jacobs Room* (1922): Chapter 2: "Now it was clouding over. Back came the sun, dazzling. […] It fell like an eye upon the stirrups, and then suddenly and yet very gently rested upon the bed, upon the alarum clock, and upon the butterfly box stood open. The pale clouded yellows had pelted over the moor; they ***zigzagged*** across the purple clover. The fritillaries flaunted along the hedgerows. The blues settled on little bones lying on the turf with the sun beating on them, and the painted ladies and the peacocks feasted upon bloody entrails dropped by a hawk."

PASSAGE 3: Chapter 5: "At Mudie's corner in Oxford Street all the red and blue beads had run together on the string. … The proximity of the omnibuses gave the outside passengers an opportunity to stare into each other's faces. Yet few took advantage of it. Each had his own business to think of. Each had his past shut in him like the leaves of a book known to him by heart; and his friends could only read the title, James Spalding, or Charles Budgeon, and the passengers going the opposite way could read nothing at all—save "a man with a red moustache," "a young man in grey smoking a pipe." The October sunlight rested upon all these men and women sitting immobile; and little Johnnie Sturgeon took the chance to swing down the staircase, carrying his large mysterious parcel, and so dodging a ***zigzag*** course between the wheels he reached the pavement, started to whistle a tune and soon was out of sight—for ever. The omnibuses jerked on, and every single person felt relief at being a little nearer to his journey's end, though some cajoled themselves past the immediate engagement by promise of indulgence beyond … Jacob, getting off his omnibus, loitered up [St. Paul's Cathedral's] steps, consulted his watch, and finally made up his mind to go in. … Does it need an effort? Yes. These changes of mood wear us out."

The initial double z in "dazzling" increases the reader's attention to the word "zigzagged." As in the first passage, proximity resurfaces, as well as colors. Again, "zigzag" is used to describe movement. The repetition of "Butterflies" and alliteration in "Blue Butterflies" and "butterfly box."

PASSAGE 4: *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925): (SEPTIMUS) "Where were his papers? the things he had written? […] She brought him his papers, the things he had written, things she had written for him. She tumbled them out on to the sofa. They looked at them together. Diagrams, designs, little men and women brandishing sticks for arms, with wings—where they?—on their backs; circles traces round shillings and sixpences—the suns and stars; ***zigzagging*** precipices with mountaineers ascending roped together, exactly like knives and forks; sea pieces with little faces laughing out of what might perhaps be waves: the map of the world. Burn them! He cried. Now for his writings; how the dead sing behind rhododendron bushes; odes to Time; conversations with Shakespeare; Evans, Evans, Evans—his message from the dead; do not cut down trees; tell the Prime Minister. Universal love: the meaning of the world. Burn them! He cried."

Note: Here, Septimus's "change of mood" wears him out too much; this passage precedes his suicide. "Roped together" is reminiscent of Passage 3's beads running "together on a string." "Sun" repeats, as does the image of fire ("burn"). In this passage, Septimus calls his papers "odes to Time," suggesting the reason why *Mrs. Dalloway* is exclusively used later in this discussion to describe Woolf's temperament of time in her novel.

PASSAGE 5: *To The Lighthouse* (1927): (MRS. RAMSAY) "And she waited a little, knitting, wondering, and slowly rose those words they had said at dinner, "the China rose is all abloom and buzzing with the honey bee," began washing from side to side of her mind rhythmically, and as they washed, words, like little shaded lights, one red, one blue, one yellow, lit up in the dark of her mind, and seemed leaving their perches up there to fly across and across, or to cry out and to be echoed; so she turned a felt on the table beside her for a book. […] And she opened the book and began reading here and there at random, and as she did so, she felt that she was climbing backwards, upwards, shoving her way up under petals that curved over her, so that she only knew this is white, or this is red. She did not know at first what the words meant at all. … She read and turned the page, swinging herself, ***zigzagging*** this way and that, from one line to another as from one branch to another, from one red and white flower to another, until a little sound roused her—her husband slapping his thighs.

But now, it didn't matter a damn who reached Z (if thought ran like an alphabet from A to Z). Somebody would reach it—if not he, then another. This man's strength and sanity, his feeling for straight forward simple things, these fishermen, the poor old crazed creature in Muckelbackit's cottage made him feel so vigorous, so relieved of something that he felt roused and triumphant and could not choke back his tears."

Note: Discussed later, this passage in *To The Lighthouse* is used to describe Woolf's

vision of how one should read. As in previous passages, colors are repeated, as is the double z in "buzzing" adds greater salience to the word "zigzagging." Woolf introduces the concept of echoing, or repeating. Literally, she is echoing parts of her past works.

PASSAGE 6: *The Waves* (1931): (BERNARD) "I was saying there was a willow tree. Its shower of falling branches, its creased and crooked bark had the effect of what remains outside our illusions yet cannot stay them, is changed by them for the moment, yet shows through stable, still, and with a sternness that our lives lack. Hence the comment it makes; the standard it supplies, and the reason why, as we flow and change, it seems to measure. […] **Then Jinny came**. **She** flashed her fire over the tree. **She** was like a crinkled poppy, febrile, thirsty with the desire to drink dry dust. Darting, angular, not in the least impulsive, **she** came prepared. So little flames ***zigzag*** over the cracks in the dry earth. **She** made the willows dance, but not with illusion; for **she** saw nothing that was not there. It was a tree; there was the river; it was afternoon; here we were; I in my serge suit; **she** in green. There was no past, no future; merely the moment in its ring of light, and our bodies; and the inevitable climax, the ecstasy."

Note: Bernard uses the word "zigzag" during his description of Jinny, augmented by the echoing—or repeating—use of "she." As in previous passages, imagery of fire and colors are repeated. This passage is also suggestive of Woolf's conception of time as a series of still "moments."

LOST IN TRANSLATION

In Woolf's analyses of reading she alerts readers to the threat of illusive-elusive narrative landscapes in the misdirecting memory, which can cause "imperfect sympathy": "Parts of the book seem to have sunk away, others to be starting out in undue prominence" (*DIII),* she writes in her diary. In *Jacob's Room*, Woolf posits the idea of misplaced or mis-mapped emotion as the topography of the psyche and of speech is scrutinized:

> …consider the effect of sex – how between man and woman it hangs wavy, tremulous, so that here's a valley, there's a peak, when in truth, perhaps, all's as flat as my hand. Even the exact words get the wrong accent on them.

The heaving landscape lying ahead could – with that foregrounded tentative "perhaps" – be illusory, and suggests that this comment throws into relief the often primal return to the name of the love-object as a repeated sound rather than signifier, spoken aloud as though negotiating a tricky route. Woolf is aware of the distinction—the term "undue" above implying this claim-- between worthy and unworthy narrative endeavors. In her attentiveness of Sterne's errant style as an inefficient form of travel, she enlightens readers that 'zigzagging' takes up more space and time than a straight line.

Yet, here divergences of 'zigzagging' compose the journey itself. The pleasure of the journey lies in linguistic indulgences that do not necessarily advance plot or deepen character, Hazlitt explaining that "The soul of a journey is liberty[…]to think, feel, do, just as one pleases" ('On going a Journey' 181). In Sterne, the veering sentences of Shandy's 'chat', piling clause upon clause, slow him down, but it is precisely from these seemingly 'wasted' words that his characteristic humor is generated. Woolf herself cannot resist indulging in percussive effects that relish words for words' sake, as self-reflexively dramatized in *The Voyage Out*'s interlude of abandon. Hewet's freedom of movement in 'Sternean' "fine air"('Sterne' 284) is manifested in Hewet's freedom of speech:

> He shouted out a line of poetry, but the words escaped him, and he stumbled among lines and fragments of lines which had no meaning at all except for the beauty of the words […He] ran swinging from side to side down the hill […] roaring innumerable words, lovely words… (*The Voyage Out* 174)

Hewet's zigzagging "from side to side" distributes himself further across time and space than the straight line, just as poetic immersion in the sonic force of words allows the

narrator's voice to preside over the whole work. Yet within this freedom, the words can become unintelligible because unmediated words run away with Hewet and Woolf, with the artist of course indulging as the critic is subdued. If the words have no meaning, yet are beautiful, "innumerable" and "lovely," the critic is unable to disagree because he does not even know what words to disagree with; if there is no word to create a word-symbol, the critic is left like a scientist without his beakers.

The starling attack in *Between the Acts* is an exploration of words' soundscape much like the audible airplane of *Mrs. Dalloway*, yet recalling the proliferating 'z' of "zigzagging":

> The whole tree hummed with the whizz they made, as if each bird plucked a wire. A whizz, a buzz rose from the bird-buzzing, bird-vibrant, bird-blackened tree. The tree became a rhapsody, a quivering cacophony, a whizz and vibrant rapture, branches, leaves, birds syllabling discordantly life, life, life, without measure... (*Between The Acts* 245)

Visually and aurally this passage resonates, as "whole" morphs into "hummed" and 'optically alliterates' with "whiz", the 'w' sound rounding off the sentence in "wire". The double-'z' runs rampant in the repetition of "whizz" and "buzz/buzzing"; the 'y' suffix also permeates the layering of "rhapsody", "cacophony" and "discordantly". The triple repetition of the "bird" prefix with the reverberating 'b' sound is echoed and intensified in the relentless "life, life, life". Woolf attempts to replicate the "rhapsody…quivering cacophony" of discordant "syllabling" in a highly self-reflexive display of the suddenness and uncontainability of inspiration. She enacts a kind of oral/aural drag, offering indeterminate sounds that the ear clutches at as one passes quickly through time and space in the carriage or car.

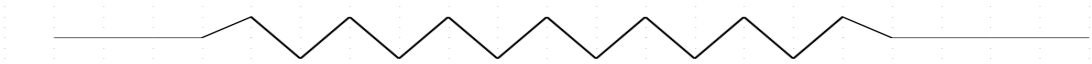
The jolting of the carriage that jerks forwards and backwards and side to side is Sterne's mode of transport for the inefficient narrative that lurches along and threatens to be stymieing itself. The curve and counter-curve of corporal Trim's flourish (550) is verbally articulated: "What is the life of man! Is it not to shift from side to side? – from sorrow to sorrow? – to button up one cause of vexation!- and unbutton another!" (302). The syntactical balancing facilitated by "and", "from" and "to" mimetically demonstrates Sterne's hobby-horse metaphor: "off I set – up one lane – down another, through this turn-pike, over that" (268). This kind of doing and undoing, voyaging out and circling back is envisaged by Woolf as a process for the *reader* as much as for the writer. In *To the Lighthouse* Mrs. Ramsay,

> opened the book and began reading here and there at random, and as she did so she felt that she was climbing backwards, upwards…she read and turned the page, swinging herself, zigzagging this way and that, from one line to another… (100-1)

Woolf offers efficient encouragement for her readers to read this way, even if it halts the progress of the syntactical and narratological journey by teasingly directing the reader backwards through her books; in Sternian words, "instead of advancing, as a common writer, in my work…I am just thrown so many volumes back" (257). Both Sterne's and Woolf's leaps in time and place via interjectory interludes necessitate return, as though there are multiple points of narrative embarkation and arrival. There are also many ways of being waylaid, even at a syntactical level, by the stray wanderings of an apparently well-destined sentence:

> Dr. Slop drew up his mouth, and was just beginning to return my uncle Toby the compliment of his Whu-u-u- or interjectional whistle,- when the door hastily opening in the next chapter but one – put an end to the affair. (163)

Here the phrasing uneasily pivots, or zigzags, between tenses, advancing and retarding the sentence. Slop in the imperfect tense "was just beginning to return" much as this passage is in its foreshadowed interruption. The sentence itself is used as a waylay, or interruption, to the journey. The hyphenated "Whu-u-u" of the "interjectional whistle" is itself disrupted by the dashes around the phrase "when the door hastily opening in the next chapter but one –," the punctuation misleading us into reading it as a subordinate clause, when in fact the destination-phrase "put an end to the affair" follows directly from the door opening rather than the "interjectional whistle". A mini-history is deposited in every clause, as we pass through the sentence but find that we necessarily re-read it in order to reach some meaning. Sterne's contemporary print convention of the 'catchword' at the bottom of the page meta-textually enacts Mrs. Ramsay's Shandean impulse to rapidly read ahead, as the reader anticipates what is to come but is then forced to read the same word again overleaf. Yet, reading ahead wont help the reader anticipate what is to come unless he or she is looking in the right place. The movement from one page to the next is thus both propulsive and regressive, as we flick backwards and forwards, side to side, to locate ourselves again in the sentence and in narrative.



Much like Sterne, Woolf leaps to explore the terrain of thought and how it is mapped in modulated speech. Woolf works with the different voices of her re-created spaces in two seemingly antagonistic ways, both to unify and to fragment time and space. Just as Clarissa's personal voice must contend with the loud presence of the city, so must the woman writer both accept and deny the urge to impose a unifying vision. Incorporated into the voices of the novel, especially through the use of water imagery,

these preoccupations form the basis of Woolf's often thought of "feministic re-visioning" of urban and human experience. The act of writing what demands to be read aloud is an attempt to trace precarious mental states as Sterne's Yorick's:

> …now, if I have strength and Spirits to trail my pen down to the bottom of the page… upon taking up my pen, my poor pulse quickend…and tears stood ready in my Eyes to fall upon the paper, as I traced the word Eliza. O Eliza! Eliza! (*Tristram Shandy* 112-4)

"The word Eliza" is transferred from the mind to the paper to the mouth in the climactic lament: the exclamation marks force the name to leap out of the page, demanding that it be spoken aloud. "Eliza" is the fixed point the sentence gropes for. In *Between the Acts,* Woolf similarly articulates this vivifying of language that seems to transform itself into the written to be spoken: "Words this afternoon ceased to lie flat in the sentence. They rose, became menacing and shook their fists at you" (74). In the earlier work, *Pointz Hall*, language threateningly assumes a life of its own for William Dodge too: "words erect themselves and point fingers at him"(89). In *Between the Acts*' literally (physically) performed words, language has its own topography of rising and falling cadences. In one instance, Phyllis raises her voice before trailing off:

> *Gentles and simples, I address you all* (she piped)
> *Our act is done, our scene is over* […]
> *But soon will rise another dawning* […]
> *You shall see….*
> Her voice petered out. (*Between the Acts* 114)

The one-dimensional four-dot ellipsis offers only a trace of where the words have been. This diminution is paralleled by the peaks and troughs of the musical accompaniment: "The music petered out on the last word *we*" (118). The faltering tape-recorder fragments the text, so that the reader's eye travels over rough terrain in truncated heightened words, flat ellipses and mis-placed dashes: "The gramophone gurgled *Unity* –

Dispersity. It gurgled *Un..dis*…And ceased" (*Between The Acts,* 118), much like the individual letters of the advertising plane in *Mrs. Dalloway* (20). "The dots are a characteristic device," Woolf states in her essay 'The Sentimental Traveller,' they are,

> part of an artistic system that prevails throughout. If only, in travelling, you will open your mind to receive all impressions and force your imagination to track down the most fugitive of suggestions, something charming and valuable, because original, will be recorded. This is perhaps the course any sensitive mind adopts naturally, though it does not always go on to trace it out upon paper. (44)

In turn, the act of writing what longs to be read aloud becomes the tracing of precarious mental states. As with Sterne's Yorwick (above), Woolf's Septimus in *Mrs. Dalloway* similarly escalates this 'precarious mental state.' Being shell-shocked from World War I, Septimus is unlike the other characters in the novel. However, readers do not need to be told that Septimus has been driven "mad" during the war, for his insanity is suggested by his different pattern speech and mental thought; when his consciousness is first introduced, the narrative comes to a dead stop: "Men must not cut down trees." "There is a God." "Change the world." (24). The diminutive sentences force the narrative to switch not only to a different narrative voice, but also to a different form of structure. Unexplained, the short, cutting sentences vary significantly from the lyrical prose that dominates most of the text; primarily, *Mrs. Dalloway* flows very tightly together, riddled with semi-colons and commas to keep Woolf's characters tightly knit. This use of punctuation allows Woolf to show multiple people, places or ideas as companions in the narrative. Breaking away from her "great discovery" in narrative (her "tunneling" technique) Woolf implies that Septimus' consciousness is different from the other characters' in the novel, and perhaps, is unable to be sympathetically communicated. Septimus' thoughts and speech are rarely articulated for longer than a

few passages at a time, allowing Woolf to aesthetically distance herself from Septimus through, ironically, the act of *not* writing. Woolf not only finds it difficult to write about Septimus, but also doubts her readerships' ability to sympathize with an insane character. Furthermore, instead of lyrical passages moving in and out of consciousnesses, Septimus is sometimes only read through curt explanations of movement,

> … he could hardly walk. He lay on the sofa and made her hold his hand to prevent him from falling down, down, he cried, into the flames! and saw faces laughing at him, calling him horrible disgusting names, from the walls, and hands pointing round the screen. Yet they were quite alone. But he began to talk aloud, answering people, arguing, laughing, crying, getting very excited and making her write things down. Perfect nonsense it was; about death; about Miss Isabel Pole. (66-67)

"Yet they were quite alone" is one of the few instances in the novel when the narrator intrudes the text-- perhaps, in fact, to make sure the reader hasn't lost their place within the narrative. What remains important, however, is that Septimus' words are transferred from his mind to his mouth to his wife's writing hand in the climactic lament "flames!" The exclamation mark forces the word to leap from the readers' page and demand it to be yelled—that it be "cried"—to necessitate attention. His eventual demise is the same fixed point that the Sterne passage above had "groped" for. Yet Septimus "Make it known" (24), one must "write it down." Spoken language does not hold the same power as that which is written. Distinct and pungent by the very punctuation it uses, *he wrote it down* (25), set astray by parentheses, appears almost as a natural act of movement, especially by its placement within the passage; it follows the first instance of a rarely-used series of short sentences, which open the paragraph. In turn, Septimus' short-sentence repetition becomes just as important as their exclusivity within the narrative frame.

BEWARE: FAULTY WORDS AHEAD

Woolf's essay 'Craftsmanship' informs readers that words are an impure medium. In the later-published *Orlando*, when Woolf's main character is mesmerized by a Russian princess, he anxiously searches for, and is eventually unable, to find for the right words to describe her:

> [What was she like?] Snow, cream, marble, cherries, alabaster, golden wire? None of these. She was like a fox, or an olive tree; like the waves of the sea when you look down upon them from a height; like an emerald; like the sun on a green hill which is yet clouded—like nothing he had seen or known in England. Ransack the language as he might, words failed him. He wanted another landscape and another tongue. (*Oralndo* 45)

Even when Orlando's feelings are most passionate, they are expressed in terms of artificiality, for example, when Orlando tries to actually *define* his lover Sasha:

> Images, metaphors of the most extreme and extravagant twined and twisted in his mind. He called her a melon, a pineapple, an olive tree, an emerald and a fox in the snow all in the space of three seconds; he did not know whether he had heard her, tasted her, seen her or all three together. (36)

Seemingly, Orlando appears destined to only find uncongenial, that is, improper 'word' equivalents for Sasha. Even when Orlando tries to write poetry, a medium that would presumably allow for mis-definition, words still remain inadequate:

> He was describing, as all young poets are for ever describing, nature, and in order to match the shade of green precisely, he looked . . . at the thing itself, which happened to be a laurel bush growing beneath the window. After that, of course, he could write no more. Green in nature is one thing, green in literature another. Nature and letters seem to have a natural antipathy: bring them together and they tear each other to pieces (*Orlando* 18).

Find no adequacy in words, Orlando instead is attracted is to the abstraction of images and metaphors, suggested by the biography's shift towards symbolic representation. In turn, Woolf's actual "symbols," such as the kingfisher, prove to be just as suggestive and expressive as a "shadow" shape. For Woolf, "thought could be conveyed by shape more

effectively than by words" ('The Cinema' 270). The shape of her text, the zigzag composition and the mode it unfolds in, is just as emphatic as the movements of her characters. As critic J. Hillis Miller notes, "The most important themes of a given novel are likely to lie not in anything which is explicitly affirmed, but in significances generated by the way in which the story is told" (54). Woolf's organization in her novels is not arbitrary; rather, each is organized around various forms of occurrence through which she "zigzags."

Both Sterne and Woolf are preoccupied with the boundaries of the text as representative of the boundaries that separate author and reader. The inside/outside-text motif is visually encrypted in *Tristram Shandy* by the juxtaposition of the "monumental inscription" "Alas, poor Yorick!"(30) enclosed in a box, and the unbounded text representing the speech of a passer-by: one is written, the other read. Sterne ventures outside the text and then invites the 'real' world into it, hence Woolf's comment on *Shandy*: "everything was inside the book, nothing outside"(427-8). Sterne and Woolf enjoy zigzagging over formal and psychological borders, in their quest to move the reader: the editor's incursive comments in *Shandy* and Woolf's digressive endnotes are often extra-narrative additions that transgress textual boundaries. In the 1765 Saunders edition of *Shandy* the outside is literally inserted into the text, in an advertisement for the publisher's other printed works between Volumes VIII and IX. Sterne's self-reflexive real-time reference to Shandy's writing on "*March* 9, 1759"(42) – is echoed in Woolf's most Shandean work, *Orlando*, which ends on 11th October 1928, the book's publication date. The 'real' world outside is sallied into and finds accommodation in the text.

As when we hear the echoes of Yorick's cry in Hewitt's nonsensical verbal and literal roaming that ends on the see-sawing iambic and trochaic disyllables: "about Rachel, about Rachel," Woolf's characters, too, reciprocate with their repetitions: ""Terence […]Terence – that's like the cry of an owl,"" (207) in *The Voyage Out,* "Lord, Lord" or "But Clarissa… Clarissa" in *Mrs. Dalloway*, "I, I, I" (144) in *The Waves,* etc. The list could go on, for it is a repeating motif in Woolf's work.

Ironically, *Orlando* is one of the only novels that does not mention the word/phrase 'zigzagging,' and yet does, in every sense, gather the various aspects of Woolf's approach to fiction. The intensity of Orlando's life and feelings is evoked by the wealth of genres and art forms the text borrows from. *Orlando* is a composite work drawing from the theater, the masque, even from architecture if we consider that it can be read as Woolf's attempts to deconstruct "mausoleum-shaped Victorian biographies." It is perhaps precisely because *Orlando* is a mixture-- a hybrid—that it can weave through a great number of intertexts, each with its own connotations. As a mock-biography, it rejects category, Floriane Reviron-Piegay noting,

> It has always been difficult to classify [*Orlando*], and critics have applied different definitions to it. According to Nancy Topping Bazin, it is a "fantasy-biography" (139); for Rachel Blau du Plessis "*Orlando* is at least a parodic biography, a female history of Britain, a feminist apologue . . . an insouciant break with conventional norms surrounding gender, sexual identity, and narrative" (131); and Joanne Trautmann gives a definition which perhaps shows the impossibility of precisely defining *Orlando*: "Among other categories, it may be seen as a parody of biography, an essay in the exotic, a mock-heroic novel of ideas, an imaginative literary and social history of England and a biography of Vita Sackville-West" (40).

By debunking the typical category of 'novel,' early bookstores wondered what section to place *Orlando*, in the novel section or biography section. Most noticably, it manipulates

time, starting in the sixteenth century and ending in the twentieth. The main character is male for the first half, female for the second half, which allows for Woolf's sudden shifts in plot and abrupt changes of scenery, from England to Broussa and the Thessalian Hills via Constantinople and then back to England; "*Orlando* is the literary transposition of what Woolf sensed the cinema could achieve if it stopped being merely a recording device and became a vehicle of fantasy: 'the past could be unrolled, distances annihilated, and the gulfs which dislocate novels . . . could by the sameness of the background, by the repetition of some scene, be smoothed away' ("Cinema" 272)." (Reviron-Piégay 40).

"One might say that in Mrs. Woolf's novels," a critic notes,

> life has turned into what she once described it as being—'a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. […] And the novel has turned into something very like a poem. This incisive and unflagging prose is as rapid as verse, and the utterances follow one another with a short of rhythmical incantation. Sometimes they are frankly antiphons, and one always has that sense of a response; the book moves to that measure. This formal effect recurs with the further settings which have given its title; prefixed to each movement of it there is a background of the sea, with changes from dawn to sunset. ('Review of the Waves' 20)

Character, mood and self are shown by an individual gesture, an image, a perception, yet they are filaments, especially in *The Waves*, in the consciousness of each speaker: "Each of them is much more conscious than we habitually are—this sharpened and dramatized consciousness is the 'convention of the novel'—and utters not merely his sense of the moment but again and again, his secret individuality" ('Review of the Waves' 20).

The linguistic 'returns' displayed suggest how *Mrs. Dalloway* is composed: "The part of us which appears, are so momentarily compare with the other, the unseen part of us, which spreads wide, the unseen might survive, be recovered somehow attached to this person or that, or even haunting certain places after death perhaps-perhaps" (79), Clarissa

states. Woolf's repetitive tentative "perhaps" creates the impression of an author full of suggestions and no definite answers. Seen character runs of the risk of being illusory, suggesting that there is a discrepancy between the seen and unseen aspects of an individual.

Woolf's assumption about the way one mind can be related to others is a generative principle lying behind the form of her novel, for the question of narrative voice can be seen as a special case of the problem of relations between minds. The narrator is a mind projected by its way of "speaking," "with special access to [the characters'] minds and with special powers for expression on what goes on there" (Miller 52). Therefore the manipulation of narrative voice is closely associated with the theme of human time /history that seems intrinsic to the form of her novel. While the past tense in a novel typically establishes the narrator as something living *after* the events of the story, readers likewise assume that this narrator is retelling the past perfectly. As Miller suggests,

> The narrator tells the story in a present which moves forward toward the future by way of a recapitulation or repetition of the past. This retelling brings that past up to the present as a completed whole, or it moves towards such completion. This form of an incomplete circle, time moving toward a closure which will bring together past, present, and future as a perfected whole, is the temporal form of many novels. (52)

Woolf investigates these traditional conventions of form in order to bring something new into fiction. Woolf's assumption about time is that it is a series of still moments, in which a succession of singular moments take place and then are later collected in a memory. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, the novel depends on the presence of a narrator who remembers all and who has the power of bringing the past into the present: "In *Mrs. Dalloway,* narration is repetition," Miller concludes. In turn, the narrative's

language generates a certain texture to the novel, specific to place and character while repetition is used to create fixed specificity. Although unaware, the characters depend on the narrator, who is the preserver and writer of their thoughts, sensations, images and speech: "She rescues them from time past and presents them again in language to the reader. Likewise, the narrator's mind is dependent on the characters' minds, for evidentially, it could not have a voice without them.

"WHAT'S SAID HERE, STAYS HERE": USING THE PAST TENSE FOR THE PRESENT

Woolf's use of time is a form of indirect discourse, in which she zigzags through temporal regulation: the narrator reports in the past tense thoughts which once occurred in past moments of characters' lives. This narrative style punctuates the narrative and reveals the presence of one-way relationship, readers often taking the ventriloquist's voice for granted. We hear Peter Walsh's thinking: "Clarissa refused me, he thought"; "It is Clarissa herself, he thought." In turn, if the reader questions where he is placed at any given page of *Mrs. Dalloway*, the 'place' is often within an individual mind that is being understood from inside by an omnipresent, all-knowing mind, speaking from some later point in time, a point that is always "after" anything the characters even think or feel. Speaking for all of them, knowing all of them, the narrator is everything and everywhere *at once*.

Woolf's use of past tense is conventional to her fiction. While the first sentence, "Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself," establishes a temporal distance between the narrator's present and the present of Clarissa, everything the characters do or think is placed firmly in an indefinite past as something which has always already

happened when the reader finally stumbles upon it. In turn, *Mrs. Dalloway* has, what Miller coins, "double temporal form" (59). Within the characters' "general pastness of the narration," they "remember something from their own pasts." Then, when "the narrator reports" the event in the initial "indirect discourse," Woolf does not have the to place it in the past than to cast it as

> … some version of the past tense which she has already been using for the 'present' of the characters' experience: 'How fresh, how calm, stiller than this of course, the air was in the early morning.' That 'was' is a past within a past, a double repetition.
>
> The sentence before this one includes the 'had' of the past perfect which places it in a past behind that past which is the 'present' of the novel," (59-60)

Which is, of course, the day of Clarissa's party.

The "now" of the sentence describing Clarissa's "plunge" (3) onto the streets of London is the narrator's memory of Clarissa's memory of her childhood home, which is brought back to her mind so vividly that is becomes the present within the reader's actual experience of reading. The sentence literally opens the door "with a little squeak of hinges which she could hear now" (3) to a flood of memories that bring a long-gone memory back as a 'present' with the complexity and fullness of immediate experience. The way readers locate themselves in the memories is by gravitating between both Peter Walsh's and Clarissa's accounts of Burton to collect and use daily conventions such as dinner as time-markers. Still, the temporal location of the memories, for the most part, remains ambiguous.

Woolf aims at expressing the "moment of being" as a subjective conception of time, the narrator or biographer in *Orlando* awkwardly trying to reconcile "the rapid passage of events and actions" and the "slow opening up of single and solemn moments of concentrated emotion" ('De Quincey's' 139). The characters in *Mrs. Dalloway*

concentrate their moments of emotion in the past, while Big Ben ceaselessly moves their 'present' time forward. Mentally, the characters cyclically return to memories as the clock repeats his strikes.

The temporal placement of Clarissa's experiences outside of London is in the form of a memory of the past in Bourton. The memories intrude as waylays on the narrative journey; however, while they do not progress the narrative, they do provide insights that are important for character development. Generally, the main characters are restored to life in memory by bits and pieces. To compose a character requires readers to collect, and essentially draft, a mold through repeated actions, thoughts or memories. When collected, the memories form a central episode from their common past, specific in both time and place. The characters then come together at Clarissa's party again in a casual repetition of the past. However, things have, of course, changed. Woolf uses both these temporal time frames in her narrator's perspective of a single distance from the text. The narrator moves forward through its own time of narration toward the point when Peter and Clarissa come together in the completion of the final sentences of the novel. Yet even this is fragmented, for they "almost come together," since a temporal gap still exists in the separation between "is" and "was": Peter Walsh states,

> It is Clarissa.
> For there she was. (296)

This moment of almost-completion passes quickly in the lives of the characters. The party ends, the novel ends and readers are left wondering what is to become of them all.

Mrs. Dalloway, as story that is a recollection composed of recollections, provides a perfect example of Woolf's exploration of the functioning of memory as a form of repetition. It also questions both chronological and psychological duration (the time, so to speak, it takes a reader to read the text versus the time that the reader feels or accepts has passed). Woolf likewise has a heightened awareness of the time physical events take and the space the narrative allows for scenery to be developed. Although time can be analyzed in each work by Woolf, reading it through *Mrs. Dalloway* as a lens provides a solid example of her process in regards to time's limitations and demands. In *Mrs. Dalloway,* Big Ben introduces the concept of time and its authority, for he surpasses being merely a sound that chimes for characters and readers: he becomes a visual persona within our very imagination.

In *Mrs. Dalloway,* moments develop through the scope of mystery, yet they do not conclude in the fashion of a nineteenth-century novel. In Woolf's narratives, the constraint of time allows for narrative variation and movement. The spacing and movement of the incidents that bestow development on her novel unfold slowly as a process of recognition, the narrator manipulating time through intricate organization. Furthermore, the nature of Woolf mental state, as displayed in her diaries, cyclically declined and recovered multiple times, perhaps suggesting her reasoning for representing time and reality as fractured. When translated into novel form, the fractured pieces fight to configure a whole, which resists the 'clock-time' it takes for a return from insanity; the 'clock-time' transfigures the creation of the *different* time, or the 'mental-time,' when one's mental state is altered.

Like the months in *The Years* and the hours in *Mrs. Dalloway*, time passes arbitrarily whether the characters like it or not: "The years, we know, are indifferent to us; we grow old whether we are ambitious or lazy, married or single, good or bad. … Mrs. Woolf ignores what the years ignore, and this might seem right if the years did not ignore everything; they have no story" (Muir 622). Although the characters have no control over it, they are aware and in turn subject to its decorum. In *Orlando*, time passing with Orlando living during almost four centuries and barely aging, is perhaps the most subversive aspect of the novel.

Woolf's zigzagging is a dramatizing of time's very implications. Time is questionable because of the way it is represented in the novels: *Orlando* ends on the date of publication, *The Years* stirs the sensation of passing time, and *Mrs. Dalloway* is confined to a single day. Her concern with specificity of time suggests the importance it has in her novels. When Woolf writes of Sterne that "*A Sentimental Journey* is a succession of portraits" (404), proving she is more self-commentary than she is in *A Sketch of the Past.* Much like the movement through tableaux of characters in *The Waves*, the vast, past memories that compose each individual's making and thinking span the course of decades. Time and place function as tools of awareness so that Woolf is able to "tunnel" out her characters' emotions and consciousnesses, unfolding them piece-by-piece; together they provide the perfect type of boundaries for Woolf's zigzagging.

For example, the beginning of *Mrs. Dalloway,* when Clarissa is found shopping, Woolf begins in an interior world and transforms it into something readers recognize as the localized "morning" time. The blending of objective and subjective time is initially given to us before we acknowledge that the novel is confined to a single day; readers are

then jerked from Clarissa's "now" immediately into Clarissa's past, when she was eighteen, and then, once again, we return to Clarissa's present instant at the curb. The tenses, shifts, and innovative breakthrough that took "year's groping to discover what I call my tunneling process, by which I tell the past by installments, as I have needed of it" is communicated. Her "prince discovery so far" is *zigzagging.*

It should be noted that traveling forwards and backwards in time, zigzagging in and out of various characters' minds and tenses creates a movement suggestive of what we think madness would be like. The mind can no longer represent the world in a coherent form: it becomes a *montage*, 'a-bric-a-brac' reality. The narrative focus continually shifts from the external world to the minds of the characters perceiving it. Woolf's ramblings go in and out of her novels and formal essays, that she often uses a "But to return to..." (*EIV* 319) phrase to resituate the disoriented reader.

Woolf's very approach to space and time in *Mrs. Dalloway* spirals in various directions—the third-person narrator suggesting the author's vast control and the clocks dictating the time. The familiar, classical unities of time and place mark off events as the hours and half-hours are struck off on London clocks. Furthermore, Big Ben, striking with "extraordinary vigor, as if a young man, strong, indifferent, inconsiderate" is both a character and a device. It quickly establishes itself on the first page: "There! Out it boomed. First a warning, musical; then the hour, irrevocable. Leaden circles dissolve in the air." As readers, we are then carried through a single day, beginning in the morning: "what a lark!" It is a simple time-line: a woman's day. Big Ben establishes time, while London establishes place. Within these two limiting forces, Woolf can shuffle in memories without the fear of stalling the narrative progression.

Character as Narrative
Narrative as Character

Like trail signs designating family portrait worthy scenery, readers depend on *Mrs. Dalloway's* Big Ben to suggest moments of significance. As a character, his offered service is reliability: when Elizabeth Dalloway leaves Westminster and is out of the 'hearing-zone' of Big Ben, she frantically wonders "what was the time?—where was the clock?" (137). Big Ben also upholds authority, giving the text a specific time frame, often intruding into the thoughts of the characters. The other authoritative character—Dr. Bradshaw—likewise interrupts Clarissa's party with the news of Septimus' death. It is no coincidence that his surname is synonymous with timekeeping: "in the early twentieth century, a 'Bradshaw' was a railway timetable" (Whitworth 120)—Dr. Bradshaw's wish to confine Septimus to a home is synonymous with Big Ben's confining the characters within a single day.

Woolf's narratives appear as a part of "a series of experiments with the emergent techniques of perspectival narration, temporal discontinuity, and rhythmic jutaposition of elements" (Fleishman 107). Because Woolf was presumably not writing a novel about herself, one can argue that time in *Mrs. Dalloway* is a series of "life junctures" (Fleishman 108) that depends on the "systems of measurement, the state of motion of the characters involved, and the degree of simultaneity or divergence in the recording of various events." Time must be fractured because the past cannot be distanced by distance, for even on a journey, the mind can never erase what has come before no matter what

location it has happened in. In *Mrs. Dalloway,* Woolf includes flashbacks of the past, in which Peter and Clarissa gravitate between the Bourton the of past and the London of the present. Likewise, Septimus and Rezia gravitate between the war of the past and the London of the present. Within both sets of characters and memories, time is manipulated to move forwards and backwards in a cyclical pattern that necessitates both departure and return. Woolf's novel is unable to move towards a feasible end-point, and thus relies on mystery to carry readers from place to place.

As in *Jacobs Room* and *To the Lighthouse,* the specificity of time and place captures the quality of life in an English class system. Lunch, tea, dinner, impose order on a chaotic modern world just as *Mrs. Dalloway's* Big Ben imposes his chimes upon the characters' activity. Daily regiments are yet another 'ordering envelope' hemorrhaging into the novel to keep the characters in check. Thus, the London Woolf evokes is simultaneously solidly traditional and lyrically nostalgic. Amidst the upheaval and change Woolf depicts in the novel, the monarchy remains intact and the Empire victorious. The geographical wandering and tropes of travel that are intricately placed inside its English domestic setting may frustrate and probematizes a purely aesthetic reading of the novel, but more importantly, it acts as a restraint. Clarissa, "with her perfect manners, like a real hostess," with "her courage; her social instinct; he admired her power of carrying things through" (62), understands her 'role' because of these conventions. A slave to social conventions and time, Clarissa can only roam freely in her mind.

Big Ben also allows Woolf to play with chronological yet, allowing for repetition. Characters, in a sense, can do things at the *same* time because of Big Ben's loud strikes;

because of the clock, readers do not get lost in the no-man's land when switching in character or scene. Alongside the "clock-time" plot Big Ben entrenches in the narrative, non-chronological narrative roams almost ceaselessly on the pages and in the memories of the characters, but remains strictly bounded by the Big Ben envelope: when Septimus throws himself from his window, or when Clarissa feels overwhelmed by her past as a faraway experience and sense of being, Big Ben's chimes call to readers' attention not only the meaningfulness of the episode, but also the meaningfulness of the questions that compose our natural curiosity: questions of life and death.

Primarily, Big Ben acts as a unifier and placeholder; time, in addition to place, keeps readers aware of the position or physical reality of the characters. Often there is a heightened awareness of life when time *stands still*, and the past and present merge as the future emerges. In turn, readers are reminded of the 'exactness' of moments when all is at rest; there is a heightened awareness of life when the traveler stops to take a photograph of his scenery—if beautiful or interesting enough, the traveler suddenly loses sight of everything else except for the moment.

While Woolf was writing *Mrs. Dalloway,* her (f)actual ring back to reality was often "Dinner!", a recurring interruption of, and conclusion to, various diary entries. For the characters in *Mrs. Dalloway*, it is Big Ben—the monumental Westminster clock. Each time Big Ben strikes, the characters that hear him are lifted out of their transfixed absorption into the existence of daily strife. Time itself imposes emphasis, reminding readers and characters alike that each individual life is a part of an all-encompassing stream, and that with each passing moment, our living, physical life is zigzagging away from us; there can be no doubt about Woolf's preoccupation with the problems of time

passing and the approach of death. The clocks remind the characters that that they are getting older, and that their memories act as failed escape routes.

Perpetual return is synonymous with repeating moments. When different consciousnesses intrude the narrative, time is often rewound and played again. Big Ben allows for the characters to appreciate "moments" of time as still moments; the sights of London's texture, traffic, and single people transfix momentum. Big Ben's chiming necessitates the return of the wandering reader back to the single day of Clarissa's party, to a present "now." As Conrad Aiken notes, Woolf "preferred to see [things] through a safe thickness of plate-glass. It was as if she could not be quite at ease with life until she had stilled it, reduced it to the mobile immobility of art—reduced it, even, to such comfortable proportions and orderliness as would not disturb the drawing room. In *Jacobs Room,* however, and *Mrs. Dalloway* Mrs. Woolf began to make it clear that this tendency to sterile dexterity, though pronounced, might not be fatal" (Aiken 16).

However, Big Ben is somewhat deceptive, for although he upholds authority, his 'clock-time' is falsified because it is an arbitrary measure. Woolf shows doubt in his reality, suggesting a distinct fraction of unity when the St. Margaret's chiming happens *after* Big Ben's (42). Big Ben *seems* to be upholding authority, yet paradoxically falsifies the real nature of time for readers and characters alike, for his way of marking time stands in contrast to the characters' experiences of time, particularly in relation to memory. Movement in mental time, from present to past to present again, is important for Woolf and her characters, for it requires certain space(s) to define identity and relationships between characters: when Elizabeth Dalloway leaves Westminster and Big Ben is no longer present, she notes while walking, that not a single "Dalloway" had ever

walked the "Strand" (140). Yet, Elizabeth is only allowed to make these types of observations when Big Ben is not present. Zigzagging between the past and the present defines what has happened in the past, drafts the history that composes each character and illuminates the reasoning behind why a character feels or does. Likewise, it allows for images and ideas to be imagined, such as Clarissa's life and the world surrounding her, while likewise illuminating the very co-existence of someone else's existence.

MEETING THE QUIRKY BUSBOY: (THE DAYS WHEN WOOLF HAD FORMAL CHARACTER)

While the 1920s were a time when critics could "unashamedly" (Beja 4) speak of character in fiction, take E.M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel* or Jane Austen's work as examples, Woolf's characters are compositionally different. As readers, if we accept E.M. Forester's remark that Woolf "Could seldom so portray a character that it was remembered afterwards on its own account as Emma is remembered, for instance, or Dorothea Casaubon, or Sophia and Constance in *The Old Wives' Tale*" (12), her work potentially may appear to be flawed in its failure to provide a "gallery of memorable portraits, such as can be derived from the works of other great novelists" (Bennet 20). However that may be, it is certain that she developed a *different* method of characterization from that of other eighteenth and nineteenth century novelists, which was also capable of producing different effects. Only in her first two novels does Woolf allow her literary past to constrain her dealings with characters: for example, Mr. Hilbery[2] in *Night and Day* is introduced *traditionally*, similarly to how characters are composed for the reader at first appearance in other nineteenth century works:

> He was an elderly man, with a pair of oval, hazel eyes which were rather bright for his time of life, and relieved the heaviness of his face. He played constantly with a little green stone attached to his watch chain, thus displaying very sensitive fingers, and had a habit of moving his head hither and thither very quickly without altering the position of his large and rather corpulent body, so that he seemed to be providing himself incessantly with food for amusement and reflection with the least possible expenditure of energy. One might suppose that he had passed the time of life when his ambitions were personal, or that he had gratified them as far as he was likely to do, and now employed his considerable acuteness rather to observe and reflect than to attain any result.

"The fault here is a slight overloading with detail," critic Joan Bennett reflects, "and the physical traits are made to carry an undue burden of psychological significance, a common fault with this type of presentation" (20). While the necessary characteristics of a traditional portrait are present, such as the traditional explanation to Mr. Hilbery's, character, Mr. Hilbery is nonetheless an individual, not a mere prototype. Woolf's descriptive language evokes "easily remembered" characteristics that can be developed in the readers' mind, and then confirmed late by his behavior. This method of creating a character offers readers a fictional self-gratulatory feeling of having understanding his 'self' from first descriptive appearance; in a sense, it creates imperfect sympathy. However, this feeling is not provided in later Woolf novels: Peter Walsh's playing with his knife in *Mrs. Dalloway* does not necessarily display "sensitive fingers"; instead, it displays whatever readers choose the act to display: a nervous tick, an obsession, possibly. The point here is that if Peter Walsh's 'self' is even comprehended by readers, it is via his actions and the impressions readers gather from them. One is not told, so to speak; one is shown. Whether readers acknowledge it as an important attribute of his personality is entirely personal. In creating this distance of ambiguity, Woolf allows for readers to wander just as she is.

Character in fiction, like personality in real life, is a question of repetition: one "knows" someone is something because he does certain things in a characteristic way. Characters and individuals are composed of their own histories of action and the impressions it leaves. Typically, fictive characters appear to be factitious and coherent when they repeat certain actions; Peter Walsh is still 'Peter Walsh' when he is shown flicking his knife in both the past and present, but when Sally Seton appears at Clarissa's party as "Lady Rosseter," Sally's past is almost erased, for self identifies with her new name as a married woman: "Was it Peter Walsh grown grey? Lady Rosseter asked herself (who had been Sally Seton)" (181). Indeed, Sally's new life is not that of a "ragamuffin," as were her days in Burton. Yet, in Clarissa's view, Sally/Lady Rosseter is still "reckless" (182). While on the one hand characters Woolf must contend with repeating aspects "being" in order to create identification, she is forced to find other methods that undermine the fixedness of traditional character within fiction.

The differences between the character of Mr. Hilbery and those in later Woolf novels become apparent over time, most notably when she discovers her "tunneling" technique during the composition of *Mrs. Dalloway*:

> I should say a god deal about The Hours[3], & my discovery; how I dig out beautiful caves behind my characters; I think that gives exactly what I want; humanity, humor, depth. The idea is that the caves shall connect, & each comes to day light at the present moment… (*DII* 263)

Mr. Hilbery is not set in motion, nor is he introduced through her 'unfolding' process in which character is given to the reader gradually as one moves through the text. Aside from Mr. Hilbery, Woolf's characters' private contemplations and mental musings take place while they are in motion: perambulating across Regent's Park, rushing down Bond Street, riding on an omnibus across London. Winds, sirens and endless sounds of

nautical metaphors are sprinkled into the text, embedded like the candles in a funfettie cake, endlessly confusing our tastebuds while complicating and confronting the boundaries of her text through a rhetoric of travel. In turn, Woolf is trying to represent consciousness as a flow of new and fresh air, using character as a malleable, plastic as material.

LOCATING THE 'NEW' SELF: "Out of the country and myself I go" (Hazlitt)

In his essay "Imagination and Sympathy: Sterne and Adam Smith," Kenneth MacLean describes how sympathy "[flashes] upon the screen of consciousness an image, or picture, of the suffering condition of another" (MacLean 401). Sterne and Woolf foreground the tension between the static image – the weekend away's "snapshot pictures of people" (*The Years* 341) – and the dynamic linearity of the written sentence. In turn, form expands and becomes a process: the journey and not merely the markers of departure and destination. While Sterne relishes this freedom, Woolf is pre-occupied by creating an overarching shape: "Suppose one can keep the quality of a sketch in a finished and composed work? That is my endeavor" (*DII* 312). In the pen of a writer who is enthralled by "wandering," inherently dematerialized consciousnesses and skirmishes with apparent formlessness are recurrent. She admires this sympathetic balancing of formal stasis and motion in Sterne: "The utmost fluidity exists with the utmost permanence"('The 'Sentimental Journey'' 404). Yorick in *Journal to Eliza* converses with his beloved's literal "sweet Picture"(113), which is "eloquent" precisely because it is also composed of his pen-strokes, a sympathetic 'arrangement' of words. He offers "the present Picture of myself" in the text's framing margins, but states that he has not "varied in one Lineament, from the first Sitting – to this last"; his assertion of the

fixity of his love simultaneously extends the singular image into a series of sittings that travel over time.

The 'rigid' image is made partial and provisional, just as the meaning of a phrase and a sentence is accumulated through individual words: "take it as a Sample of what I ever shall be…"(*Sentimental Traveller* 139). Movement through a text, much like movement through time, allows for shifts of change to occur. Originally induced in them by the author, reading character is an "image-creating process", a continual present participle of the kind Woolf liberally uses. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa's engagement with the woman she peers at through her window represents an additional engagement of imaginative blind space:

> She was going to bed, in the room opposite. It was fascinating to watch her, moving about, that old lady, crossing the room, coming to the window. Could she see her? It was fascinating, with people still laughing and shouting in the drawing-room, to watch that old man, quiet quietly, going to bed. She pulled the blind now. (186)

Every participle is a present participle, enhancing Woolf's authoritative specificity towards time and movement. Not as much fixed in scenes, but ebbed in her characters, Woolf's approach to movement and time as a stream of consciousnesses is risky, for it runs the risk of drowning her characters due to the lack of 'traditional' character.

Similarly, in *Jacob's Room*, snapshots of London scenery are set in motion by the durative process of reading: "pictures in a book whose pages we turn over and over as if we should at last find what we look for" (96); the destination of full sympathetic engagement is deferred by the conditional "as if". But Woolf's imagination is neither passive nor stagnant; it is active, transforming the objects of her attention into something mutilated by actual reality; observation itself in turn distorts the image. When Orlando

makes her way out of the city in her car, Sharon Ouditt sees "something which seems to imitate the 'tracking shot' taken from the perspective of the moving vehicle" (151):

> Long vistas steadily shrunk together. Here was a market. Here was a funeral. Here a procession with banners upon which was written 'Ra—UN', but what else? Meat was very red. Butchers stood at the door. Women almost had their heels sliced off. Amor Vin—that was over a porch. . . . Nothing could be seen whole or read from start to finish. (*Orlando* 275)

Finally, the last chapter of *Orlando*, with its insistence on movement and instability, is a translation of Woolf's fascination with speed (she was fond of driving). She was aware that the cinema, with its "speed and slowness, dartlike directness and vaporous circumlocution" ('The Cinema' 271), had the ability to move the spectator both literally and figuratively. "The (e)motive power of the moving pictures" critic Floriane Reviron-Piegay states, "is perhaps the kind of effect she meant to achieve in *Orlando* : hence the concatenation of ideas, thoughts, emotions, and movements in the last chapter." When at Marshall and Snelgrove's, Orlando takes a lift for the first time and is

> shot smoothly upwards. The very fabric of life now, she thought as she rose, is magic. In the eighteenth century, we knew how everything was done; but here I rise through the air; I listen to voices in America; I see men flying—but how it's done, I can't even begin to wonder. So my belief in magic returns. . . . Each time the lift stopped and flung its doors open, there was another slice of the world displayed with all the smells of that world clinging to it.

In Woolf's short story 'Sympathy' (1919), she admits that there is a "blind moment" beyond the limits of her sympathetic engagement with her characters: she can "see" Celia "and then not" (103). This syntactical pivoting recurs when Woolf imagines Celia as "a widow; or she is not." Celia's black mourning weeds give way to the "white from head to foot." As Celia and the narrator move through the sentence, the image not only alters but undoes itself, just as *Shandy*'s end chronologically undoes its beginning.

She is "forced" to admit that these visions and revisions risk derailing the journey of sympathy: "The outward sign I see and shall see for ever; but at the meaning of it I shall only guess" ('Sympathy'108). Hazlitt observes that "if we paint one set of objects" on the "the canvas of the fancy…they immediately efface every other" ('On Going A Journey' 258), and while Sterne picks and discards characters and scenes at will, Woolf is uncomfortable with merely "passing through," for she sees her characters with E.M. Forster's later critical eye: "They [the characters] speak no more to us or to one another as soon as the page is turned" ('Virginia Woolf' 229).

As a miniature representation of the larger problem Woolf has in composing her fiction, single moments of time lack the unity of roundness. "Images" of sympathy are insufficient because they lie flat in the mind and because they cannot turn into rounded knowledge. In turn, character and form for both Sterne and Woolf must be made three-dimensional in the landscape of narrative literally mapped out in the jagged lines of *Tristram Shandy*'s "misadventures and cross accidents" (7) or Woolf's London parks, shops and streets. In the eighteenth-century editions of Sterne's novel the force of the type's impress upon the page literally indents language, giving the work its own textural-textual landscape. Woolf states of the biographical context for *Shandy*: "these are merely marks on the surface, and the source from which they sprang lies very deep" ('Sterne' 283), alerting us to the undulations of the psyche that we plunge into as well as dart across. The use of repetitive semi-colons helps develop the act of plunging and darting—zigzagging-, for Woolf envisages her mind as a receptacle and not just a flat canvas when she writes *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Like Sterne, Woolf's movement through the text allows her to offer multiple images or versions of her characters, redrafting them as she writes, as though being seduced by new untrodden tracks not on the London tube map. Woolf in turn applies this pattern to reading, in 1931 writing, "New impressions are always completing or cancelling the old. One's judgment is suspended, for one does not know what is coming next" ('The Love of Reading' 271). This runs the risk, though, of "frittering and dribbling away" the continuity of a clearly-delineated character – a fixed point of 'discovery' the writer and reader can aim towards.

In *Mrs. Dalloway,* Peter Walsh's imagining of capturing the girl he follows through the park attempts to encapsulate feeling in one still image, and still, it constantly shifts as the narrator provides more of his "thoughts":

> ….he started after her to follow this woman, this excitement, which seemed even with its back turn to shed on him a light which connected them, which singled him out […]
>
> But she's not married; shes young; quite young, thought Peter […]
>
> She was not worldly, like Clarrissa […]
>
> Still if she stopped he would say "Come have an ice," he would say, and she would answer, perfectly simply, "Oh yes." […] (61)

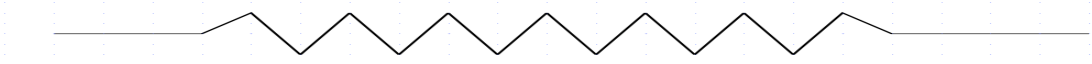
Likewise, in *Sentimental Journey,* Yorick's imagining of the captive in Paris attempts to encapsulate feeling in one still image – "I was in a right frame" to "take his picture" – but it constantly shifts as he gives "full scope to my imagination" (61):

> I beheld his body half wasted away[…]and felt what kind of sickness of the heart it was which arises from hope deferr'd. Upon looking nearer I saw him pale and feverish[…]
>
> But here my heart began to bleed – and I was forced to go on with another part of the portrait[...]
>
> He gave a deep sigh – I saw the iron enter into his soul – I burst into tears – I could not sustain the picture of confinement which my fancy had drawn…

Yorick offers a series of aborted impressions; the subject of sympathy, like the captive's hope, is the destination always "deferr'd" to the Hazlittean horizon the writer and reader never quite reach. He is "forced" to keep relocating in his actual mental picture, and just when he does attain the physical sympathetic response of tears, the mind-forged image of captivity paradoxically escapes him: it is a mirage. As in *Orlando's* meta-textual dimension with three layers of meaning, the manuscript draft of *Pointz Hall* meta-textually enacts Woolf's anxiousness over indeterminate forms as the insight that Miss La Trobe "always wanted to make something important to stabilize what was essentially fugitive at the moment" (82) is the last legible sentence because "*The remainder of the page is mutilated*". Like Yorick's evasive captive, Woolf's description of a motor-car drive in 'An evening over Sussex' laments how the landscape

> was escaping all the time[…]Gone, gone; over, over; past and done with, past and done with[…]We have been over that stretch, and are already forgotten. ('The Death of the Moth' 26)

While Woolf creates imaginative settings of intense shape and texture, the landscape often surrounds our emotions and constitutes a certain weight within images and symbols that directly and indirectly imply meaning. Comprised of remembered and forgotten memories, Woolf's work dictates inexact feeling-- something dappled and verging on being forgotten, subdued for reader and writer alike.



In her fiction, Woolf explicitly links form and character as sympathetic companions on the narrative journey, blending into each other: "it is to express character," she states in her 1924 essay, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," "that the form of the novel, so clumsy, verbose, and undramatic, so rich, elastic, and alive, has been

evolved" (*DII* 282). However, as it first appears, *The Waves* seems to blend her characters *too* much into one another, yet when she notes about Sterne that "*A Sentimental Journey* is a succession of portraits" ('Sterne' 285), her movement through tableaux of character in *The Waves* is self-reflective. Concomitantly, Sterne's *Shandy* was written and published as a "succession" of nine volumes over nine years.

In *The Waves,* glimpses of character are unfolded to the audience delicately; we are aware of each, even, when they are silent or missing from the narrative, an awareness tuned to the silence under their speech, movement without action, and flickering of that inmost plane of personality, whose place is often vacant even in a novel of "character." In turn, she is able to show life in a texture that matches it: "The substance of life, as we are accustomed to see it in fiction, is transposed and the form of the novel is transmuted to match it," one critic notes. The six characters are stranded together as a band of friends—three male, three female— whose voices Woolf zigzags through. Their time-scale begins in an offset childhood spring and ends in a later unspecific winter of their lives. In unison, all that they feel and do is revealed through their own words. Each is alone with himself, but excessively aware of the others; in the middle and again at the end, they reunite as a group, and finally Bernard—the character most eloquent with words—creates the entire perspective of the group within the novel.

Woolf imitates the selective process by which we know and recollect one another, the world, and ourselves, enhancing her characters' movements through scenery while timing them as if real. The created impressions, the scratches on the brain, are incongruent; events occur simultaneously, as when Peter Walsh and Reitza are forced to

share ‘air-time’ in Regents Park. The relationships between the characters are not certain, but the dramatic shifts of subjective consciousness are apparent.

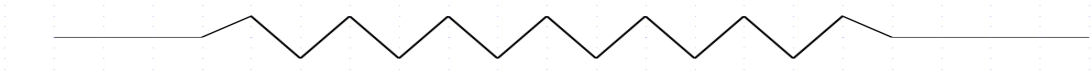
In writing, for one consciousness to be represented, an ‘other’ must be absent. However, Woolf’s technique does not extinguish technique doesn’t dissipate Clarissa’s existence entirely when she exits the page; her existence is merely temporarily displaced, held onto, at times, in a clause designated by semi-colons. Punctuation is not the only tool Woolf uses in order to create a formal shift of consciousnesses, for objects too are prominent linking devises: the motor cars on Bond Street, the airplane writing in the, the hourly chimes of Big Ben each serve to create a connecting between characters. In these moments, a different mind or character is able to reposition the camera, and in turn replace whichever mind was currently being scribbled by the pen, as when readers initially follow Clarissa to the flower shop and are abruptly shifted to multiple consciousnesses and then to Septimus’ consciousness after everyone, simultaneously, hears a car:

> And as [Clarissa] began to go with Miss Pyn from jar to jar, choosing, nonsense, nonsense, she said to herself, more and more gently, as if this beauty, this scent, this colour, and Miss Pyn liking her, trusting her, were a wave which she let flow over her and surmount that hatred, that monster, surmount it all; and it lifter her up and down when—oh! A pistol shot in the street outside! […]
>
> The violent explosion which made Mrs. Dalloway jump and Miss Pyn go to the window and apologise came from a motor car which had drawn to the side of the pavement precisely opposite Mulberry’s shop window. Passers-by who, of course, stopped and stared, has just time to see […] Yet rumors were at once in circulation […] Edgar J. Watkiss, with his roll of lead piping round his arm, said audibly, humorously of course: ‘The Proime Minister’s kyar.’
>
> Septimus Warren Smith, who found himself unable to pass, heard him.
>
> Septimus Warren Smith, ages about thirty, pale-faces, beak-nosed, wearing brown shoes and a shabby overcoat, with hazel eyes which had the look of apprehension in them which makes complete strangers apprehensive too. The world has raised its whip; where will it descend?
>
> Everything has come to a standstill. (13-14)

How the characters connect is suspended in time, for even though Clarissa and Septimus never meet, they are joined through an internal experience that is "publically" exposed:

> Like the omniscient narrators of *Vanity Fair, Middlemarch,* or *The Last Chronicle of Barset*, the omniscient narrator of *Mrs. Dalloway* is a general consciousness or social mind which rises into existence out of the collective mental experience of the individual human beings in the story. (Miller 56)

The passage also suggests that an objects function is capable of being extended beyond its object-symbol association through the mastery of both time and space. Although objects and ideas may seem artificial in their ability to link characters and enclose a text, Woolf's emphasis is an "adult-won victory over urban complexity," for it is a victory over the ideas and symbols that are affiliated with the use and meaning of the image and word "motor car."



Creating shifts in narrative through her seemingly fragmented Sternian structure, Woolf is able to both connect the minds of the narrators to the minds of the characters to the landscapes they move through and reflect the workings of imagination. Woolf's method of creating characters that are interrupted and dispersed further explores what, in the Sternian moral, is the human tendency and process on self-fashioning one another and oneself. In other words, identity is often found through role-play—characters literally cast themselves into roles, just as when Clarissa returns from her room during her party to fulfill her role as a hostess.

It is precisely because of the fluidity and symmetry of arrangement that one can summarize the novel as such; however, the substance should not be divided from its form, for the form has been evoked by the essence of the novel, in so for as the

"substance" is too ponderous a phrase for the lives within the work. Woolf envisages her mind as a receptacle and not just a flat canvas when she writes that *The Waves* will "embody, at last, the exact shapes my brain holds" (*DIV* 53), and how her "tunneling" technique discovered during her composition of *Mrs. Dalloway* enabled her to penetrate "the richest strata of my mind" (*DII* 69). While in *The Waves* the reader accepts each character as unique and idiosyncratic, at a distance, the characters begin to blur into one. The careful formality of diction is common to all six of them, and often requires attentive reading to deduce who is actually speaking or doing. The rhythm scarcely falters as Woolf moves smoothly from Bernard to Neville to Louis – as if the narrative is the actual product of a single consciousness, artificially divided into six voices.

Nevertheless, each speech-style is pointedly "personalized" to reinforce its uniqueness (and difference), in order to emphasize the cognitive process of fusing the various characters and landscapes into a single unity. Woolf assigns certain verbal formulas to each character, whose appearance becomes an instant indicator of the speaker. When Rhoda speaks, for example, "The door opens and the tiger leaps" (72) or Neville, "Death among the apple-trees" (12), the effect is to *narrow* the breadth of each character, pare down his individual multiplicity to render him recognizably 'different' to the reader.

Furthermore, the arguably most pivotal moment in *The Waves* can be when Louis, as a child, states, "I hold the stalk in my hand. I am the stalk" (4), for up to this point, the children's discourse has been wholly focused on the external world and their perceptions of it—"I see a ring" (1), "I hear a sound" (2)—in which their focus is directed entirely *outwards*, for if they have any sense of an 'I', it is only as a conduit for external images

and sounds. As the chorus of voices proceeds, and the children become gradually more aware of their own bodies with the mentions of “feet” (11) and “hand” (5) and “ear” (4) beginning to enter their speech, their focus shifts towards an exploration of their reciprocal relationship with the outside world – an understanding that they can affect their surroundings, just as it can affect them, such as the dew dampening Jinny's palm or the stones chilling Neville's feet (2). The children begin to realize their character and develop self-hood in the same time frame that readers do. Here, their sense of character unfolds from page to page as quickly as our sense of them is manifested. However, it is not until this point that Louis's remark indicates an abrupt redirection, or zigzag, of attention *inwards*. 'I hold' is followed – and, in a sense, *replaced* – by 'I am'; the question of 'the self' and what precisely it is has displaced enquiry into the external. Yet the question remains prompted by the stalk, as an external, non-self object.

A Lacanian interpretation, viewing this moment as representative of 'the mirror stage', might suggest that the stalk here replaces mirror-reflections or images of the mother's face to become the 'other', the external image which Louis has taken as the gestalt of his developing idea of selfhood. The declaration 'I am the stalk' is a tacit annexation of the stalk's identity for himself; it is a comprehensible, perceptible physical entity upon which he can model his own psyche and, subsequently, come to understand it. Particularly notable here is the implied simultaneity of these two states of being. Both sentences acquire identical immediacy from the present tense; firmly bounded by full stops, the periods leave no room for 'then' or 'so' between them to portray the latter declaration of personal identity as a progression or development from the former. Louis is the entity holding the stalk, as well as the stalk itself. The similar structure of the

sentences implies that, in some form, they merely expound two facets of the same notion. Not only is the self, then, 'multiple,' but also diffuses at this time in the narrative beyond the boundaries of the individual human body, including and inhabiting the external, non-I object of the stalk. Woolf's writing expands on this idea of the self as something 'multiple' and unbounded.

The self, then, is a place where multiple beings reside, Louis echoing, “I am the little ape who chatters over a nut...I am also the caged tiger, and you are the keepers with red-hot bars” (71). While the words “Bars”, “caged” and “zoo” all imply enclosure, a discrete, individual self is hemmed in from the rest of the world, though it may be multifarious (ape as well as tiger) within its own boundaries. *The Waves* seems to almost contradict this idea; its central conceit approaches the French conception of unanimity[4] from the early twentieth-century, uniting six different minds into a single consciousness, rather than dividing a single mind 'against itself'. In turn, it actually reverses the assumed method.

Therefore, by unifying the six discrete ‘selves,’ a larger, communal 'self' is formed. Woolf strings her characters together with a common diction so that they become 'a single flower' with six petals: an entity that is an independent whole, yet inherently multiple in composition. Here, as with Louis and his stalk, the sense of self has spilled over from the bounds of the individual human body to encompass the non-self, as manifested in one's environment, and in other people. As in Woolf's short story, 'Lappin and Lapinova’ (1938), the identifying feature of the parents-in-law is that they are adorned with yellow for their golden wedding anniversary, which then seeps into their very surroundings in which the entire kingdom is gold. They form part of a unified

environment in which “Everything was gold:” “a gold-edged card with gold initials intertwined...a plate of clear golden fluid”(‘Lappin and Lapinova’ 260). Woolf's phrase for the result is “a golden mesh.” Mesh allows for the object to be seen and understood yet creates a new screen of meaning and implication; as an “object,” the “plate” still can have the function of a surface one eats from, but when being gold it could perhaps transform into an object not meant to be the surface one eats from, or let alone touched.

The figure of the “mesh” mimics the interconnecting webs and filaments which run through *Mrs. Dalloway*; together with 'edged' and 'intertwined', it creates a world where the 'selves' of the parents-in-law pervade their surroundings, drawing them together in a single unity under a communal environment. And, just as Louis requires the external entity of the stalk to provide a pattern for comprehending his own identity, participation in the 'six-sided flower' of unanimistic discourse is the means by which Bernard becomes aware of his own 'multiple' self in his statement, “With them I am many-sided” (64). The similarity of the terminology tacitly positions him, the individual, as a microcosm of the larger, multi-sided community. In a sense, as he contributes to the unified, public sense of self, the others complete, and complicate, his own personal identity by becoming part of it. The unification of the diverse becomes, ironically, the means and process by which the individual is diversified.

However, with this multiplicity of self/ selves comes a preoccupation with ideas of fragmentation and disintegration. In this regard, the six-sided flower, as a symbol for individual and communal conceptions of self, is revisited/repeated later in *The Waves*. In ‘Lappin and Lapinova,’ the chrysanthemums form “tight balls” (258), the petals curling together and defying disintegration. They metonymically represent the unified 'golden

mesh' of the extended self of which they are part, the massive, impenetrable structure of Thorburnhood that the "insoluble" Rosalind cannot penetrate or undo. Likewise, in the short story 'Happiness', the character Stuart expresses his sense of a cohesive, "unified" self through the image of the many-petalled flower: "he was compact of many petals laid firmly and closely on top of each other all reddened, all warmed through, all tinged with this inexplicable glow" (173). "Laid" implies that the skilful tessellation of petals, being "firmly and closely," is the work of a higher command, for it suggests purpose and intention. The triple repetition of the word "all" insists on collection, or the 'unity' of his multiple parts or petals. Readers later learn that when "he stooped a petal fell" ('Happiness' 172), implying the sense of potential fragmentation, or at minimum, a temporarily deferred form that is clearly implicit in the innate multiplicity of the structure.

In the present of the novel, the singularity of the falling petal, being the only petal that has fallen from the bunch, primarily draws attention to the unity of the rest. As when Septimus Smith is first introduced in *Mrs. Dalloway*, his difference from the other characters' consciousnesses shows his difference while illuminating their unity. In doing so, it also gently establishes the intact "flower" of selfhood that readers assume as merely the prelude to an inevitable or complete dissolution. Unity is a temporary phenomenon while fragmentation is the default status of the self, to which it will, inevitably, return.

As a writer with an imperfectly formed sense of self, or, at least, an acknowledger of "imperfect" sympathy, Woolf cyclically fails to give her characters a 'face.' In *The Waves,* Rhoda attempts to symbolically perform this process of self-creation through her "fallen petals," while the process in 'Happiness' is reversed: rather than a innately

centered, unified entity which is beginning to fragment, Rhoda's bowl of petals is a uncentered collection of fragments. When the process is "reversed," Woolf asks, in 'The Sentimental Traveller,' "and a waist coat button is made the centre of branching avenues of thought, do we feel that they strike inevitably from the spot of heat in the middle? […] That is slipshod thinking, and if it does stumble on the truth we feel inclined to congratulate ourselves on the accident. The question as to what exactly distinguishes the truth from the falsehoods in such work is a delicate one, and the value of the book depends entirely upon our immediate certainty" (158). The togetherness of the petals is wholly artificial, a belated attempt by Rhoda to return them to the 'unity' they possessed previously, before the flowers they composed disintegrated. The petals float, separate and 'scattered'. They form, in the basin, a failed witches' brew; its components cannot magically cohere into the desired whole.

Similarly, Rhoda's psyche remains essentially fragmented. She lacks a center around which to construct her identity: "there is no single scent, no single body for me to follow" (73), she states, implying that her sense of "self" is, in similar regards to Julia Kristeva's propositions, "semiotic." It is "feminine": 'multiple', incoherent, non-linear. In "Happiness," Stuart Elton's sense of self, in contrast, is of the symbolic order – centered and ordered by an external system of codes that dictate its regular arrangement of "rosy flakes round a bright light." As Clarissa Dalloway's role as a domestic woman, she understand who she is, yet there still remains an aspect that is false, which in turn begs the question of if she even believes in her identity.

Woolf's biographical subject/object Roger Fry discusses how the receiver of an artwork must "pass outside it to other things necessary to complete its unity"('Life and

Art', 20); the reader is hauled along on the narrative journey but this zigzagging inside and outside the text – between the artist's self-substitution and the critic's self-consciousness – disorientates the reader. Sterne constructs his readers as an audience for Shandy's spectacle of himself and simultaneously as companion-travellers within the narrative: he speaks to and *with* them. Woolf, on the other hand, takes a similar role when she becomes both a critic and a novelist. Like T.S. Eliot's critical work, Woolf's critical essays help create her readership. Her essays act as foils to her work so that eager readers can be taught. As Woolf well knew, her desire to be free could potentially create a misunderstanding in narrative translation.

Woolf notes that Shandy's punctuation "brings the sound and associations of the speaking voice in with it"(402), and Shandy himself tells us that "Writing[…]is but a different name for conversation"(109). However, the illusoriness of this analogy is daunting, for narrative cannot be taken 'in turns' by reader and writer: "The reader may indeed be walking a road with Tristram, but his mouth has been securely taped shut"(Pratt 395). Indeed, Shandean humour lies in the author's self-conscious awareness of this fact and the narrator's obliviousness of it. The reader is incorporated into the text as an inquisitive interlocutor, but this welcoming in allows Sterne to mould and thereby control his potential critics. Shandy's interlocutor constantly shifts, from an individual who – Orlando-like – alternates sex, to the collective "your worships" and the universal "all mankind"(15). His syntax shifts uncomfortably between the individual, collective and generic "you", displacing our conception of ourselves in and in relation to the text:

> I know there are readers in the world, as well as many other good people in it, who are no readers at all,- who find themselves ill at ease, unless they are let into the whole secret[…]of everything which concerns you.
>
> (*ibid*:8)

"I" here is set against the third person plural "readers", "themselves", "they", which in turn is set against the undefined "you"; it is uncertain whether Shandy refers to himself, to an individual auditor in the text, to a generalised "one", or to the "good" reader to whom Shandy will exclusively address himself. In *Sentimental Journey* Yorick laments the "boundaries and fences to circumscribe the discontent of man"(Jack and Parnell throughout:8) distinguishing foreigners from natives, the initiated from the uninitiated. But Shandy's seemingly arbitrary zigzagging between intimate and formal registers – the conversation and the autobiography – further waylays the reader. We are "perfect strangers"(New:11) despite knowing the intricacies of his conception at the outset, but are assured:

> As you proceed further with me, the slight acquaintance which is now beginning betwixt us, will grow into familiarity; and that, unless one of us is in fault, will terminate in friendship.
>
> (*ibid*)

The phrases "with me" and "betwixt us" imply shared sympathy, but "friendship" is jarringly juxtaposed with "terminate", the abortive imagery denying an organic growth of good feeling. The tentatively-posited "us" is singularized into "one of us", cyclically returning to the opening clause's distinction between "you" and "me". Yet in the same chapter, Shandy invokes the reader as "my dear friend and companion", with whom he will "trifle upon the road"(11). Woolf's typical third-person narratives do not allow her to so explicitly challenge the reader, but in *The Journal of Mistress Joan Martyn* – a rare first-person escapade – she plays a similar Sternean game of offering and denying intimacy. She picks up and deposits names as she motors through the short story: Joan Martyn, Rosamond Merridew, Dame Elizabeth Partridge, Dame Elinor, John Martyn.

The reader is immediately disorientated by the expectation of intimacy with the 'Joan Martyn' of the title and the opening sentence's introduction to 'Rosamond Merridew' as our guide. Indeed, Rosamond utters a teasing Shandean self-reflexive sentence that transgresses the author/persona boundary: "There are certain rules in the game of the antiquary of which the first and simplest is that you must not state your object at the first encounter"(36). The reader only eventually reaches Joan's voice via Rosamond's and the direct speech of the Martyns first. Even then she is not a fixed point of arrival, with the subdivision of the narrative into sections admitting the possibility of doubled voices as the reader struggles to determine who is speaking. At the start of Section Four - "I was stopped in the midst of such reflections"(51) – we are unsure if Joan is still speaking, or Rosamond has reassumed control of the narrative.

These tricks of perspective reveal both authors' preoccupation with and discomfort over reception – who is allowed on the journey with the writer and characters and at what distance they should be kept. A scenic walk should be more enjoyable with company, but the reader threatens to weigh them down. In this sense both writers subscribe to the Romantic aesthetic of solitary wandering articulated by Hazlitt:

> …comparing of notes interferes with the involuntary impression of things upon the mind…For once, I like to have it all my own way…eventful moments in our lives' history are too precious…to be frittered and dribbled away in imperfect sympathy. On going a journey', 182-3)

Sharing the journey with a critical reader who does not appreciate the landscape threatens to dilute the narrative's intensity; in publishing – the retrospective of spontaneous writing – the author cannot "have it all my own way". In *Journal to Eliza* – the charting of Sterne's real-life love for Elizabeth Draper – Sterne demonstrates "imperfect sympathy" with the reader and his persona by distancing himself from Yorick's outpourings:

> This Journal wrote under the fictitious Names of Yorick and Draper[…]a Diary of the miserable feelings of a person separated from a Lady…
>
> The real Names – are foreigne – and the Account a Copy from a French Manuscript… (107)

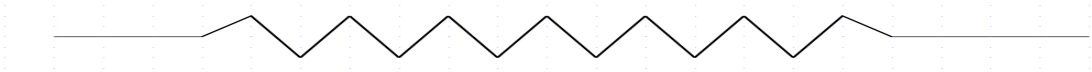
The indefinite article renders "a person" and "a Lady" anonymous and de-located in time and space, a distancing compounded by the text's fabricated status as a *copy* of a *foreign* manuscript. Fact and fiction commingle in Elizabeth Draper's real name being classed as "fictitious", but "Yorick" is a name Sterne repeatedly hides behind, his own sermons being attributed to this persona.

Woolf's version of "imperfect sympathy" is the reader's becoming too self-conscious about the writer's attempt to elicit fellow-feeling. Sterne himself says that "an author must feel himself, or his reader will not"(*Letters* 285), but Woolf disparages *Sentimental Journey* for its "affectation of simplicity"(285) and draws attention to Sterne's critical revisions as an indicator that his methods are far from "arbitrary". In *The Waves* Bernard's imagined letter to the object of his affections are a commentary upon Sterne's seemingly spontaneous, but in fact well-rehearsed, narrative technique:

> …she must think [it] was written without a pause, without an erasure. Look how unformed the letters are – there is a careless blot...I will write a quick, running, small hand, exaggerating the down stroke of the "y" and crossing the "t" thus – with a dash. (57-8)

Bernard must be seen "to be passing from thing to thing with the greatest ease in the world" like a gallivanting Shandy. Woolf like Bernard admires stylistic abandon and inclusiveness, but the technical precision of the shape and size of letters – borne along by the obligatory Shandean dash – indicates the danger that it is no more than an aesthetic in the hands of such a self-conscious author. Bernard breaks off from the letter not for fear that the "effusiveness" is artificial, but that it *reveals* itself as such. Woolf hopes for

unselfconscious sympathetic substitution with character, but Sterne is the constant presence reminding her that writing is a *representation* – a display – of thought



To return to 'Lappin and Lapinova,' one will find that the text represents an attempt, by the female figure of Rosalind, to project her semiotic being into this symbolic unity of self – to find a way of identifying herself in line with the symbolic, societal codes which will dictate her existence as Mrs. Ernest Thorburn, similar to Mrs. Dalloway's title. The kingdom of Lappin and Lapinova is organized according to certain established rules, almost like the rules of English society in *Mrs. Dalloway*: "There were the black rabbits and the red; there were the enemy rabbits and the friendly." Woolf's works hold their own moral laws, whether they are real or unreal is not necessarily the point. However, the hierarchy is simple, couched in the language of childhood along well-trodden fairytale patterns—"they were King and Queen"—providing, in turn, an intermediary space between her idea of her new, formal life of "the Albert Memorial, mahogany sideboards, steel engravings"; symbolic imagery of government, death, regulation and hardness around which this existence is constructed, and her life as an unmarried girl, the familiar, cozy world of "her tame rabbit at home". She constructs her identity much like how Clarissa Dalloway constructs hers. It is a territory in which she can interact with her husband Ernest on terms which are agreeable to both. She can simultaneously act out the symbolic codes of conduct which she fears, practicing, in a sense, the process of being her husband's wife, Queen to his King, in order to protect herself from those codes as they are manifested in "the rest of the world," or the expectations of the Thorburns.

Moreover, her role-play as Lapinova enables her to displace her multiple identities as 'wife', 'daughter-in-law', 'Mrs. Ernest Thorburn' into a single, *new* identity: that of the 'wary and undependable' hare, a facet of self defined by its indefinability. Increasing the multiplicity of her self to include Lapinova, therefore, becomes a means by which she can impose a sense of unity upon her existence. Role-play allows for a 'collected' self under which all categories can fall, even those fixed in fantasy. However, the redrafting of character through role-play only works in singular intervals; one cannot be *all* in a single instant, but can acquire differences over time.

Notable, also, is the way in which 'Lappin and Lapinova' presents identity and self in terms of territory and personal space. The outlines of the fantasy world, which lacks any existence outside the cookie-cutter identities, are very carefully delineated: "The stream at the bottom, where our wood meets the black wood." Ernest's blank non-recognition of the territory—"What stream?"-- initiates the decline of the fantasy (much like Woolf's "What characters?"), and the eventual death of Rosalind's identity as Lapinova. Dwelling-places therefore become manifested in Woolf's writing as depositories of identity. However, this is not clearly stated elsewhere: in 'Street Haunting: A London Adventure' (1930), Woolf suggests that one's room is an inadequate or incomplete symbol of self: "As we step out of the house…we shed *the self our friends know us by"*(160). The implication is of many selves, only one of which is represented by the room in a process that marginalizes the others. In the domestic space, what Walter Benjamin calls "auratic objects" – for instance, "the blue and white china bowl" – accrete around the self, expounding certain elements of experience while concealing others. Like the street itself, therefore, the self is 'at once revealed and obscured' by these solid

objects. Removed from this space, therefore, is akin to a stripping; one loses all sense of self except that of "a central oyster of perceptiveness, an enormous eye." The self is returned to the pre-verbal stages depicted at the beginning of *The Waves*, where unfiltered perception preceded awareness of inner being. But is Woolf playing on words here? Is the phrase 'an enormous *I*' simultaneously existent here? Does the act of leaving the domestic space permit one's identity to expand – to become *more* multiple and various? Certainly, the return to the domestic space imposes a compulsory 'unity' upon the "streaked, variegated" self, for "When he opens his door in the evening," Woolf writes, a man must choose from the limited range of clearly defined selves implicit in "banker, golfer, husband, father" ('Street Haunting: A London Adventure' 163). Overlap and expansion are forbidden; the multiplicity of the self is denied.

Woolf assembles her people, places and things slowly so that when small parts become whole, they reflect the time frame of a dawning consciousness, suggesting that the character of consciousness likewise needs to be present in the narrative. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf begins with a whole and then begins to un-pack it. She uses London as her breeding ground. Woolf even un-packs the date of the text; the manner in The novel begins with June, London, a woman, yet manages to manifest and disperse itself here and there-- to Burton, to the war, to India--, only to be recollected later into a *single da*y in a certain part of London, in a certain life of a certain woman. Collection is necessary in unifying the whole.

Readers must, in a sense, discover the boundary they are confined to. Upon finding the date and time frame, this boundary is set in place. To assemble specific 'time,' we must collect suggestive time references as we move along the narrative journey. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, readers first discover that it is first June (6), then a Wednesday in June (19), and finally a Wednesday in June in 1923 (80). Woolf begins with "June" only to narrow our knowledge of June to a single day. Likewise, the novel begins with June, London, and a woman, yet manages to disperse itself across the globe and to different months and years.

Her ramblings seem to gloss over the topography of her place, London, while her characters ramble their way down the pages and streets alike as if from her short story 'Street Haunting: A London Adventure'. Both time and place in her novel imply "incredible flux," (Lamont 165) for as she notes in her journal, "The ease & rapidity of life in London a good deal impressed me" (*DII* 55). Likewise, historical London of 1923 is mimetic in its dealings with the newly ended first world war. Although the novel concentrates on "one moment in June," Woolf goes to great lengths to present a historical London, in great transition, both at home and in colonies abroad: the tomb of the Unknown Warrior, built at Westminster Abbey in 1920, by which many characters walk during the course of the novel, and other new features of London public ideology were still unfamiliar to the London landscape. The novel opens as Clarissa stands poised on Bond Street, waiting to cross Victoria Street to finish her pre-party errands. These places in London, notoriously hurried by movement and business, simultaneously evoke and serve as metonyms for the staid affluence of the upper-class British family and solid military power of the Empire. Within Clarissa, Woolf manages to capture the dialects of

dwelling and travel, stasis and motion, within one persona, a motif that extends to Mrs. Ramsey in *To The Lighthouse*.

Narratorial zigzagging reflects a see-sawing authorial mind with respect to control over aesthetic processes. Just as Sterne's characters pivot between his oft-repeated tenet that provided the character "keeps along the line of his story," "he may go backwards and forwards as he will"(345), aware that the mind can be "torn asunder by two projects of equal strength, both obstinately pulling in a contrary direction at the same time"(301), Shandy and the lovelorn Yorick want to immerse themselves and their audience in their emotionally-strident narratives, fearing the kind of "dying" that Woolf always envisaged for her own completed novels. Ruth Whittaker observes that, for serious and humorous effect/affect, Sterne "tries to outwit…a sense of time's passing" (89).

However, Sterne does weary of Shandy's authorial antics as the years and volumes pass, literally diminishing them in the slimmer ninth Volume. Sterne foreshadows his eventual jadedness with the journey when he modifies the galloping metaphor: "by treading the same steps over and over again, they presently make a road of it, as plain and as smooth as a garden-walk…" (*Tristram Shandy* 2). Retracing our steps through any work runs the risk of eroding the joyful "momentaneous" abandon that first engaged the reader's sympathy. In 'The Journal of Mistress Joan Martyn' (1906) Woolf alludes to the same risk in John's "level" voice, "as of one who tells a tale so well known that the words have been rubbed smooth of meaning"(40); the exertion and exhaustion of revision for Woolf indicate her own despair at the thought that the journey will never end.

INVENTORY

That illusion of a world so shaped that it echoes every groan of human beings so tied together by common needs and fears that a twitch at one wrist jerks another, where however strange your experience other people have had it too, where however far you travel in your own mind someone has been there before you—is all an illusion. We do not know our own souls, let alone the souls of others. ... In illness this make-believe ceases. ('On Being Ill')

Like holiday snaps accumulated in an album, Woolf seeks to eventually gather up the "odds and ends within us" (*Orlando* 73) that she acquires during her travels through narrative. She takes part in a personal adventure, in which her works represent her continual process toward self-recognition (Lawall 197). In an almost rebellious manner, Woolf begins to unpack her authorial accoutrements as she goes along just as Sterne does in his "Chapter on THINGS":

> I have a thing to name – a thing to lament – a thing to hope – a thing to promise, and a thing to threaten – I have a thing to suppose – a thing to declare – a thing to conceal – a thing to chase, and a thing to pray for...
> (*The Life and Opinions of Tristam Shandy* 302)

Yorick likewise parcels outward with the aid of dashes as Sterne substitutes himself with Yorick when he writes in his own letters. Just as Shandy lists the pageant of social roles he encounters on his Grand Tour (IV.XX), Yorick in *Sentimental Journey* catalogues travelers:

> Simple Travellers,
> Idle Travellers,
> Inquisitive Travellers,
> Lying Travellers,
> Proud Travellers,
> Vain Travellers,
> Splenetic Travellers…
> and last of all (if you please) The Sentimental Traveller. (9)

We are tempted to place Woolf's characters into Yorick's categories – the inquisitive Lily Briscoe, the hostess Clarissa Dalloway, the proud Mr. Ramsay – casting Woolf herself as the actual "Sentimental Traveller," who invents and inventories them. Woolf casts her characters into role, and in doing so, her characters, too, cast themselves into role. In Woolf's work, forms as well as characters are catalogued, as with any historiographer's sources, as *Shandy's*,

> Accounts to reconcile:
> Anecdotes to pick up
> Inscriptions to make out:
> Stories to weave in… (I.XIV)

Sterne's list microcosmically displays the texture of not only his novel, but also Woolf's work as a patchwork of formal fragments offering multiple journeys and travelers: authorial dedications, a letter to *The Times*, doctor appointments, Peter Walsh's letters, Clarissa's party and so on, all function through and because of travelers.

Sterne's books were small enough to travel inside travelers' pockets and eventually gathered together cohering from the "opusculis" ('little works') referred to in the Epigraph (V.III and IV) to the magnum opus *Shandy* published today. *Orlando* is similarly presented as the gathering together of the source text: "We have done our best to piece out a meager summary from the charred fragments that remain" (*Orlando,* 110). Hazlitt too talks of needing to collate his travelling experiences, as if he were collating a book: "I can make nothing out on the spot: - I must have time to collect myself" (On going a journey' 184).

Woolf adopts this trope in 'Evening over Sussex', as the multiple selves dispersed along the car journey must be rounded up and recorded: "Now," I said, "comes the season of making up our accounts. Now we have got to collect ourselves; we have got to

be one self...". Woolf is pulling together the body and mind that "were like scraps of torn paper" in the description of Orlando "motoring fast out of London" (*Orlando* 276). Of the episodic, multi-narrative structure of *Between the Acts*, Woolf wonders "if I can pull it together" (*Letters 6* 486), and speculates that the reviewers will call *Jacob's Room* "a disconnected rhapsody" (*DII* 46)—again using Sterne's language when Shandy's reference to his "rhapsodical work" (*Tristam Shandy* 33). As if anticipating both Hazlitt and Woolf in his use of the 'collecting' trope, Sterne completes the trio's concern:

> …I am this moment walking across the market-place of Auxerre…and I am this moment also entering Lyons with my post-chaise broke into a thousand pieces – and I am moreover this moment in a handsome pavilion…rhapsodizing these affairs.
>
> Let me collect myself… ('An Evening Over Sussex' 30)

The three different narrative routes simultaneously tell of separate moments in the past, and desire to meet: the "thousand pieces" of the experiencing, recollecting and writing selves must cohere to provide the unified object with which the reader can sympathize. The divided self, the disintegrated, dissociated personality, as she states in her diary, are our "second selves" (D*III* 12). As seen in *Orlando,* "Woolf rejects the notion of totally integral personality as not merely inaccurate but unhealthy as well, since 'unity' seems so often to entail having a single, overriding but partial and distorted self. An analogy is to the sense of the androgynous self as a healthier than one that is 'solely' male or 'solely' female" (Beja 4).

Likewise, the end of *Orlando*, from the moment when the twentieth-century violently imposes itself on Orlando's consciousness through an explosion, is typical of the modernist concern with unity in the midst of, or transcending, the multifariousness of modern metropolitan life. While such symbols of speed and technique as the airplane, the

lift and the motorcar are evoked, Orlando faces fragmentation, dislocation and the onslaught of the present. Her biographer, much like the common reader, at the end, is at a loss to follow the erratic course of her thoughts during her rush through a department store, through busy London streets, or during her frantic drive home. The biographer can only disconsolately admit that "if there are (at a venture) seventy-six different times all ticking in the mind at once," there must be about two thousand and fifty-two people "all having lodgment at one time or another" in Orlando's mind (277). In the last chapter, as Orlando's identity becomes "a perfect rag-bag of odds and ends" (269–70), the syntax itself becomes more and more dislocated, and the text is fraught with monosyllabic words which are merely juxtaposed ("boys, boots, bath salts"). The omitted verbs, pronouns, connectives and articles, which are typical of the stream of consciousness, are actually meant to evoke the "chopping up small of identity" (276), in a technique reminiscent of the cinematic montage. With its ability to present either more than one object or more than one time simultaneously, montage was indeed "especially adaptable to fiction" (Humphrey 121), and notably to modernist fiction, which aimed at projecting the duality and the flux of mental life.

Orlando's experience of modernity is the experience of speed and movement as she has never experienced them before; hence her different perception of the world around her. All her landmarks become obsolete. One sight triggers different memories and a welter of sensations which are juxtaposed without really being linked: "Nothing is no longer one thing. I take up a handbag and I think of an old bumboat woman frozen in the ice" (274). Again, in a visual movement which could describe the movements of a camera during shot/reverse shot and dissolve, Orlando understands that her different

perception of the present also means that her own self is no longer the same:

> Everything was partly something else, as if her mind had become a forest with glades branching here and there; things came nearer, and further, and mingled and separated and made the strangest alliances and combinations in an incessant chequer of light and shade. (*Orlando* 290)

Woolf attempts to subsume the discontinuity of the images of her life into a consistent and homogeneous whole. *Orlando*'s last chapter is therefore an illustration of what Woolf sensed the cinema could do if it could "breathe emotion into reality and animate the perfect form with thoughts. . . . We should see these emotions mingling together and affecting each other" ('Cinema' 271–72).

However, this "past," "dislocate[d]," is in need of collection, as when Clarissa Dalloway feels "glad he had done it; thrown it away. The clock was striking. The leaden circles dissolved in the air. He made her feel the beauty; made her feel the fun. But she must go back. She must assemble" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 186). After Clarissa seems to reassemble, Woolf rushes her character back to the party, the collection of Clarissa's company, in order to end the novel. Clarissa must return, for she cannot sympathize with Septimus any longer; the freedom, or "beauty," is too alluring and unknown. Readers are left wondering what had been *thrown away*. How does Clarissa facilitate return without a single thought more of Septimus and, more importantly, does she remain the same 'person' once her mind-journey is over? What was the beauty or the fun, then? In relation to Woolf's other characters, Septimus merely becomes a discarded form of interest that appears almost as quickly as he disappears. However, although the climax of *Mrs. Dalloway* is her final party, when Clairssa is able to physically bring everyone together as a whole, her temporary seclusion during the party in which she reflects upon Septimus' death becomes a question of communication. It is in this instant that Clarissa

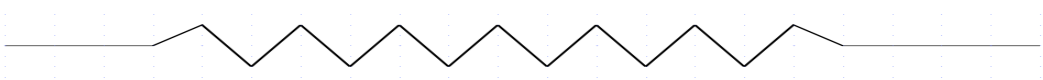
is convinced that he has shown her "beauty" in his death. His death, furthermore, can be understood as an act of communication: "Death is the place of true communication. Clarissa has been attempting the impossible, to bring the values of death into the daylight world of life. Septimus chose the right way" (Miller 68). He emerges "plunged holding his treasure" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 281), his link to the deep places where each man is connected to every other man, as displayed by the numerous times when "Evans," his friend from the dead, speaks out to him. By killing himself, Septimus not only preserves his integrity, but also forces Clarissa to realize how factitious all her attempt to "assemble" and to "connect" have been. "Communication," Woolf writes in *Mrs. Dalloway*, "is health; communication is happiness" (141). Furthermore, his final act of suicide constitutes a recognition that communication cannot be attained except evanescently in life, if at all.

Clarissa's short-lived recognition of his "truth," her moment of self-condemnation, is simultaneously the moment of her greatest insight:

> She had once thrown a shilling into the Serpentine, never anything more. But he had flung it away. They went on living … They (all day she had been thinking of Bourton, of Peter, of Sally), they would grow old. 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. This he had preserved. Death was defiance.. Death was an attempt to communicate; people feeling the impossibility of reaching the centre which, mystically evaded them; closeness drew apart; rapture faded, one was alone. There was an embrace in death. (280-281)

As Miller notes, "From this point of view the thing at the center that matters most, all speech, all social action, all building it up, all forms of communication, are lies" (Miller 68). Like the fantasy in 'Lappin and Lappinova,' it is false. The more one tries to reach this "centre" through such means, the further away from it one becomes. The "ultimate

lesson," Miller further notes, "is that by building it up, one destroys" (68). Again, one encounters the mix-match of opposing forces: the action of building, is actually, or also, the action of destroying, in which one can replace the over, be the process to access the 'other,' also suggesting the opposite: both cannot 'be' at the same time. Therefore, only by *throwing it away* can life be preserved; laid to rest on the underlying reality which Woolf elsewhere describes as a "thing I see before me: something abstract; but residing in the downs or sky; beside which nothing matters; in which I shall rest and continue to exist. Reality I call it" (Dairy 129). She continues, later, with this thought: "Nothing matters" compared to her "reality," for it is groomed by all the simple activities of life, which, like formal narrative, restrain and maintain. "There is nothing," (141) she writes during one of her spouts of depression, "nothing for any of us. Work, reading, writing are all disguises; and relations with people." The "disguises" are the constrains we must submissively accept in fear of not finding a 'role' to cast ourselves into. The fear, furthermore, is of it *all* being a fantasy; this, perhaps, is too illusive for the individual to reconcile with. Instead, our indulgences with "fantasy" are when we watch television, read fiction, play dress-up. In these types of places and spheres, the dalliance with fantasy is allowed because the *place* and *sphere* itself. And still, Woolf suggests, we cast ourselves into roles—the eager college student, the mean professor, the eldest child—for a purpose. How many roles/journeys, then, must one we go through/on until we find our 'self'?



"Fear no more the heat o' the' sun
Nor the furious winter's rages"

Originating from Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, the lyrics above are echoed to Clarissa in the beginning and end of *Mrs. Dalloway*: first, when she reads the words in a bookshop window during her shopping excursion and second during her party. The lines from the funeral dirge suggest that death is not a thing to be feared, but rather it should be seen as a relief from the hard struggles within life; in turn, it is not necessarily exclusively mimetic of Septimus's death, but of the post- feelings of World War I. While Clarissa is coming to terms with her own aging and eventual death, these lines follow her. The words can be said to "foreshadow" the death of Septimus, who repeats them right before his suicide. If one remembers the passages earlier in this paper, Septimus remarks in his moment before death,

> Now for his writings; how the dead sing behind rhododendron bushes; odes to Time; conversations with Shakespeare; Evans, Evans, Evans—his message from the dead; do not cut down trees; tell the Prime Minister. Universal love: the meaning of the world. Burn them! He cried.

Clarissa's acknowledgement of the words from Shakespeare indicates her half-conscious awareness that in spite of her love of life she will reach peace only in death. Because the words appear in her mind moments before she returns to her role as hostess, they suggest her recognition of her "kinship with Septimus, her kinship with death," for as Woolf's diary states, Clarissa is a "double" with Septimus: "I want to give life and death, sanity and insanity" (*DII* 56). However the two poles are not so much opposite; instead, they are reversed images of one another. Both have the same elemental character design, both seek communication, and desire wholeness, the "oneness of reality"; however, Woolf suggests that only Septimus finds the pure way to reach it. It is a journey in either reconciling many selves, ignoring 'other' selves or ending all 'selves' in order to create one self, the dead 'self.' Clarissa's attempt to create unity in her party is the mirror

image in the world of light and life of Septimus' vigorous appropriation of the dark embrace of death in his suicide: "Fear no more the heat of the sun," she thinks, "She must go back to them. But what an extraordinary night! She felt somehow very like him—the young man who had killed himself. She felt glad he had done it; thrown it away" (283). As Miller notes, Woolf felt that the visible world of light and life was a

> mirror image or repetition in reverse of an invisible world of darkness and death. Only the former can be described. Death is incompatible with language, but by talking about life, one can talk indirectly about death. (Miller 69)

While Miller writes "only the former can be described," he forgets to add "by the latter." *Mrs. Dalloway* ends in a confrontation between life and death as "looking-glass counterparts." Reality, completion, authenticity are on the "death" side of the mirror, with its illusory, insubstantial, and fragmentary images of that dark reality.

Moments earlier, Clarissa's thoughts about the old lady she can see from her window reveals her concern with where the woman is moving:

> Big Ben struck the half-hour. ... [the old lady] was forced, so Clarissa imagined, by that sound, to move, to go—but where? Clarissa tried to follow her as she turned and disappeared, and could still just see her white cap moving at the back of the bedroom. She was still there moving about at the other end of the room. (139)

Clarissa is forced into 'dream-land' while she is alone in her room, yet does not have the correct 'sympathy' to engage with the woman correctly; she is, indeed, looking at the woman through two sets of glass windows. Clarissa establishes the existence of a woman in a bedroom, moving, without ever meeting her; mere sight is all she needs in order to create an object of attention. Her reality of the woman is encounter-less, forcing it to be contingent on the old lady's actual movements. Space and the sense of 'being' are revealed by movement. When Clarissa is unable to see what the old lady is doing once

she moves from Clarissa's peripheral vision, Woolf suggests the limitations of one's point of view and level of sympathetic engagement.

Clarissa, in particular, cannot grasp what it fees like, when she is not there, or unable to be seen:

> Did it matter, then, she asked herself, walking towards Bond Street, did it matter that she must inevitably cease completely; all this must go on without her ... did she resent it; or did it not become consoling to believe that death ended absolutely? but that somehow in the streets of London, on the ebb and flow of things, here, there, she survived. (9)

Clarissa's meditation on 'being' in reality distances Woolf from her narration. In 'The Cinema,' Woolf imagines what that life looks like when one is not there to see it:

> They have become not more beautiful in the sense in which pictures are beautiful, but shall we call it ... more real, or real with a different reality from that which we perceive in daily life? We behold them as they are when we are not there. We see life as it is when we have no part in it. As we gaze we seem to be removed from the pettiness of actual existence. ... From this point of vantage ... as we watch ... we have time to feel pity and amusement, to generalize ... Watching the boat sail and the wave break, we have time to open our minds wide to beauty and register on top of it the queer sensation—this beauty will continue, and this beauty will flourish whether we behold it or not. (268)

In 'The Cinema,' Woolf is able to imagine what life looks like when one is absent, as when Mrs. Ramsay looks back at her dinner table and sees her family enjoying their meal just as much as when she was present in the room. Clarissa, too, in her relationship with her neighbor, which is encounter-less but mutually acknowledged-- viewer and viewed-- reader and writer, become interchanged partners on an inherently reckless journey, for the encounter it postulates will always be, in some sense, 'missed.' The knowledge that the event began without us opens our minds wider to beauty than any sense of command, of being throughout fully present and correct, ever could. What Woolf saw in the potential of cinema, Clarissa can't see in the lady across the street, or in any other event—she is

unable to grasp that the days will continue, even in her absence. London will remain and Big Ben will continue to chime.

However, Clarissa's vitality—i.e. her ability "to be; to exist"—is first expressed in the present-tense statement made by Peter Walsh in the second to last line of the novel: "It is Clarissa." The affirmation of her power to conclude the moment echoes earlier descriptions of her "extraordinary gift, that woman's gift … there she was." However, the earlier passages are in the past tense, as is the last line of the novel: "For there she was." With this sentence "is" becomes "was" in the indirect discourse of the narrator. As Miller put it, "In that mode of language Clarissa along with all the other characters recedes into an indefinitely distant past. Life becomes death within the impersonal mind of the narrator and within her language, which is the place of communion in death." Miller argues,

> There, the fragmentary is made whole. There all is assembled into one unit. All the connections between one part of the novel and another are known only within the embrace of that reconciling spirit and through the power of her words. (55)

*

Woolf's drive through Sussex ends when she realizes that "Nothing is to be seen any more"; the writer and reader have had their fill of narrative's landscape, and must return home. Woolf is the "grave, formal, see-saw character" (218) Sterne outlines in a 1765 letter. She zigzags between aligning herself with Sterne's audacity – criticizing H. Brewster in a 1931 letter to Trautmann Banks, because he "doesn't plunge and stumble and jump at boughs beyond his grasp"– and disapproving of Sterne's antics. He does not take the responsibilities of form and character seriously enough, forcing her to question whether the journey of sympathy is worthwhile: "The difficulty with Virginia was to find

any play sufficiently absorbing" (*Beginning Again* 233), Leonard Woolf writes. Sterne's "high pressure" ('Sterne' 280) characters are, for (V) Woolf, often over-cooked and in need of regulation: "The truth is that we cannot live happily in such fine air for long, and that we begin to become conscious of limitations…" (*ibid),* such as our forced character role-play. The irony remains that Sterne was confined to the domestic sphere during his famous years through illness; Shandy's far-flung and far-fetched mental roaming is a substitution for his lack of physical adventuring. Yet, the fact remains that Sterne left Shandy inside his book. In other words, Sterne doesn't cast himself into Shandy's role because he is physically and mentally unable to; thus, he writes of Shandy's journey because it is the only way to *enjoy* a fantasy that he is unable to be in. To this extent Woolf, another intermittent invalid, sympathizes with him: "the only exciting life is the imaginary one" (*DIII* 126) because it is the one that has the least amount of restrictions. In the imagination, real time and place can evaporate and the self is extinguished. Like a dream, we are able to roam freely, untamed, uncharted and alone. No one is with us in our imagination; it is the perfect journey.

While Sterne's problematizing of the zigzagging quest for sympathy is an *exercise* in narrative, for Woolf it is a hazardous enterprise. Despite their differences, though, both achieve Woolf's ideal to map "all the traces of the minds passage through the world…by means of infinite discords" (*DI* 393).

JOURNEY'S END

The reality was outside the world, in the human heart. And her literary method, based on this philosophy, was not to deal explicitly with a situation, but rather to present the shadows it cast in the individual consciousness. When the last shadows had moved across the screen, and when the attentive reader had caught a glimpse of something motionless behind them—'this peace, this rest, this eternity'—Mrs. Woolf had nothing more to say. Her story had ended without having begun. (Cowley 24)

Thus, the works of Virginia Woolf pose the question of authorial purpose: what was Woolf attempting to accomplish? Her shuffles between critic and novelist and shift from a late nineteenth century writer to an early modernist thinker arose synonymously with the transition to a new complexity and self-consciousness in the use of narrative devices. In particular, her stream of consciousness technique, dissolution of the traditional limits of plot and character, attention to "minutiae" of the mind and the external world, "pulverization" of experience into a multitude of fragmentary particles, each without apparent connection to others, and lastly, termination of the common boundaries between mind and world (Miller 53), are suggestive of her narrative and character innovations as a novelist that later become characteristic of her narrative style.

While this journey has come to an end, Woolf, like Sterne and Hazlitt, is cast as "figure of the past" (Beja 1). Yet like Woolf's characters, our impressions are not left completely behind. Although it has often been pointed out that Woolf's method had "little to do with that of the ordinary novel," having "no conflict in her books," "no sense of drama or dialectic," and "no progress through difficulties toward marriage or a deathbed," journeying through her works, even if "there is not even a story" (Cowley 24), leaves stamps of impressions, wonders and fascinations. Never answered, of course,

and to which there will never be satisfaction, the eager reader will always question if Woolf, "in her heart," actually believed in her stories.

However fragmented her work may appear, it belongs together as writing. Quite aware of the difference between her characters and those of Charles Dickens and Jane Austen, this is her own form of 'tradition.' Woolf replaces conventional nineteenth-century principles and brings about a transition, revealing other objects and directions of attention. Her shifts in narrative, time, character and form suggest her own approach, much like Sterne, to fiction.

NOTES

[1] These are paraphrased definitions collected from the Oxford English Dictionary and Dictionary.com

[2] Strangely enough, I have just noticed that Mrs. Hilbery appears in *Mrs. Dalloway*. However, I do not know if there is a connection.

[3] "The Hours" was Woolf's working title for *Mrs. Dalloway*.

[4] Unanimism is a movement in French Literature in the early 1900s. Primarily, it is based on ideas of collective consciousness and collective emotion, and on crowd behavior, where members of the group do or think something simultaneously. Woolf was aware of this, as displayed by the quote from *Mrs. Dalloway*.

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