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The Epistemological Importance of the Body in Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway

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On Madness: An Introduction

There lies in the subject of madness an inherent paradox that derives from the indeterminacy of where madness ends and reason begins. To contemplate madness is to contemplate thought, to search for its errors and its triumphs, to delve into methodology and determine a correct path, a correct mode of thinking that may lead the thinker to objective truth. Naturally the question of whether or not objective truth even *exists* is problematic in the context of madness, considering this "truth" must be reached through the process of reasoning, the very process that is being called into question. Also, one may not determine which path is "correct" until the end has been reached, the light found, and the darkness sequentially illuminated to lift the veil that shrouds truth. This veil may be lifted on the physical and social world, little by little (considering the vastness of these worlds) but to lift the veil on the nature of the veil itself, such is the pursuit of he or she who wishes to wholly and completely understand madness. Perhaps this paradox of meta-cognition is at the root of Felman's observation that "madness so remarkably lends itself to aphoristic statements" (Felman, 37). These aphoristic statements seem to permeate throughout the language of the goliaths of literature and philosophy. Felman observes this aphoristic dialogue:

> Whereas Hegel places madness inside thought, Nietzsche places thought inside madness. In Pascal's conception, these contradictory positions could amount to the same. 'Men,' says Pascal, 'are so necessarily mad that not to be mad would only be another form of madness.' Rousseau, it seems, would agree: 'Nothing resembles me less than myself'; (Felman, 36)

And so these aphorisms, containing a contradiction that seems to hold an authority in-and-of-themselves are often the result of the cyclical effect of metacognition; to go through an entire train of ideas and determinations, only to arrive at the start, where one began their journey. And

yet there is still discovery. One discovers the cycle itself, the contradiction itself. It appears there is an absolute truth present regarding the relativity of madness. In other words, madness is absolutely relative. How might this be possible? That madness itself may be dependent on one's *position*? Is a madman ever truly mad? Is a respected philosopher truly sane? It appears madness is only truly discernable when analyzed within the context of an age. It most certainly seems the case that there is a distinct connection between madness and marginalization. Subsequently, to hold this absolute relativity as tangible direction is to question the age itself in comparison with other ages.

Mrs. Dalloway deals closely with the subject of madness, both on the surface of language and through implication. Septimus Warren Smith is designated the title of "mad" due to his position relative to post-Victorian London. However, there is also present the madness of post-Victorian London itself. Woolf demonstrates that the latter madness is disguised, due to its application to the dominant ideology of the early twentieth century. The veil that Woolf lifts regarding madness is not the madness present within Septimus Warren Smith, but rather how this madness compares when held next to a less obvious manifestation of unreason in London at large. Very much in line with Pascal's observation, it becomes clear that no character in *Mrs. Dalloway* is without madness, it simply becomes a question of degree regarding the frequency and intensity of each characters patterns of deviation from reason. The question remains: how may we decipher deviation from reason when reason itself is obscured considering the indeterminacy of objective truth? Such is the advantage of literature. Considering this is a manufactured world (albeit based heavily on the perceived reality of Woolf), Woolf is able to *create* objective truth relative to the world her characters inhabit, and thus establishes a method of measurement for madness. The removed narrator at times informs the reader of what does and

does not exist in *Mrs. Dalloway,* and the reader may determine the idiosyncrasies of each character's madness based on how they relate to this truth. Ultimately, Woolf demonstrates that the fault of post-Victorian London is its rejection of the body and blind worship of rationalism, and that madness stemming from a rejection of the body is more worthy of condemnation than madness stemming from a rejection of the mind. This is done through an intricate network of comparison and connectivity between three characters: Septimus Smith, Clarissa Dalloway, and Peter Walsh. Septimus reflects the madness that rejects the mind in favor of the body, Clarissa the madness that rejects the body in favor of the mind, and Peter demonstrates proper dynamism between the mind and the body that is most apparently the great alleviation from the universal disease of unreason.

Chapter 1: Dynamism

1. Defining Madness

While madness itself may prove elusive in terms of practical identification, the concept of madness has a specific enough definition in modern thinking. In his work *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault presents his own interpretation:

> There is only one word which summarizes this experience [that of madness], Unreason: all that, for reason, is closest and most remote, emptiest and most complete; all that presents itself to reason in familiar structures—authorizing a knowledge, and then a science, which seeks to be positive—and all that is constantly in retreat from reason, in the inaccessible domain of nothingness. (Foucault, 107)

Aphorisms referencing paradox again seem to be inescapable from madness, however now it appears there is a much more specific thread to unravel, that of unreason. If madness is indeed the experience of unreason, defining madness entails an understanding of unreason. Foucault was not the first to find this very thread; in fact Virginia Woolf herself closely integrated the two concepts in her own framework. Writing on her own struggles with depression, Woolf uses the term "unreason" in direct opposition to "sanity":

> Things seem clear, sane, comprehensible, & under no obligation, being of that nature, to make one vibrate at all. Indeed, its largely the clearness of sight which comes at such seasons that leads to depression. But when one can analyse it, one is half way back again. I feel unreason slowly tingling in my veins. (Lee, 187)

This framework, as Hermione Lee observes, was "an original language of her own" and was "her response to the competing narratives of mental illness" these competing narratives being "Darwinian," "moralistic," and "Freudian." While Lee believes this description of mental illness was intended to be a "private language…which explains to herself the way her mind feels," there appears to be in this passage not simply description, but a re-defining of the experience of mental

illness, a matter Woolf most certainly intended to extend into the public sphere through her works (Lee, 187).

In *Mrs. Dalloway,* mental illness is inextricably linked with madness through the character of Septimus Warren Smith. The term "depression" is not used in Woolf's own narrative description of Septimus, but only once in dialogue with one of his doctors, William Bradshaw (a man sharply satirized by Woolf), who remarks, "we all have our moments of depression" in response to the discovery that Septimus had spoken of suicide (Woolf, 108). It is clear that Woolf avoids calling Septimus depressed (perhaps to avoid the problematic clinical understanding of the word), however she does not refrain from applying the term "mad" to Septimus on several occasions. In fact, Septimus is the only character in the novel that is placed into this category.

"Depression" merely accompanies Septimus' unique condition that seems to be far more grounded in "unreason" of an autobiographical nature. The madness of the shell-shocked veteran appears to derive rather specifically from Woolf's own experience. One of the most prominent and specific correlations being an instance where Septimus witnesses "a sparrow perched on the railing…sing[ing] freshly and piercingly in Greek words," which mimics a precise episode Woolf experienced in her youth during which she hallucinated birds singing to her in Greek (Woolf, 28). As another one of Woolf's biographers, Julia Briggs, recognizes, "like Virginia in 1904, he hears the birds singing in Greek… like Virginia in 1915, he is appalled by the sight of a 'maimed file of lunatics'" (Briggs, 147). Briggs understands Woolf's creation of Septimus' character as an "exorcism":

> Rewriting madness had involved partly reliving it…In lines later deleted from the manuscript, Septimus 'squinted too…It was his eyes that were terrible. He wished to die.' Creating Septimus had been an act of exorcism, in which she summoned up her own experiences in order to write them out of her system and into his…While shell shock (or

> war trauma) was distinctly different from her own breakdown, the symptoms were comparable, and so was the treatment. As Elaine Showalter has pointed out, the treatment of shell-shocked soldiers was influenced by that of pre-war women patients. (Briggs, 146)

In this passage, along with Briggs asserting her own belief that Woolf indeed did place much of her own experience with madness into Septimus, there is also the apt recognition of a rich observation by Elaine Showalter that attests to the appropriate nature of this exorcism. In other words, "the treatment of shell-shocked soldiers [that] was influenced by that of pre-war women patients" allows for Septimus to be an ideal venue for Woolf to correct clinical misunderstandings that she herself had experienced. Thus, Septimus demonstrates many colors of Woolf's own experience with madness, and becomes an integral tool for communicating *her* definition to the world in replacement of Darwinian and Freudian dialogue.

While the connection between Woolf and Septimus is immediately tangible to Woolf's biographers, a less obvious yet no less important relationship exists between Woolf's own madness and Clarissa Dalloway. With the constant reprisal of "Fear no more, the heat of the Sun" alive in Clarissa's mind throughout the day, she is no further from thoughts of suicide than Septimus himself, and shares an enigmatic connection with Septimus when she hears of his death and has to shut herself away in a secluded room. Her connection with Septimus' madness is discernable throughout the novel, but truly solidifies itself as she contemplates his death in solitude. Aptly, she relates his suicide to Sir William Bradshaw and she understands his stake in the matter, remarking, "they make life intolerable, men like that" and after the profound understanding that Septimus was victimized, she realizes she is no different than him: "the words came to her, Fear no more the heat of the sun. 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" (Woolf, 203-4). She too is a victim, and while Septimus may

demonstrate episodes that coincide with Woolf's own life literally, Clarissa demonstrates characteristics that are unique to the struggle of women in an indomitable patriarchy. Clarissa is glad Septimus has killed himself, she herself begins her contemplation on the subject with her own disdain for living, and suicide is a sign of Septimus' that has been inextricably linked with madness. And so Septimus and Clarissa, with their strong linkage, are both mad, it appears equally so. Therefore a definition of madness according to Woolf must be one that takes both cases into careful consideration, it must contain within it a coherence that speaks to the reasons why Clarissa feels so close to the "young man who had killed himself" despite not knowing his name or ever seeing his face. It also must explain how Clarissa is able to hide her madness from herself and those around her, how she is able to hide it from everybody, everybody that is except for Peter.

It appears the shared experience that both Clarissa and Septimus have in common is that of this "unreason" that Woolf (and later Foucault) brings to the discussion on madness. The term unreason does not eliminate mental illness, but rather it redirects the focus. To be "ill" is to be in poor health, it is of the body, a physical ailment that has more to do with a confrontation with mortality and "discomfort" than with epistemology. While Woolf considered herself to have both illness and madness, by opening up the discussion to "unreason" madness may apply to a broader demographic, and may contain more dimensions than simply that of the mental patient. Partly, broadening this concept may very well have been a response to the classical understanding of madness, which equated the state of delusion with a surrendering to the passions, reducing man to animal. This classical understanding was one that Woolf and Foucault combatted. It was not so much the experience of madness that was confused, but rather the notion that the origins of this experience came solely from passion. Understanding passion and what is "animalistic" about

the human being having a direct link to one another, Foucault observes, “these strange practices woven around madness, these usages which glorify and at the same time discipline it, *reduce it to animality* while making it teach the lesson of Redemption, put madness in a strange position with regard to unreason as a whole” and he also suggests the presence of madness outside of passion, saying “the scandal of madness could be exalted, while that of *other forms of unreason* was concealed with so much care” and thus Foucault opens the criteria for the origins of unreason beyond that of the senses (Foucault, 81 & 82 my emphasis). Re-defining the origins of unreason entails a re-conception of the state of unreason itself, if unreason may indeed be derived from more than simply passion, there may indeed be a new picture to be applied to the madman, a picture that is perhaps less scandalous, less marginal, but true nonetheless.

Understanding madness as the state of unreason, and understanding that how one reasons is an epistemological question, one must return to the faculties of perception when attempting to lift the veil of these “other forms of unreason.” If the unreason may originate from the senses, as has been the glorified, scandalized, and most evocative depiction of madness, stemming from an error in perceiving the world correctly through these senses, a “malfunction” of sorts, might it be true that madness may also stem from the only other tool granted to human beings regarding the phenomenology of perception: our minds? If one may err with one’s senses, seeing what is not in front of them, perhaps hallucinating like Septimus Smith or Woolf herself, and also feeling what should not be felt in the first place (there is the all too familiar depiction of the madman who live in fear and paranoia, imagining dangers that seems to stem from the cycle of the paranoia itself), might one also err with one’s mind? The mind, it should be acknowledged, perceives the world less directly. The mind takes what has entered through the body and transforms images, language, and sensory input into patterns, into logical thought. In other words, the mind

interprets using logic. Yet this is just as essential to reasoning as receiving the sensory input that must indeed be present for interpreting. In fact, the two coordinate with one another. Considering, as it seems to stand, that the mind and the body are the two tools used for proper perception, for determining what is true about the reality outside of our bodies and what is false, than to *reason* must involve both logic and some quality acquired from the body. Affect seems to be a suitable name for this quality. And so the origins of unreason (the result of improper reasoning) must also include an improper use of logic, as it classically has included solely the improper use of affect. What is achieved in either case, be it error in the use of affect or error in the use of logic is, in its most comprehensible form, delusion.

The beginnings of any delusion requires imagination. Imagination plays a key role in the experience of unreason, however, as Foucault recognizes, "Imagination is not madness," he acknowledges, "there is an original innocence of the imagination." Imagination's relationship to madness is that of misuse rather than use, which is the exact same principle that applies to affect and logic (Foucault, 93-4). While Foucault recognizes imagination as applying only to a delusional perception, I would argue that it plays a role in a non-delusional perception as well. The images we see of the "real" world are still images that we imagine through our senses and our minds. The images do not stand as they are, but rather are changed and personalized as they pass through the senses and into our minds as representational images. Such is why perception pertains to phenomenology. Imagination, therefore, must be the combination of affect and logic, the two tools used to create and solidify these representational images that are stored away in memory to shape the "real" world. Our realities, be they closely resembling the absolute plane of existence or not, are imagined. Imagination comes first, lies at the origins in the process of coming to experience this unreason: "Madness is thus beyond imagination, and yet is so

profoundly rooted in it; for it consists merely in allowing the image a spontaneous value, total and absolute truth" and so madness occurs after the image has been manufactured, it arises when we make the conviction that the "image" is absolutely true (Foucault, 94). The creation of images through the powers of affect and logic, and the "reality" the madman lives in is thus of his own devising, and disingenuous to the reality that theoretically objectively exists. However how does one allow a value to any image that is not "spontaneous" to *some* extent? One has only to sift through their memory to realize how distorted the images we create of our own lives truly are. We imagine our past, just as we shape and mold our present. The key question surrounding the discussion on imagination, considering its role in both improper and proper perception, is "to what extent do we create our own realities?"

The process of perception is in its essence a creation. Thus madness simply must exist in all human beings to some extent or another. Madness also only exists as long as there is indeed an absolute reality to be mistakenly perceived (for how can one create a reality of an identical nature?), rather than the alternative possibility: that of a relative reality. The question of madness in *Mrs. Dalloway* is that of extent due to the fluctuation between relative and absolute realities. While the narrator does indeed paint an absolute picture for the reader (during which a character's madness may be determined easily enough, Septimus being the most common example), this picture is in certain instances obscured in relativity, and absolutism gives way to a multitude of viewpoints. Such is the case regarding the identity of the passenger in the motorcar that stops abruptly outside of the window of the flower shop on Bond Street. The narrator tells the reader, "Queen, Prince, or Prime Minister nobody knew. The face itself had been seen only once by three people for a few seconds. Even the sex was now in dispute. But there could be no doubt that greatness was seated within" yet each character declares the identity of the passenger

with profound conviction: “The Queen going to some hospital; the Queen opening up some bazaar, thought Clarissa,” “Shawled Moll Pratt with her flowers on the pavement wished the dear boy well (it was the Prince of Whales for certain)” and the reader must determine which character they trust, all of the options seeming to be manufactured in one sense or another (Woolf, 19, 20, 22). This choice must therefore be made based on the character that seems the *least* delusional, considering there are no absolute answers provided.

The culmination of these three facets (imagination, creation, and finally the experience of unreason) constitutes the common analogy used by both Foucault and Woolf that appears most frequently attached to the madman: that of the dream. The dream carries within it all of the necessary aspects of madness: when one is within a dream one believes what they are seeing is indeed real, they are invested in a world they have created themselves rather than simply preoccupied with it. Also the dream incorporates within its context imagery of night and day, light and dark, light being a literary tool frequently associated with knowledge. Foucault synthesizes these concepts in his own analysis:

> Madness is precisely the point of contact between the oneiric and the erroneous…With error, madness shares non-truth… from the dream, madness borrows the flow of images and colorful presence of hallucinations. But while error is merely non-truth, while the dream neither affirms nor judges, madness fills the void of errors with images, and links hallucinations by affirmation of the false. In a sense, it is thus plentitude, joining to the figures of the night the powers of day… it links the dark content with the forms of light. (Foucault, 106)

Here we see an important concept develop, that of the linkage of “dark content with the forms of light.” There is a fusion of light and dark, a mixture within madness through which it is unclear whether or not one is in light or one is in darkness. Interestingly enough, while darkness implies mystery, uncertainty, and light implies certainty, a mixture of the two seems to favor the implication of uncertainty alone. In other words, to not understand something completely but

rather somewhat, to have any mixture of dark content at all, is to be uncertain. The perfectionist expectation attached to "reason" is precisely why it is so elusive. Considering most perception in *Mrs. Dalloway* falls on a spectrum between light and dark, dark content may never be completely extinguished. Such is the reason why tackling the question of how to define madness must begin from the process of perception, the beginning, rather than the objective reality itself, the end.

While Woolf has the opportunity to provide an absolute reality, and does so, she makes this choice at times to obscure the reality in relativity due to a concern she has with correcting the process of perception rather than focusing her novel on a declaration of what there is to be perceived. To focus her novel on the later would be to claim that she herself had no errors in her own perception. To carry this pretention would be to carry with herself her greatest criticism of post-Victorian London. The problematic marginalization of Septimus Warren Smith was due to the pretention that madness could be defined through any opposition to an exact "answer," a bold identification of objective reality. Sir William Bradshaw's bold identification is that of "proportion":

> Sir William said he never spoke of "madness"; he called it not having a sense of proportion…Worshipping proportion, Sir William not only prospered himself but made England prosper, secluded her lunatics, forbade childbirth, penalized despair, made it impossible to propagate their views until they, too, shared his sense of proportion…Sir William with his thirty years of experience of these kinds of cases, and his infallible instinct, this is madness, this sense; his sense of proportion. (Woolf, 107-110)

This sharp parody of the medical practitioner places William Bradshaw in the scope of the collective at large, "England." We see through this passage that what is designated "mad" and what is designated reasonable is more a question of power than it is a question of the actual definition of madness. Bradshaw defines madness as all that is in opposition to his absolute principle, while he may say he "never speaks of madness" the narrator makes it clear he is

untrustworthy, mentioning later that he does indeed make the judgment "this is madness" using his "sense of proportion" as the measuring tool.

Madness, instead of being defined through a complex system of proper perception, is defined through simplistic negation. This over simplification is the result of beginning at the end. Septimus' reality differed from that of William Bradshaw, and while Septimus is the *recognized* madman, Bradshaw's "sense of proportion" is later compared to the dark side of English Imperialism, a consequence of the delusional mindset that England had set out on the quest to "civilize" Africa. As Woolf suggests, "proportion has a sister, less smiling, more formidable, a Goddess even now engaged—in the heat and sands of India, the mud and swamp of Africa… is even now engaged in dashing down shrines and smashing idols, and setting up in their place her own stern countenance" and this "stern countenance" is the perceived absolute reality of Imperialistic Great Britain. And so Sir William Bradshaw is directly connected with the problematic dominating ideology of post-Victorian England on the whole. Woolf may have been afraid of an egotism of her own, but it was simply the clarity of mind in certain moments that shed light on the shroud. To define madness through a focus on the process of perceiving is to avoid upsetting the balance of relativism and absolutism. To become absolute in one's convictions (even as a writer) is to run the risk of resembling devilish Imperialism. However relativism too holds its disadvantages, requiring the toleration of a dominant ideology that Woolf wanted to speak out against.

And so Woolf's definition of Madness, the definition that I will be exploring in great detail, is one that rides the fence between claiming an absolute reality and recognizing relativism. The absolute reality in *Mrs. Dalloway* reveals itself through satire; we can clearly see what is *absolutely* not the truth. Bradshaw's sense of proportion (therefore Victorian Imperialism) is one

example, but so too do we see Woolf's feminism protest against any assertion on truth within the concept of male superiority. In this sense, rather than proposing her own sense of proportion, Woolf rises above pretention by merely holding up a mirror to post-Victorian London and utilizing pathos to make Septimus Smith a largely sympathetic and relatable character. The end result of this strategy is a re-focusing, not a re-defining. Septimus is still quite mad, but Woolf points out that so is William Bradshaw, and so is Great Britain. Madness is thus defined through comparison, not invention. That that is marginalized from an age and that that is incorporated into an age says everything about the age itself and very little about what is and is not "mad."

The concept of madness is the experience of unreason through delusion, madness itself manifests in a vast multitude of idiosyncratic delusions that permeate from one theoretical shared plane of existence. The nature of these delusions greatly depends on the age. Age determines the type of madness. Age determines how one may be mad. In *Mrs. Dalloway* the dominant ideology, the immense force that is to be dethroned by Woolf, is that of a complete rejection of the body and sole worship of the mind. It is an age of rationalism. Such an extreme ideology yields an exciting opportunity for discovery on the mind-body relationship in regards to madness. While madness is a cycle, one may find law in the cycle itself. One may understand the rules of clarity, and at the same time exist within those rules (perhaps even struggling against them) albeit one may not understand *where* this clarity (if it is reached, and subsequently maintained) may lead. Such is how Woolf begins at the beginning rather than the end. Woolf does not propose her own sense of proportion, but rather, she takes a firm stance on epistemology, providing a tool that may be used for an individual to reach his or her own sense of reality.

2. Fixed Forms

Virginia Woolf was constantly aware of the inescapable dynamism between the individual and the collective, referring to the "private" versus "public" spheres of human existence over and over again in her musings, autobiographical writing, and diary entries. This public sphere, Woolf claims, holds great power over not only the mindset, but also the very identity of the individual. In other words individuals define themselves, even perceive themselves, based on the age of which they are a product. In fact, in a passage that begins with a reflection on her mother, Woolf concludes that a person indeed cannot possibly be separated from the age they live in, but rather are inextricably connected to it:

> She was one of the invisible presences who after all play so important a part in every life. This influence, by which I mean the consciousness of other groups impinging upon ourselves; pubic opinion; what other people say and think; all those magnets that attract us this way to be like that; or repel us the other and make us different from that… Consider what immense forces society brings to play on each and every one of us, how that society changes from decade to decade; and also from class to class; well, if we cannot analyze these invisible presences, we know very little of the subject of the memoir. (Woolf, 80)

Such is invariably the case with Clarissa Dalloway in particular. These "immense forces" seem to be so ever-present to Woolf that she will dictate one is inevitably faced with the choice of rejection or acceptance of pre-ordained "invisible presences." The term "invisible" reflects the insidious nature of these presences, that they harness their power from their subtlety. The *designated* madman is so detectable, so blatant in his appearance due to the deviation from an ingrained uniformity, not the nature of the characteristics that differ. It is his strangeness, not his madness, that causes Rezia to fearfully reflect, "people must notice" (Woolf, 26). We see in Rezia's fear the awareness of a marginalization and its profoundly negative effects on reputation. This innate human instinct that finds discomfort at the very idea of a detachment from the

collective is possibly the origins of one's allowance of the blurring of individuality within the "consciousness of other groups."

Septimus must not be viewed as completely marginal, however, just as Clarissa is not completely engulfed by standardization. Rather we see that the two remain fixed in their movement between the two spheres by choice and not by nature. Septimus refuses to listen to others, disdains interruption—"interrupting again! She was always interrupting"—disdains anything that takes him away from himself and into the lives and realities of others (Woolf. 29). Yet Septimus still exists within this public sphere, unable to separate himself due to its intrinsic bond with the private world he appears to prefer. Just as such, Clarissa appears to disdain moments when she is forced into privacy, these moments contain interruption as well and cause her to feel uncomfortable. Peter arrives unexpectedly before Clarissa is allowed enough time to gather herself for public presentation, and such an exposure "had upset her so that any one can stroll in and have a look at her where she lies with the brambles curving over her" and she exclaims to herself "it was outrageous to be interrupted at eleven o'clock on the morning of the day she was giving a party" (Woolf, 49, 45). The private nature of this interaction was the exact quality that disturbed Clarissa, who appears to feel more at ease in the public setting.

This inability to escape the dominant ideology of one's age forces the individual (and most certainly the characters in Woolf's novel) into a dynamic with the collective. Woolf seems to believe that as the mind and the body are in constant communication, as one cannot exist without the other, so too does the private and public world exist in conjunction. As a result, Septimus is unable to escape the public sphere just as Clarissa is unable to escape the private sphere.

Woolf believes a proper balance between the private and public sphere is so necessary and so powerful, that it may be the solution to a correct path (not an end, rather the desired journey to an end that is unforeseeable) towards the possible prevention of war. In her essay *Three Guineas* Woolf demands an adherence to this dynamic:

> How essential it is that we should realize that unity the dead bodies, the ruined houses prove. For such will be our ruin if you in the immensity of your public abstractions forget the private figure, or if we in the intensity of our private emotions forget the public world. Both houses will be ruined, the public and the private, the material and the spiritual, for they are inseparably connected. But with your letter before us we have reason to hope. For by asking our help you recognize that connection (Woolf, 142-143)

Here we see that this "ruin" is to be avoided by finding an everlasting dynamic balance between the private and the public sphere and avoiding any kind of exclusion of one or the other. Neither is placed above the other, but rather it is an equilibrium that is being sought, an avoidance of excess, and this excess being "inseparably connected" with passivity. This passivity is in respect to movement from the private to the public and back again. To "forget the private figure" is to remain in "public abstracts," perhaps there is movement within those abstracts, but in relation to the private sphere there is no movement, there is complete rigidity, one is fixed in the public sphere. Such passivity characterizes bother Clarissa and Septimus, while the two differ in where they are located in their passivity. Septimus, the marginalized, the "lunatic" is fixed in the isolation of the private sphere, whereas Clarissa, the "perfect hostess" is fixed in the Public sphere and is therefore not marginalized, but rather completely incorporated into the age of rationalism. Peter, it appears, has a mastery over this dynamic, and therefore is neither completely marginalized nor completely incorporated. This pattern between the three characters is their strongest connection: Clarissa and Septimus demonstrate extremes, whereas Peter demonstrates the mean between these two extremes. Clarissa and Septimus demonstrate passivity, are fixed, whereas Peter demonstrates activity, moving from one side to the other,

balanced in his movement, not oriented in one way or the other. This activity on Peter's end is demonstrated in a moment in his hotel as he contemplates whether or not to go to Clarissa's party, or to spend the night reading by himself (quite literally struggling with this tension between the private and the public sphere). Eventually he rests on the determination to go to the party, but this is not a rejection of his private self, rather, he contemplates the "truth about our soul" and recognizes an existence in both worlds:

> For this is the truth about our soul, he thought, our self, who fish-like inhabits deep seas and plies among obscurities threading her way between the boles of giant weeds, over sun-flickered spaces and on and on into gloom, cold, deep, inscrutable; suddenly she shoots to the surface and sports on the wind-wrinkled waves; that is, has a positive need to brush, scrape, kindle herself, gossiping. What did the Government mean—Richard Dalloway would know—to do about India? (Woolf, 177)

Movement within this metaphor is elevational, the private sphere is associated with the depths of the sea, and the public sphere by that of the surface. It appears that this movement from the private to the public sphere is due to the "positive need to brush, scrape, *kindle,"* and it is celebrated, despite the fact that the end result is merely "gossiping" something of a meaningless and petty action. The trivial nature of the public sphere in this passage is reinforced as Peter fails to identify exactly *why* he wishes to enter it, "He would go to Clarissa's party, because he wanted to ask Richard of what they were doing in India—the conservative duffers. And what's being acted? And music…Oh yes, and mere gossip" and it appears as though the souls "positive need to brush, scrape, [and] kindle herself" is not due to the destination (which has no discernable significance), but rather the movement itself (Woolf, 177).

While the "obscurities" that are present in the depths of the seas might appear to yield a greater sense of delusion than that of the surface, it is simply a world that is less illuminated, but not completely so, judging by the presence of "sun-flickered spaces." Woolf does not want to associate the depths with insanity, but rather mystery, there is no evidence in this passage that

suggest the soul claims this deep world is illuminated when it is not. Madness only arises when one projects light onto darkness, as Foucault pointed out in his musings on imagination. As is suggested in the case of Septimus, it is when one loses this notion of the souls "positive need" to bring oneself up to the surface that one runs the risk of *living* in this obscurity.

With all of her criticism of post-Victorian ideology, it is a wonder that Woolf encourages a movement back and forth between the private and public sphere, rather than demonstrating a preference for the private sphere that may seduce one with the idea of being untainted by the age that seems to haunt her and give her more obstacles than opportunities for intellectual growth. This is possibly due to the desire to transcend the age that she herself was born into. It seems that all of Woolf's criticisms of Victorian society also fit into a much larger, much deeper, framework of reasoning that allows for light to be shed on madness itself, not simply the madness of one particular age. Transcendence does not necessarily mean escape. Woolf was aware that as damaging as its ideology was, Victorianism (or its influence) was a part of her self. As a result of this entrapment she embraced this enemy and with such inner awareness was able to fight the immense forces of Victorianism all the more successfully. As Steve Ellis aptly put it,

> The complex social and cultural network that descended to Woolf from the Stephen family line and that from Leslie Stephen's two wives veritably embedded Woolf in the Victorian past, knitted the literary and the familial together in an imposing 'pedigree' she was keenly conscious of, and enabled her, through the 'social slide' she 'inherited' from her mother to make full use of it (Ellis, 11)

Woolf's mother in particular personified much of the Victorianism that was to enforce its power over Woolf throughout her career. The forces were great, even formidable, but not immortal and not impenetrable. The transcendence of her age manifests itself through Woolf's arguments and positions on subjects that reach a universal scale. Feminism and pacifism transcend Victorianism, applying to the long history of humanity rather than a short span of one hundred

years of human existence. So too, does Woolf's position on madness transcend her own age. This transcendence is the reason for such philosophical concerns as the phenomenology of perception in general rather than the perception of the average Victorian. Here lies the difference between the Victorian madman and the universal madman. The Victorian madman is Septimus Warren Smith, such is the relationship between the mad and the marginal. To be marginalized is to be mad relative to an age. However, to demonstrate Septimus' preference for the private sphere, rather than judge him through the lens of a Victorian is to judge him impartially, to transcend one's age through reason. It is imaginable that reason could be the only path to transcendence. Ironically, this involves the dynamic Woolf speaks of; it is this same dynamic (between the private and public sphere) that led her to her pacifist belief as well.

Woolf presents a metaphor for her battle with the public sphere as the killing of the Angel in the House. The intrinsic connection between the private and the public is again present, as the Angel is within Woolf, and its insidiousness is portrayed through the phantom-like quality it brings out. This inner demon[1] is a demonstration both of the power of the invisible presences and an identification of these invisible presences themselves:

> I discovered that if I were going to review books I should need to do battle with a certain phantom. And the phantom was a woman, and when I came to know her better I called her after the heroine of a famous poem, The Angel in the House… I will describe her as shortly as I can. She was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily…In short she was so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others. (Woolf, 278)

The parallels between this Angel and Clarissa Dalloway are astounding. One of the most blatant is that of "sympathiz[ing] always with the minds and wishes of others" a quality that Peter draws attention to in one of his musings, "With twice his wits, she had to see things through his eyes—

[1] The title of "Angel" is almost delightfully ironic.

one of the tragedies of married life. With a mind of her own, she must always be quoting Richard—as if one couldn't know a tittle what Richard thought by reading the *Morning Post* of a morning!" (Woolf, 86). Not only is Clarissa refusing herself a mind of her own, but the mind she sympathizes with (Richard's mind) is one that is standardized, as shown by the identical resemblance of his thought to that of the Morning Post. Clarissa has surrendered herself to the public sphere, a rather specific public sphere of her age.

This "Angel" is a form, a mold that is shockingly specific for a phantom, something that is invisible to the naked eye, but that enforces itself upon the individual through implication. Through this medium, that of the Angel in the House, the distinct difference between the private and public spheres reveals itself. It is much more difficult to escape the public sphere than the private sphere. It is far easier to become consumed by the public sphere, than it is to be consumed by what is private. Perhaps this is the most probable reasoning for the existence of far more characters alike to Clarissa in her consumption in *Mrs. Dalloway* than characters alike to Septimus[2]. While both exhibit the extremes of a universally shared dynamic, the inhabitance of these extremes leans far more to the public sphere than to the private. At least, this appears to be the case in the age *Mrs. Dalloway* responds to. This imbalance also explains the romanticization of the marginalized mad, often associated with the "mentally ill." It is a delight in rarity. Seldom does the case of a breach from fixed forms occur. As Miriam Bailin observes:

> Nothing, it seems, holds more menace or fascination…than the departure from fixed forms. Even though such departures are often presented as grounds for hope in the evolution of a higher form, a more perfect order… their presence is generally accompanied by an ominous sense of estrangement from the grounds of one's own being…it is this potential loss of a guarantee of the existence of a present more than a future self (Bailin, 41)

[2] Only a few other characters in the novel seems to remain as fixed within the private sphere as Septimus does. The "battered woman" on pages 90-92 is perhaps the most blatant example. There might also be an argument that Miss Kilman shares this position.

If there is indeed to be dynamism between incorporation and marginalization, departure from fixed forms is a necessary element. There is also an order to this dynamism that is discernable. One must first move away from the default state of the fixed form and into the marginal; the killing of the Angel represents this initial movement. Departure does not mean that one may dwell in marginalization however, as Septimus dwells. However, as Bailin points out, the state of deviation is often one of uncertainty (there is the possibility of a loss of the "present" self), however it appears this is deemed necessary for growth. This term "fixed forms" is one that incorporates both the notion of passivity and that of a "mold" a preordained frame of being. The Angel is an example of a fixed form, it is one that is as specific as it is inhibiting. In *Mrs. Dalloway* it appears there is another name for this form, one that is slightly altered perhaps, but no less inhibiting: that of "the perfect hostess," a name branded (not gently) upon Clarissa by Peter.

Fixed forms are birthed from ideological domination, coming from such origins they are by nature oppressive and formidable forces. It appears as though the center of oppression, what makes a force an oppressive force, is that of inhibition. This prevention is the prevention of exploration, the prevention of activity, and therefore the prevention of personal growth. While the Angel is specific to the Victorian era, each age has its Angel, just as each age has its form of madness. The common threads that tie the ages together, these threads are what Woolf searches for in her own exploration and identification of madness. To identify a delusion would be to remain in her age, to avoid transcendence. To transcend is to discover truths on delusion itself. Thus is the explanation for the flexibility of these terms: private, public, marginalization, incorporation, dynamism, affect, logic, and fixed forms. These are terms that may apply to the cumulative knowledge of philosophy. To identify madness specifically is to remain within one's

age, for delusion changes as reality changes. Therefore, the only path for transcendent enlightenment on the subject of madness is the pursuit of a methodology regarding the process of reasoning; to find a method of avoiding madness that is cross-generational, that may be applied to differing ages. In other words, truth itself is not universal; rather it is the search for truth that remains absolute. In *Mrs. Dalloway,* through the neatly woven and interdependent models of Septimus, Clarissa, and Peter, we see a proposal on how to properly navigate the growth of the soul, and a criticism of how Victorianism curtails this growth.

Chapter 2: Spheres

1. Enlarging the Circumference

To tackle the dilemma of madness is again not a question of identification, but rather that of the desired avoidance of an amorphous entity. Considering that objective reality does not remain constant, but rather changes consistently (due to the morphology of reality from age to age), madness is akin to the flu virus, that changes its form and adapts along with new generations of antibodies. Considering this is an ongoing battle with a shape-shifting enemy, Woolf is not so much as interested in identifying the madness relative to the post-Victorian era (while she certainly does do this) but rather she uses epistemology to utilize the true nature of knowledge acquisition to create a methodology that may be used to minimize delusion across the ages.

On a remark regarding an opportunity for intellectual growth, Woolf comments not only on the picking up of one of Feud's works, but also the reason why:

> *Diary entry for 2 December, 1939, 'Began reading Freud last night; to enlarge the circumference; to give my brain a wider scope, to make it objective, to get outside. Thus defeat the shrinkage of age.[3] (Woolf, 108)

This notion of a "sphere" of knowledge comes from the word "circumference," and the term "scope" may be understood as an extent of space. The analogy is remarkably geometric, and not on accident. This geometric setting in such an analogy allows one to consider space outside of the sphere. A sphere is enclosed; it is limited. It is suggested by Woolf that such a sphere may be

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[3] This passage (from page 248 of the *Diary of Virginia Woolf*) is a footnote in Woolf's autobiographical work A *Sketch of the Past.* This particular reading of Freud Woolf claims gives her a word to describe the feelings she has towards her father and mother: ambivalence. This is the term she comes to use now for the "violently disturbing conflict of love and hate" that she had been feeling towards her father in particular (Woolf, 108).

"enlarged" and "widened" but it will always be an enclosed shape with an inside and an outside. Being a shape that by definition must always be enclosed and must by definition always have an outside, we see that it is impossible to reach a point where the circumference cannot be widened any further. A sphere may always have room for potential growth, may always have its circumference widened further. Just so, there is also the outer rim of the sphere that represents limitation to an individual's library of knowledge. In this musing Woolf is acknowledging her own "circumference" suggesting there is a limit to her knowledge and a specific method (in this case reading Freud) to widen this circumference. The next two chapters will be about this method. We will discuss Woolf's stance on Epistemology, in which she appears to construct an argument on the proper way to widen one's sphere. Her understanding of "ambivalence" seems to begin with a feeling she had not yet thoroughly understood, beginning when she was a child. The reaching of this understanding has a sequential order remarkably similar to Woolf's explanation on why she must be a writer, on her "shock-receiving capacity." Clarissa, Septimus, and Peter appear to demonstrate the specific methods from which one may widen one's sphere. The three characters encompass all possibilities of error and success through a representation of two extremes and a mean. Peter is the mean, and appears to successfully widen his own sphere through the maintenance of mediation between the two extremes represented by Septimus and Clarissa.

2. Dichotomous Infinities

In regards to the plane of space and time (in other words, the space outside of a growing sphere of knowledge, all that is unknown that has not yet been brought into the light) it appears the expanse is immeasurable. This expanse, it seems, does not stretch in one direction, but rather

two. A given object is both infinitely large and infinitely small. Meaning, that the size of this object all depends on the perspective one relates it too. For example, an elephant is large relative to an insect, but small relative to the planet. The larger one's relative perspective becomes, the smaller the elephant becomes. Vice versa, the smaller one's relative perspective becomes, the larger the elephant becomes. This concept of infinities perhaps explains why the object is a sphere and not a simple line. One may explore the object of the elephant in two pathways, infinity, or infinity as it approaches zero.

The concept of dichotomous infinities fits in perfectly with the analogy of the circle. Numerically, there is no number too large for a circumference, yet there is also no number too small. In this sense, the circle itself may be seen as both infinitely small and infinitely large. In other words, while an individual, it may seem, knows nothing, they also may know everything. It all depends on the perspective from which the individual is being seen. How much of time and space that has been uncovered by an individual is both an incredibly large amount and an incredibly small amount. It is most practical regarding these infinities to continue with the metaphor of the ocean, considering this is one of Woolf's favorite tools to express the infinite nature of both time and space. In *To The Lighthouse* we see an example of infinities expanded and contracting in size:

> Brooding, she changed the pool into the sea, and made the minnows into sharks and whales, and cast vast clouds over this tiny world by holding her hand against the sun, and so brought darkness and desolation, like God himself, to millions of ignorant and innocent creatures…And then, letting her eyes slide imperceptibly above the pool and rest on that wavering line of sea and sky…she became with all that power sweeping savagely in and inevitably withdrawing, hypnotized, and the two senses of that vastness and this tininess… made her feel that she was bound hand and foot and unable to move by the intensity of feelings which reduced her own body, her own life, and the lives of the people in the world, for ever, to nothingness. So listening to the waves, crouching over the pool, she brooded. (Woolf, 75-76

This Passage emphasizes a transition from infinitely small to infinitely large, where both infinites of space are highlighted. Nancy First comprehends her enormous size relative to the fish in the tide pool, having a great, almost incomprehensible significance comparable to that of God himself. This is temporary, as once she shifts her perspective from the tide pool to the world surrounding her (namely the ocean, represented by the "sea and sky" she watches during the transition and the waves in her ear at the end) she is overwhelmed by her relative insignificance (as shown by the word "nothingness") and minuscule size.

Also, we see how knowledge and control is incorporated into these infinites, that compared to the fish in the tide pool Nancy is literally like God, all knowing and all powerful (the fish are "ignorant" in comparison to Nancy), this knowledge very much directly related to her vantage point of perspective, hovering *over* the pool and seeing it as a whole, whereas her vantage point on the sea is from the same plane, and as far as she knows from where she stands it could be endless. It stretches beyond her limitations.

The dichotomous infinities revealed in the "tide pool" analogy may be applied to the world of *Mrs. Dalloway.* Clarissa feels very much in control of the world she creates in her own domain. Unpredictable elements to her day are few and far between, the most disturbing (yet, by the same token, exciting) one being Peter. Clarissa is blind to the expanse, yet this expanse does not reach beyond her potential. Her limitations in knowledge regarding the world outside of her physical sphere (which appears to consist of her house and "this solemn progression…up Bond Street") are clear with her inability to comprehend the struggles of people outside of her country, so much so that she has no idea whether or not Richard's meeting involves helping the Armenians or the Albanians. Strangely enough it seems as though all of Clarissa's limitations are intentional, revolving around her restricting of her own knowledge. This is also shown through

her believing she knows nothing while restricting her own reading. Very likely this restriction is due to the insidious nature of the "The Perfect Hostess." When she is exploring, breaking free of her fixed forms, she is joining the coalition of the marginal, the "rebels" against what is prim and proper as represented by Sally Seton. In Clarissa's youth she found joy in a wide expanse of reading materials. As Peter notes, "she was a Radical then," and she deviated from societal norms (Woolf, 169). However, these years of adventure are long behind her:

> And people would say, 'Clarissa Dalloway is spoilt.' She cared much more for her roses than for the Armenians. Hunted out of existence, maimed, frozen, the victims of cruelty and injustice (she had heard Richard say so over and over again)—no, she could feel nothing for the Albanians, or was it the Armenians? but she loved her roses (didn't that help the Armenians? (Woolf, 133)

This passage is very much a commentary on the insidious nature of fixed forms. Clarissa is aware of the problematic nature of her ignorance towards the Armenian or the Albanian Genocide. The beginning line "And people would say" suggests these rumors about her are very much within her own awareness (considering she is alone in this setting, even if the narrator is speaking the context is not far away from Clarissa's consciousness), and the contemplations on the confusion between her husbands career could have a great deal to do with her own admittance of guilt and also self-condemning validation that she "could feel nothing." This is not true of Clarissa. Feeling as though one should feel something is not feeling nothing; and she tries to feel something, thinking perhaps her love of flowers might help the Armenians. It is likely she knows on some level this is futile. And so she is all the more tortured because of her awareness of the limited position she is in.

This "awareness" runs very deep, so deep that Clarissa has to search for it within herself, until finally, contemplating the significance of what is her world, however limited and small, her parties, she comes across this plea of her soul for expansion that she herself has been stifling, had

stifled by marrying Richard, and may be at the heart of why she would have preferred the unconventional adventure of the passions (both painful and pleasant) that would have accompanied a marriage with Peter:

> And [the party] was an offering; to combine, to create; but to whom? An offering for the sake of offering, perhaps. Anyhow, it was her gift. Nothing else had she of the slightest importance; could not think, write, even play the piano. She muddled Armenians and Turks… and to this day ask her what the Equator was, and she did not know. (Woolf, 135)

Here, in the context of Clarissa's lack of having things "of the slightest importance" value is attached to knowledge. There is more reason to believe Clarissa truly does feel regret for not having any picture at all of the world outside of London, she is greatly disappointed with herself for "muddl[ing] Armernians and Turks." This regret, it would seem plausible, comes from recognition in the fault in her own character: the detriment of allowing herself to be dominated by fixed forms.

3. Unknown Waters

Before delving into exploration process itself (and this will intimately take into account affect and logic) what must first be tackled is the question why madness is so prevalent, and this process so very particular with an incredibly large margin for error. For one, there are many dangers regarding the process of expansion of spheres. An appropriate analogy would again involve space. To explore an unknown world—let's take the "seas" as an example once more—a danger naturally exists in the simple fact that whatever is to be encountered is indeed unknown. As the soul "plies among obscurities" in the darkness of the depths it is (by the simple definition of its environment) lost. Yet, is that not necessary? To gain knowledge, and make something

known, it must first be unknown. However, this danger is one of the strongest preventative forces.

Woolf begins the discussion on her "shock-receiving capacity" with an acknowledgement of her feeling powerless as she receives a shock. It is as though, being born with a rare sensitivity to the world around her, Woolf was almost forced into adventure not by choice, but by nature. In the context of adventure, when a sailor embarks on an expedition of unknown waters not by choice, it would be understandable to see trepidation in this character. However, Woolf discovers the benefits of her fate for the unknown seas, she experiences growth and satisfaction at having had discovery. She says "In the case of the flower [a moment during which she received a substantial shock] I found a reason; and was thus able to deal with the sensation" she goes on to remark, "this suggests that as one gets older one has a greater power through reason to provide an explanation; and that this explanation blunts the sledge-hammer force of the blow (Woolf, 72). The blunting of this force is due completely to newly gained knowledge, the widening of her sphere, and therefore, truly, an identification of the unknown. To make the unknown known is in essence to combat this domination, to harness some control and fight the paralysis that accompanies mystery. It allows one to keep moving, to keep growing.

Woolf goes on to make the emphatic remark, "the shock-receiving capacity is what makes me a writer" and so we see that the purpose behind writing for Woolf is to explore, to provide explanation as a result of having already received a shock in her past. The making the unknown known through reason is again identifiable as she continues this analysis of her self, "I feel that I have had a blow, but it is not, as I thought as a child, simply a blow from an enemy *hidden* behind the cotton wool of daily life; it is or will become a revelation of some order: it is a token of some *real* thing behind appearances; and I make it real by putting it into words" (Woolf,

72, my emphasis). After discovering what is real, what indeed exists in the world that's mystery has threatened her safety, Woolf feels incredible pleasure: "by putting it into words I make it whole. This wholeness means that it has lost its power to hurt me. It gives me, perhaps because by doing so I take away the pain, a great delight" (Woolf, 72). And so, while the threat of exploration is great, so is the reward for Woolf. There is a strong suggestion that Woolf does not believe this process of discovery is limited to herself as she states "This intuition of mine—it is so instinctive that it seems given to me, not made by me—has certainly given its scale to my life" and the choice of the word "instinctive" suggests that this "intuition" is very much built in to the human condition. Therefore this process may apply to the acquisition of knowledge for human beings on the whole, and not simply for her self.

The threat of exploration is much greater to the pioneer than to that of the journeyman who walks on a paved road. The pioneer confronts the purest form of the unknown; he leaves the collective understanding of the world, and the safety this brings, to seek answers. The acquisition of knowledge, being an individual experience, and with its strong relationship to growth, is not unlike the journey of the pioneer. While dangerous, and full of mishaps, this instinct to strike out on one's own reflects a natural human curiosity that is closely attached to growth and the completion of the soul. Clarissa's teenaged daughter, Elizabeth, in a youthful desire for adventure is compared to the pioneer,

> She looked up Fleet Street. She walked just a little way towards St. Paul's shyly, like some one penetrating on tiptoe, exploring a strange house by night with a candle… For no Dalloways cane down the Strand daily; she was a pioneer, a stray, venturing, trusting. (Woolf, 151-152)

Imagery of the pioneer accompanies imagery of light and dark, that of what is dark being brought slowly to light through the candle. Both images capture the nuances of discovery. Elizabeth is at an age where not only is her sphere of knowledge in want of expansion, but the

doors have not yet been closed for her. Not only this, but she also finds herself in a revolutionary time for women, the "modern" woman striking out to find her own profession and transcend the domestic sphere. While Mrs. Kilman initially encouraged Elizabeth to seek a higher future for herself, it is not until her adventure that she truly desires it, "she would like to have a profession. She would become a doctor, a farmer, possibly even go to Parliament if she found it necessary, all because of the Strand" and Elizabeth's daring trek through the Strand is attributed to her transcendence of fixed forms (Woolf, 150-51). She may become something more than a "perfect hostess." This overall beneficial experience is not without its discomfort. Elizabeth "shyly, like some one penetrating on tiptoe" peeks around new corners before light is shed on this unknown world. There is an element of trepidation in this overall positive experience, but Elizabeth does not allow this to paralyze her. In more ways than one, she resembles a young Clarissa traveling on omnibuses with Peter.

4. On Courage

The constitution of the marginalized mad in comparison with the incorporated mad appears to follow a trend regarding bravery. To have courage is one of the defining qualities of the pioneer, yet courage, too lies on a spectrum. To lose one's dynamism, and break the flow of movement between marginalization and incorporation appears to result in a passive state of rashness or cowardice. To be brave requires dynamism, movement, and balance. After analyzing Woolf's own feelings of powerlessness as she is struck by a shock that is yet to be defined, the concept of bravery regarding knowledge acquisition strikes a personal chord. By contrast, the refusal to explore, and subsequent compliance with the dominant ideology of an age, reflects cowardice unique to those who rely too heavily on incorporation. However, it is also possible to

be rash, and it is equally the case that the individual who loses himself in marginalized madness, Septimus as one of the best examples, exhibits rashness. This rashness results from exceeding one's capacity before one is prepared to do so.

Turning back to geometrical imagery, in both cases of extremity, the individual is far from the circumference. In the case of cowardice, the incorporated individual lies inside of his or her own sphere of knowledge, experiencing either stagnation or shrinkage, and in essence solely experiencing what is known, what has already been lit (presumably lit by others). Understandably, it would be deemed rash to push one's circumference farther and faster than it may be able to grow, such is the case of the marginalized mad, who remain outside of the limited sphere, claiming to understand higher planes without fully digesting them, exposing themselves to dangers. Just so, the balanced individual may locate themselves on the circumference exactly, marking their growth to the point, and in essence, having an optimal understanding of his or her own limitations. This in turn allows for expansion of these limitations.

Hostility directed towards Hugh Whitbread is a condemnation of his cowardice and a declaration of the hidden ramifications. A shining member of the army of the upright may only be condemned when a characteristic may be identified that places this individual at fault, and responsible for their actions. In her essay, "On being Ill," Woolf describes this "army of the upright":

> With the heroism of the ant or the bee, however indifferent the sky or disdainful the flowers, the army of the upright marches to battle. Mrs. Jones catches her train. Mr. Smith mends his motor. The cows are driven home to be milked. Men thatch the roof. The dogs bark. The rooks, rising in a net, fall in a net upon the elm trees. The wave of life flings itself indefatigably. It is only the recumbent who know what, after all, Nature is at no pains to conceal—that she in the end will conquer; heat will leave the world… the sun will go out. (Woolf, 198)

Sarcasm decorates the ideal of heroism attached to “an army” in this passage, as it is compared to not only that of small mindless creatures, but also is accompanied with reactions of “indifference” and “disdain” from the world in which these acts are being executed. The actions of the “army of the upright” are trivial, revealing the cold perspective that a fight, a battle that is normally taken to represent the meaning of life itself, is rather meaningless in the end, considering “the sun will go out.” The army lives in the delusion that they may enjoy an accomplishment in their actions. Not only this, but the actions of any member of an army feeds the greater body, the uniform ideals and desires of the cause this individual has sworn allegiance to. Such is Peter’s observation as he views the English Army marching towards Whitehall, “on they marched, past him, past every one, in their steady way, as if one will worked legs and arms uniformly, and life with its varieties, its irreticences, had been laid under a pavement of monuments and wreaths and drugged into a stiff yet staring corpse by discipline” and Woolf not only emphasizes the loss of individuality but also the loss of vitality that accompanies such an allegiance.

Irony exists in a cowardly soldier, yet the “army of the upright” is not to be confused with the army of England, rather the “upright” must be placed into the context of those ordinary actions of mending motors, driving cows home, and thatching roofs. Rather, the imagery of uniformity and the negative connotation of working for a larger body with no sense of individual reflection and purpose accompanies the word “army” in Woolf’s description of this general populace that is relieved from the burdens of illness. The image of the “army of the upright” is birthed from an essay on illness, juxtaposes the ill, and is described through the critical lens of illness. And yet, with this context in mind it is reasonable to suppose that one does not have to be in a military army to be a member of an army. It appears the sole characteristics to Woolf of an

army are the surrendering of the self towards one larger political body. So Hugh is not so much an individual, but rather a representation of post-Victorian England, more specifically the conservative political agenda. As Peter reflects, again, on the case of Hugh, he recalls Sally Seton having fought against the coalition that Hugh is consumed by:

> Of all that ancient lot, Clarissa's friends… Sally was probably the best. She tried to get a hold of things by the right end anyhow. She saw through Hugh Whitbread anyhow—the admirable Hugh—when Clarissa and the rest were at his feet… One of the things he remembered best was an argument one Sunday morning at Bourton about women's rights (that antideluvian topic), when Sally suddenly lost her temper, flared up, and told Hugh that he represented all that was most detestable in British middle-class life. She told him that she considered him responsible for 'those poor girls in Piccadily'… She did it on purpose, she said afterward… [Sally speaking in Peter's memory] 'He's read nothing, thought nothing, felt nothing'… No country but England could have produced him. (Woolf, 81-82)

Hugh has "read nothing, thought nothing, and felt nothing," he is a perpetuator, and nothing more. In perpetuation the coward becomes a puppet that acts based on the fixed forms designated to them, forms that may be identified as flawed by those who expand their sphere enough to question their nature (Sally Seton being an example, the rebellious girl who "smoked cigars in her bedroom" like a man). Hugh "had the most extraordinary, the most natural, the most sublime respect for the English aristocracy of any human being [Peter] had ever come across" and his loyalty is so extreme, so "natural" it appears to be inseparable from Hugh the individual (Woolf, 81). Not all armies go to war. Some members do England a much larger favor by staying within England and standing in as a representation and solidification of certain ideals, ideals that at this time were patriarchal and imperialistic. While Hugh Whitbread demonstrates patriarchy in his treatment of Sally, "kissing her in the smoking-room to punish her for saying that women should have votes," William Bradshaw perpetuates (and arguably *fuels*) imperialism with his sense of "proportion" (Woolf, 199).

Peter's disgust with Hugh is the disgust that we see in the person who allows themselves to be a drone, disgust at the damage and danger that the delusion of the coward may inscribe on others. Hugh carries out and helps prolongate the perversion of the collective's logic-centric ideology. It is perhaps seen by Peter as a form of intentional ignorance, under the impression that one has an option to either perpetuate or stand against such fallacies. It is as though Hugh has surrendered the fight ironically to become a member of the army, the coalition that deems Peter a "failure." Hugh demonstrates cowardice by in joining the dominant coalition not out of belief, but rather for the sake of comfort, to enjoy the benefits of social domination. Hugh is far more comfortable in his limited sphere than Clarissa, perhaps because as a man his own fixed form carries more privilege. Peter recognizes Hugh at Clarissa's party, "Hugh Whitbread it was, strolling past in his white waistcoat, dim, fat, blind, past everything he looked, except for self-esteem and comfort" and this comfort, this cowardice that stems more from laziness than fear is the reason why Hugh is both so reprehensible and so "dim" having had little experience in the world to broaden his circumference and enlighten the world outside of that which he has been given.

Septimus, while he experiences episodes of paranoia and fear, is still rash in his pursuits; his fear, rather, is a result. Dr. Holmes, while evil, is arguably just as evil as Hugh, a perpetuator, a drone, yet not, as Septimus envisions, "Holmes was on him—the repulsive brute with the blood-red nostrils," the devil himself (Woolf, 102). Septimus shows an exaggerated anger characteristic of the classically mad. As Shakespeare writes in Midsummer nights Dream through the character Theseus, "The lunatic, the lover, and the poet are of imagination all compact. One sees more devils than vast hell can hold: that is the madman." (Shakespeare, 72). Theseus is associated with light and day, arriving in the morning, after the "dream" has ended,

and he is the voice of light as he stumbles upon the lovers asleep, not able to decipher whether or not what happened to them the night before was real or whether it was a dream. As the monologue ends, "or in the night, imagining some fear, how easy is a bush supposed a bear!" the paranoia of the madman akin to Septimus is captured (Shakespeare, 72). Septimus supposes the bush that is his medical practitioner is the bear of the devil. To gain knowledge is to bring light to the darkness, not stumble around rashly in the darkness exposing oneself to both imaginary fears and real fears in the paranoia of the unknown. Just as such, no knowledge is gained through reclusion into the safety of that which is already lit. Septimus, in his search for "the meaning of life" is rashly plummeting himself into philosophical lands that he cannot fathom. His fear is circumstantial and a result of rash decisions. This fear of the devil is the result of Septimus' state, not the driving force of the devil's appearance.

Neither Septimus nor Clarissa appear to completely succumb to cowardice or rashness, but rather these are more dwellings for them from which they deviate enough to make them tortured by a self-awareness of their flaws. This torture manifests itself through the regret that accompanies the actions that for Clarissa prove cowardly, and for Septimus prove rash. The overlying regret of Clarissa throughout the entire novel, the manifestation of her cowardice and the decision she made years ago to limit her exploration and become this "perfect hostess," is represented in her decision to marry Richard. This regret haunts her multiple times, often it bubbles to the surface regarding the suggestion at having should have married Peter:

> And Clarissa had leant forward, taken [Peter's] hand, drawn him to her, kissed him… feeling as she sat back extraordinarily at her ease with him, and light-hearted, all in a clap it came back to her, If I had married him, this gaiety would have been mine all day! It was all over for her. The sheet was stretched and the bed narrow. She had gone up into the tower alone and left them [who is this referring to? I could work to find out, and if not

> I could possibly leave it out] blackberrying in the sun. The door had shut… and Richard, Richard!... He has left me; I am alone forever[4] (Woolf, 52-53)

Peter represents adventure and exploration, not just in-and-of himself, but also in relation to Clarissa. Clarissa still yearns to expand her sphere and live more fully, she finds a vital impulse within herself, "Take me with you, Clarissa thought impulsively, as if he were starting directly upon some great voyage" and is reminded by Peter's presence of all she has not seen, nor uncovered in the world (Woolf, 53). Accompanying this adventure is a demand for bravery that Clarissa finds difficult to swallow. It takes bravery for her to see herself, bravery that only Peter's presence seems to demand. Her encounter with Peter is painful because the veil is visible, and for a brief moment she is brought out of the delusion that she is "happy" and into the objective reality that her soul is suffocating. Yet this veil is so powerful that it appears to only last as long as Peter is present in the room. Clarissa realizes this once again at her party, "It was extraordinary how Peter put her into these states just by coming and standing in a corner. He made her see herself" (Woolf, 184). Clarissa has an even clearer picture of her honest self when Peter is looking at her than when she is looking at her own self. Clarissa's own company produces artificiality, in which she picks and chooses which parts of herself to bring to the surface, and which parts of herself to bury deep enough that they become imperceptible to her and others. Such is the case as she looks in the mirror, "she pursed her lips when she looked in the glass. It was to give her face point. That was her self—pointed; dart-like; definite. That was her self when some effort, some call on her to be her self, drew the parts together, she alone knew how different, how incompatible and composed so for the world" and so "the world" is the driving motivation for Clarissa to mold herself into the proper form (Woolf, 42).

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[4] there is often isolation in incorporation just as there may be isolation in marginalization. That to become *lost* is easy to do in both. Perhaps this points to the fact that madness is a lonely state.

Septimus' regret reveals itself most clearly just before he is to commit the rash act that festers inside of him as long as his madness carries on, the act of committing suicide. Septimus hesitates, "but he would wait until the very last moment. He did not want to die. Life was good. The sun hot" and this act of throwing himself out the window is a last resort. Septimus is fighting off some devil while he thinks, "Holmes would get him. But no; not Holmes; not Bradshaw," his uncertainty reveals itself in the physicality of the moment as he "get[s] up rather unsteadily, hopping indeed from foot to foot" and there is an instinctual intuition that the action about to be performed might have undesired consequences, it is rash for the given moment (Woolf, 164). Septimus' desired outcome from this action is to deal the final blow of an imaginary battle as he cries "I'll give it to you!" before flinging himself, but the end result is the further marginalization (and misunderstanding) of his self as his doctor reflects, "why the devil did he do it, Dr. Holmes could not conceive" (Woolf, 164-65). Dr. Holmes does not understand the gesture, and it's failure to fall on listening ears suggests there may have been a far more effective mode of combatting the influence that the general practitioner represented. The decision was made in a moment, it was not coolly calculated, it emitted from a great fit of affect, and was a rash action on the whole.

Both the decision to marry Richard and the decision to commit suicide prove equally substantial in terms of solidification. It appears as though once these two characters made these decisions there was no more fighting their madness. It was in the commitment of these decisions that these two characters became trapped in their roles as marginal and incorporated. Clarissa's decision was cowardly, and Septimus' decision was rash. The regret that both characters felt surrounding these decisions reflected their own inner desire to win the fight against unreason. The discussion on courage implies imagery of battle. Ultimately Woolf is asserting that the

acquisition of knowledge, the resistance of madness, is an ongoing, never-ending battle. The violence involved in "killing" the Angel in the House can attest to this analogy. In terms of faulty battle technique there are two classic modes of misconduct: to choose not to fight at all, or to rush in without proper preparation. Clarissa regrets not challenging herself, Septimus regrets creating more of a challenge than is needed. Whether or not it is these character's faults that they were rash and cowardly is another question entirely. Both are most certainly not. In fact, both of these characters are portrayed as victims. It is victimization that accounts for their madness (unlike Hugh or Dr. Holmes). This might very well explain why Peter and Sally hold a much greater contempt for Hugh than for Clarissa. Clarissa cannot be blamed for her position. Some forces are too large to fight on one's own. Clarissa and Septimus are tragic characters, their inability to maintain proper perception despite substantial intelligence on both ends is a testament to the two great grievances that Woolf highlights: war and patriarchy. Ironically, it seems, one must do battle with war. And so while Septimus and Clarissa represent the two possibilities of imbalance that result in the consumption of madness on a universal scale, they also represent how these extremes manifested themselves through the two greatest enemies in the context of the Victorian era.

Woolf blames the flawed ideology of her age (and its misunderstanding of the mentally ill, the marginalized mad) on a lack of courage:

> Those great wars which the body wages with the mind a slave to it, in the solitude of the bedrooms against the assault of fever or the oncome of melancholia, are neglected. Nor is the reason far to seek. To look these things squarely in the face would need the courage of a lion-tamer; a robust philosophy; a reason rooted in the bowels of the Earth. (Woolf, 194)

In the context of an age of rationalism, the body is what is generally held as a slave to the mind, what is bodily is considered negative (therefore feminine), and is in turn marginalized. In this

passage Woolf explains *why* sickness is frightening: it draws attention to the body. To accept the power of the body is to slip into a marginalized philosophy that requires the "courage of a lion-tamer" to "look…squarely in the face," in other words, to deviate from the dominant ideology (in this sense rationalism in its purest form) is no easy endeavor despite its potential rewards.

The delusion of the coward and the delusion of the rash may be placed into comfortable categories of incorporation and marginalization, yet to be courageous is not necessarily to be disillusioned. Madness is never completely absent, even in clarity, because this clarity is an active state, and must be maintained. To be courageous is to be in struggle against cowardice and rashness, it is an active state that is active in its prevention of passivity. Courage is, in its essence, dynamism; it is movement between cowardice and rashness to reach an active balance. There are moments when Peter experiences both, however he is determined to continue the struggle, "It was [Clarissa's] heart, he remembered; and the sudden loudness of the final stroke tolled for death…No! No! he cried. She is not dead! I am not old, he cried, and *marched* up as if there rolled down on him, vigorous, unending, his future" (Woolf, 56 my emphasis). Peter is tempted by the heavy weight of Clarissa's illness to fall into delusion, cowering at the onslaught of death, yet he does not give in to this loud, powerful force, but rather faces his mortality and claims life, adventure, and truth for himself.

5. On Pacing

Incorporation marks the beginning; it is the initial movement towards marginalization that characterizes growth. Septimus exemplifies this process. His youthful self before the war reflects a much more fixed, generalized, mold. Septimus has some qualities that give his character potential for healthy deviation. He has something of an affinity for shock and a rare

sensitivity, being a lover of Shakespeare in his youth. However, believing himself invincible Septimus receives a shock that he cannot handle. His mentor Mr. Brewer, wants to mold Septimus into an influential man who might "succeed to the leather arm chair in the inner room under the skylight with the deed boxes round him" when all of a sudden "something happened which threw out many of Mr. Brewer's calculations, took away his ablest young fellows" and what had been calculated for Septimus is no more, because of a rash decision: "Septimus was *one of the first to volunteer*" (Woolf, 95 my emphasis). He had moved too fast, and decides too quickly, too rashly, without thinking thoroughly.

It is Septimus' belief that this is an opportunity to grow, and he is not completely inaccurate. He finds a mentor, Evans, who takes the young Septimus under his wing. A classic male relationship is described by Woolf, "it was a case of two dogs playing on a hearth-rug; one worrying a paper screw, snarling, snapping, giving a pinch, now and then, at the old dog's ear; the other lying somnolent, blinking at the fire, raising a paw, turning and growling good-temperedly" and so there is an analogous teacher-student bond between Septimus and Evans instead of Mr. Brewer (Woolf, 96). Septimus is given the decision between poetry and guns, and the engagement in the war reflects a fatal rash decision. In his eagerness, he chooses the wrong method of growth.

Chapter 3: Epistemology

1. The Role of Affect and Logic

Richard Dalloway is on the whole a likeable character. Despite his governmental position and complete conformity to rationalism in conversation, his actions evoke a curious intelligence that does not go unnoticed by more astute minds. The final section of Mrs. Dalloway ends with a conversation between Sally and Peter, the two personalities that have proved to be the most androgynous, adventurous, and overall the most balanced of all the characters in the novel. It is in these moments that through Sally Woolf is both suggesting and providing a balance of power between the mind and the body. Sally is speaking to Peter, an aspiring writer and hopefully a contributor to ideological reformation[5] on matters of the body. Peter listens (the simple fact that he respects Sally intellectual is a testament to his character[6]) and allows her words to pass through him. Sally asserts her observation that is of the most importance in this moment, "Clarissa was pure-hearted; that was it. Peter would think her sentimental. So she was. For she had come to feel that it was the only thing worth saying—what one felt. Cleverness was silly. One must simply say what one felt" and while this may apply to the relationship between Peter and Clarissa, it speaks to the problematic nature of the rejection of the body (Wolf, 210). Sally, it appears, is compensating for imbalance by enacting her own extreme, ending the novel on a note of ethical emphasis. Richard is redeemed in this passage as he stands in front of Peter and Sally's judgment alongside other English aristocrats. Peter acknowledges, "of them all, Richard seemed to him the best, he said—the most disinterested," appreciating Richards honesty within his job,

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[5] Peter admits to being a socialist, and is all around a man of differing opinions than most of the Englishman who surround him in London.

[6] Despite the many times in the novel where Peter seems to misunderstand women's intelligence, his actions say otherwise.

and lack of bias[7]. As Sally and Peter continue talking, they appreciate the emotional moment Richard shares with Elizabeth, demonstrating a sensitivity of character:

> "Richard has improved. You are right" Said Sally. "I shall go talk to him. I shall say goodnight. What does the brain matter," said Lady Rosseter[8], getting up, "compared with the heart?" (Woolf, 213)

Richard's emotional (affectual) intelligence is enough to redeem his major flaw, which is essentially a lack of logical intelligence (as is hinted by Sally in this passage and Peter earlier on). This redemptive criterion suggests an equality of value (at the very least) between logical and affectual intelligence. Outwardly Woolf is also suggesting the simple existence of the latter. While Richard is delusional, he is in the end likable because of this trait. It is what this "heart" that Sally speaks of represents, a capacity for emotion and a sensitivity to sensation, that Woolf is adding to epistemology. Woolf brings into light this significance in her discussion on "Intelligence":

> Intelligence, with its tendency to acquire views and its impatience with the passive attitude of impartial observation, may be a source of danger in fiction should it get the upper hand; but even in a state of subjection it is so rare that we must welcome it on its own terms. (Woolf, 211)

The "tendency to acquire views and its impatience with the passive attitude of impartial observation" reflects the combination of affect and logic, and it is also key to the discussion on dynamism. "Impartial observation" (meaning logical thought) is a passive state without the affectual trait of acquiring a view. While this musing on intelligence may brings up the point that to feel is to make something subjective, and suggests that reality is relative, it does not say reality is not absolute, either. Theoretically, subjection, if it is indeed the same experience for all who feel properly may indeed mean objection. One must paradoxically follow the subjection of feeling in order to reach

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[7] It is likely that Richard's peers base many of their decisions on monetary concerns, receiving bribes of some sort.

[8] Lady Rosseter is Sally's name through marriage.

objection. This philosophy combines ethics and physics, it is all that is sensory, which include emotions as well. Intelligence, guided by the subjection of feeling, will be ensured to follow the proper path. This appears to be Woolf's attitude towards the beginning of an intellectual pursuit. This beginning is a "tendency," a feeling, an experience, and something to then interpret.

In regards to the actual process of widening of one's sphere of perception (moving away now from the traits that accompany this process such as bravery and proper pacing), Woolf takes an epistemological stance based on the dynamic relationship between affect and logic. In other words, the unknown may only become known through experience, and this experience must be processed correctly. Experience seems to come in two forms: through the literal physical stimulation of the senses, or an emotional response to an interpersonal situation or event. In either case, experience consists of the body being affected. Stimulus from the given reality is introduced into the body. In this sense it becomes real to the body. It is after the body has received this stimulus that the mind begins the process of interpretation, and knowledge comes once interpretation is complete. Upon completion identification is achieved.

The discussion of affectual and logical processes is at the center of the question of madness. If indeed madness is to live in delusion, believing this delusion is reality, than there must be some error, some flaw that occurs during the process of perception that is at the root of madness. As it just so happens, the evidence points to just this, that not by coincidence, as there are two extremes in madness, that of the marginal and that of the incorporated, so too are there two ways in which perception may take a false turn. There is error in stimulus reception, and error in interpretation. These trends are very much noticeable in the three characters Clarissa, Septimus, and Peter (although these errors have much more to do with imbalance than inability). Septimus is able to use logic, just as Clarissa is able to use affect, however in both cases one overshadows the other. Clarissa rejects what her body receives from the world, taking all of her

own reality as that which as been told to her. Unsurprisingly, she is logic-oriented, and her rejection of the body sends her into the delusion of post-Victorian conservative ideals. Septimus does not necessarily reject the mind completely, but rather experiences excess in sensory input, excess demonstrating itself through its relationship to the mind, which has not the time to process the amount of shock that is being received. Unable to process the shock, and having this emotional and sensory lightning flash bombard him not unlike the shells in the First World War, his madness stems from an imbalance of logic and affect, coming from the incapability of stopping to process before the next bombardment of stimulus.

2. The Process of Perception

The use of logic and affect appropriately determines the quality of perception, in other words, the most clarity. Affect comes first, directly comparable to Woolf's "shock-receiving capacity," affect concerns not only what kind of stimulus enters the body but also how much of that stimulus. The body is the receiver. Affect works as the tool used for the process of reception. Affectual intelligence may be understood as the level of mastery of this tool. While Woolf has a great concern for the matters of the body (responding to her given age), her universal concerns do not waver, and she does not ignore the importance of the mind. Stimulus, it appears, may not be completely understood without an equally powerful mind.

The mind interprets. Without a mind to interpret, the stimulus is simply felt and never put into words. As Woolf explains in *A Sketch of the Past*, "I feel that I have had a blow…it is a token of some real thing behind appearances; and I make it real by putting it into words. It is only by putting it into words that I make it *whole*" and the interpretation (represented by the "putting it into words") of this "blow," this shock, provides a more whole, more clear reality. We

see through Woolf's own process that depending on the size and quality of the stimulus, the mind may take a varied amount of time for processing.

Eventually, when one reaches a truth, the final stage may be referred to as identification. The term "identification" illustrates the notion that theoretically this truth was already present, and it has been uncovered (with as little invention as possible, the degree of invention perhaps depending on the degree of clarity). Therefore, a correct and whole understanding of the real world that lacks the common distortion depends on the balance of affect and logic, the body and the mind. If one is overused, the interpretation becomes diluted, the world is misinterpreted, and the result is delusion, a falling into a degree of madness. This madness very much depends on how imbalanced the body and the mind, affect and logic, are.

If it is possible to misinterpret (using the tool of the mind improperly) is it possible to *receive* improperly as well? Hallucination emerges as one example of affectual malfunction. This malfunction also seems to come from imbalance, and it proves to be less frequent (or at least less frequently documented) perhaps due to its relationship to the marginalized mad. Septimus Warren Smith experiences multiple hallucinations before his suicide, the most recurring and powerful hallucination being that of a ghost, the ghost of Evans: his officer who was killed during the war.

Knowledge is indeed a source of power. Peter describes both affect and logic as "powers" connected with growing older. These powers are subsequently connected with exploration and discovery, akin to maturation. In regards to affect, Peter reflects, "now that one was mature… one did not lose the power of feeling… It increased, he said, alas, perhaps" (212). As Peter contemplates "the compensation of growing old," he makes a discovery about logic, too (and this also describes how logic is something that utilizes the feeling, the experience that has already

been received), "one has gained—at last!—the power which adds supreme flavor to existence—the power of taking hold of experience, of turning it round, slowly, in the light" (Woolf, 88). While Peter has in his own mind contemplated the process that marks discovery multiple times, the novel finishes with an active experience that exemplifies these previous notions:

> I will come,' said Peter, but he sat for a moment. What *is* this terror? What is this ecstasy? he thought to himself. What is it that fills me with extraordinary excitement? It is Clarissa, he said. For there she was. (Woolf, 213)

In this final passage, the three stages of knowledge acquisition move through Peter with fluidity. Epistemological questioning marks the movement in the phrase "what is?" where there is uncertainty, but an awareness of something new, something unknown and unfamiliar (as revealed through the word "extraordinary"). By the time this question has reached Peter's thoughts the senses have already actively received a mysterious stimulus, and in the asking of "what is" Peter is beginning the stage of interpretation. It is clear that it was, in fact, these sensations that began the process of interpretation, considering that Peter was initially planning on getting up out of his chair, yet the mysterious emotional stimulus acts as the implied the reason for his pause. Immediacy and awareness characterize the significance of the moment before the mind has completed the image in front of Peter. The mind finishes interpretation: "*it is* Clarissa." The feeling is identified. After Peter's relative identification, we have the narrator confirming that this is indeed what exists in an absolute, objective, now "real" world, in other words, that this is a correct interpretation, not a mad one: "For there she was," a distant affirmative voice.[9]

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[9] The novel ends on a metaphysical note, where the knowledge of an object (Clarissa) actually and truthfully existing in space is confirmed absolutely by the narrator, yet Clarissa's mortality has been in question throughout the entire extent of the novel. This underlying question of Clarissa's physical presence may be placed into further question based on Clarissa's own theory in her youth that even after one dies, one lives on in the rooms they have previously occupied. It

3. Subjectivity Moves to Objectivity

As affect moves to logic, so too does subjectivity move into objectivity, almost as though Woolf is saying that reality may be both subjective and objective. To feel something is inherently subjective, it is relative from person to person, and something that is objective, that simply exists, is inherently absolute; it stands in a plane of existence and not relative to each person. However, to determine whether or not something indeed is, absolute, objective, Woolf seems to portray this truth through multiple lenses, implying that something is not absolute until it has been proven so by demonstrating relativity to a certain number of objects. The more objects this truth is relative to, the clearer it becomes and the closer it gets to objectivity. Just as sanity never completely manifests itself in all its purity, so too does objectivity never reach perfect clarity or certainty. In other words, objectivity, like sanity, exists on a scale with indeterminable ends, and the height of clarity seems to be dependant on how many objects the "truth" is relative to (and how dependent these objects are in terms of their methods of perception).

It is an accumulation of relative experience that gives one reason to believe something exists the way it does. Woolf demonstrates this principle in the emergence of an unknown energy triggered by the passing of the motor car:

> The car had gone, but it had left a slight ripple which flowed through glove shops and hat shops and tailors' shops on both sides of Bond Street. For thirty seconds all heads were inclined the same way… something had happened. Something so trifling in single instances[not a familiar phenomenon, not easy to catch when it does occur, easily dismissible] that no mathematical instrument, though capable of transmitting shocks to

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is possible to interpret the novel in such away that Clarissa dissipated along with Septimus, considering their close connectivity in Clarissa's final musings on his death after having found a room to be alone. While there is the question of whether or not this was Clarissa's physical presence, and what exactly a physical presence indeed *is*, the certainty that Clarissa is in the room, despite having not heard her speak or reading a description of her appearance, does not lose its value.

> China, could register the vibration [attention has not yet been called to this instance]; yet in its fullness rather formidable and in its common appeal motional; for in all the hat shops and tailors' shops strangers looked at each other and thought of the dead; of the flag; of the Empire… for the surface agitation of the passing car as it sunk grazed something very profound. (Woolf, 21)

"Single instances" must refer to the subtle nature of this stimulation, this subtlety is reinforced by the term "ripple" and the event itself is not explosive, but rather it is brought on by the departure of the motorcar rather than its presence[10]. And yet its "fullness" appears to be directly related to the accumulation of experience relative to separate individuals. This is proven by the phenomena's "motional" characteristic being dependent on its "common appeal." Whether or not the ripple actually existed would have been easily doubtful had only one head turned, however the number of heads, the fact that there are thirty of them seems to hold weight in determining the objectivity of the "vibration." The "vibration" is curiously described as something physical, the ripple seems to hold a place in the physical world, despite its unquestionable connection with the emotional aftermath of the war, as discernable through the phrase "thought of the dead." It is not said that this ripple does *not* exist in the physical world, simply that it has not yet been identified, as proven by the fact that "no mathematical instrument…could register the vibration," it being implied that this stretches beyond detection capabilities due to its "trifling" nature.

The mathematical instrument is what already exists in human knowledge and detectability. This very "real" vibration existing yet not in coordination with the mathematical instrument shows that it is beyond the "sphere" of collective knowledge. It is still unidentified at the end of the passage "*something* very profound" but its significance is not questioned due to the fact that it had affected a large number of people. Woolf is showing that this fact alone was enough to give the reader confidence of its existence. Its objectivity becomes stronger, having a

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[10] The emergence of the motor car had been a "violent explosion" that Clarissa at first believed was a "pistol shot" outside of the window of the florists shop (Woolf, 16).

relative affect on many people, as revealed through the term “common appeal.” So too the existence of Clarissa at the end is obscured because it is only beheld by Peter, and presumably nobody else.

4. Epistemological Location

Affect plays an important role in terms of our placement on the infinite scale of time and space. What affects the vessels that hold our minds, this stimulus, occurs at a given scale. For example: a foot and a minute are two logical measurements that measure this familiar scale to which experience draws attention. Our attention is not drawn as much to an eon, or a light year, due to the fact that our bodies are limited, and we do not receive stimulus on that scale. As a result it is much more difficult to comprehend time and space at this level, simply because it is at first beyond our experience. In order to understand, we must use comparison. For example, a light year may be understood as this many feet, or an eon as this many minutes. However, comparison may only stretch so far, until eventually knowledge of a given measurement is known logically but not affectually. We may use calculations to determine how far away three universes are from here in feet. Yet the number is so large that to the logician (however brilliant) it might as well be as big as a number that is three times smaller than it really is. The scale has gotten large enough, that it reaches beyond our comprehension. This is due to the fact that we have never been affectually exposed to such a large scale of a distance. A number is meaningless if we no not know what it symbolizes. Yet it still exists, but it is blurry, shaded in the veil of insignificance that clouds its clarity. It is essentially only half existent, having logic but not affect attached to it. The same can be held true for an individual’s understanding of war, slavery, the

Armenians, etc. We are just as dependent on our bodies, our affectual experience, to achieve the goal of comprehension.

The foot and the minute are understood by the human mind more easily than the light year or the eon because these are the slices of time and space that are relative to our affectual experience. The senses process these slices over and over again. Therefore, affectual stimulation not only determines what is real, but also where this reality lies on the infinite scales of space and time. In other words, affect directly effects our epistemological location. It guides us through space and time, and determines where our attention is centered.

In the absence of sentience the logical plane of existence is devoid of meaning. Affect is the intelligence that injects this impartial plane meaning, and brings a given chunk of this plane into consciousness. Following Woolf's depiction, *our* reality consists of where this plane is being navigated, and the affect-logic process demonstrates exactly how one is choosing to navigate it. Significance begins the process of identification, and is inextricably tied to affect. What is significant and paid attention to is very often what is at hand, the present. This understood, seeing as the mind may never separate itself from the body, there is always a significant state in the plane of time and space. Consequentially, where this significance is may vary, and how large it is may also vary. Depending on the emotional and sensory location of the individual.

Considering that, in the world of *Mrs. Dalloway,* without the synchronicity of affect and logic a truth is not whole, the world outside the affectual sphere is not of concern, not granted attention, and it is insignificant as a result. This relationship between significance and insignificance in regards to affectual attention manifests itself in Clarissa's reasoning for throwing a party. Clarissa contemplates why her parties matter the world to her:

> In her mind now, what did it mean to her, this thing she called life?...Here was So-and-so in South Kensington; some one up in Bayswater; and somebody else… and she felt if

> only they could be brought together; so she did it. And it was an offering; to combine, to create; but to whom? An offering for the sake of offering, perhaps. Anyhow it was her gift. Nothing else had she of the slightest importance; could not think, write, even play the piano. (Woolf, 135)

Clarissa is aware of the fact that the criteria for what she finds significant and meaningful is determined by exposure. This understanding reveals itself as she says "An offering for the sake of offering." It is not the party itself, but rather the presence of simply something to offer, be it large or small. She knows she must find meaning in something, and that while to others who have expanded their spheres larger the offering may seem small, to *her* it is all she has, because it is all she knows. Clarissa is aware of the fact that had she other venues, had she expanded her sphere, allowing what is now unknown to become known this would in turn expand the meaning in her life. This painful awareness reveals itself as she contemplates, "nothing else had she," her meaning comes from parties because of a lack of other adventures all of which (thinking, writing, and music) require training and an expansion of knowledge. It is the absence of meaning that is most tangible as Clarissa unmasks what it is that she has to offer; insubstantiality crystallizes as she rejects her parties as a worthy venue for meaning and in its stead settles on offering itself.

The opposite is true for Septimus, who becomes lost in the world of meaningless numbers due to his rash exploration of an infinity that he has no ability to relate too. He becomes lost in insignificance. It is as though Septimus is trying to synthesize feelings before they become real to him. In other words he is artificially creating significance before it reaches him naturally. In Septimus' search for meaning he believes he finds meaning in absolutely everything. He does not feel as much as he thinks he feels. This manufactured meaning reveals itself as Septimus believes "at every moment, Nature signified by some laughing hint like that gold spot which went round the wall—there, there, there… her meaning" and he cannot find anything around him

remotely arbitrary (Woolf, 154). There is immediately a hint at excess, this is *every* moment, and a gold spot on the wall (a trick of the light, perhaps) is just subtle and small enough to display to the reader that it is rather the desire for meaning than meaning itself that inspires Septimus to jump to this gold dot.

Septimus waits in anticipation for the next jolt, the next excitement: "always to be starting, laughing. Sitting hour after hour silent, or clutching her and telling her to write" and he is anticipating the next sound when he is "listening with his hand up" and yet Rezia, his wife, "But she heard nothing." The stimulus is, on some large part, due to Septimus' desire for it to exist. Such is the experience of rashly throwing oneself into affect. He attempts to identify what is beyond his reach, "he knew everything. He knew the meaning of the world, he said" and he believes he understands spheres far beyond his level of understanding (Woolf, 74). To know "everything" is essentially the same as saying one has reached infinity and has nowhere left to grow. In the world Woolf has sculpted, to reach an infinite level of understanding would be counter-intuitive; there is no end to be reached, and there will always be an outer edge; there will always be a circumference. Septimus, denying the existence of this circumference eventually contradicts himself and finds himself lost. What is supposed to be significant is only imagined so, for this "meaning" never manifests itself in clear words. Rather, it only comes out in indiscernible scribbles. Septimus never communicates these revelations successfully because he cannot grasp them. They are too large, too ambitious.

Septimus is not invested in his immediate surroundings, but only in what is existential and his desired affectual location matches the location of his thoughts. Rezia is far away because she is insignificant to Septimus, he feels nothing because he is separating himself from the smaller scale of immediate surroundings, "She cried for the first time since they were married.

Far away he heard her sobbing; he heard it accurately, he noticed it distinctly… but he felt nothing" (Woolf, 100). She is far away and yet he still hears her "accurately" suggesting she is not far away in all senses of the word. Septimus is attempting to detach himself from the ordinary world of affectual response, yet this world does not completely escape him. Septimus runs away from the significance of his immediate surroundings in the hopes that he may contemplate higher, more desirable concepts. Yet in this evasion lies a denial of his limitations. Septimus is still affectually trapped in a smaller world. He still hears his wife, "distinctly," yet he is determined to force his attention elsewhere, as revealed in his frustrated outburst, "interrupted again! She was always interrupting," where he is exacerbated at being brought down to a smaller plane of thinking by unavoidable stimulation (Woolf, 29). He would prefer to contemplate "the world" and "human nature" and "man" rather than the world in front of him that Rezia tries to bring forth by the reprise of her attempt to redirect his focus with the command, "look" (Woolf, 29). Septimus suffers from holding what is significant that which he has not the capacity to understand. Woolf uses Septimus' experience to demonstrate that just as the "whole" truth is absent without affect accompanying logic, so too is this wholeness incomplete when the mind is unable to interpret what the body is receiving.

It is when Septimus miscomprehends his own abilities of perception that the dilemma of delusion begins. He simply imagines a world that does not exist relative to his position, and so he is not picking and choosing among the proper slice, the proper scale of infinity that he should be choosing amongst given his limitations. The proper method would be to follow his affectual development over time rather than to force or hinder it. Woolf seems to be pointing out that one does have some control on how they allow themselves to be affected, judging by Peter's understanding on the matter.

Peter acknowledges his limitations, and therefore understands the location of his circumference. This acknowledgement comes from a unique awareness of his own affect and logic. In his own mind, Peter muses on the fact that one only has a portion of the understanding, not the "full flavor" of a truth until one "[turns] it round, slowly, in the light" (Woolf, 88). A shocking parallel to "Moments of Being" we see Peter acknowledging here how it might indeed take *years* to navigate through the "interpretation" stage. That understanding a feeling logically is no simple task, as Septimus is pretending as he claims an interpretation for various revelations only seconds after he has received a shock.

It appears as though Peter is of the sort where feeling has always been a natural intelligence, his "capacity" is large, so to speak, but his mind needs some maturation in order to catch up with his sensory capacity. He has an awareness of this quality, musing that to produce complete identification of certain truths: "The compensation of growing old… was simply this; that the passions remained as strong as ever, but one has gained—at last!—the power which adds supreme flavor to existence—the power of taking hold of experience, of turning it round, slowly, in the light" (Woolf, 88). This passage suggests Peter's natural tendency to feel significance for higher truths and also the understanding that one has not the mental capacity yet to understand the "full flavor." Affect, experience, is what he *has* to hold in the light. And this experience, while Peter does not acknowledge this yet, does grow with time as well.

Peter eventually finds that his emotions do indeed grow over time along with his mind, a discovery that Sally helps him find. Affect is not fixed over a lifetime either, as Woolf had made clear concerning logic in the previous passage. Peter and Sally reflect on the process of maturation with one another:

> Now that one was old… now that one was mature then, said Peter, one could watch, one could understand, and one did not lose the power of feeling, he said. No that is true, said

> Sally. She felt more deeply, more passionately, every year. It increased, he said, alas, perhaps, but one should be glad of it (Woolf, 212)

Maturity is linked with a growth in feeling. Growth in knowledge, and an expansion of one's sphere, is both a good thing, and also a thing that is directly correlated with a greater range of emotions. This evidence suggests Woolf's belief that epistemological location is determined by affect; that it is affect that makes these higher truths real and significant, accompanying the growing brain. This passage portrays a scene in which there is an allowance of emotion. Peter makes it a point to say this is a good thing, permitting himself to grow. Peter demonstrates that one may have some control over what they allow themselves to feel; it requires the proper locational choice.

5. The Fog

Beyond the reaches of affectual capacity, beyond the circumference, lies a vast and deep darkness. The unexplored world is the insignificant world, it is the world devoid of meaning. This reality only half exists, it exists in the mind, in theory, but in not in the body. Woolf paints the qualities of the fog:

> For you should see the Milan Gardens,' [Rezia] said aloud. But to Whom? There was nobody. Her words faded. So a rocket fades. Its sparks, having grazed their way into the night, surrender to it, dark descends, pours over the outlines of houses and towers; bleak hill-sides soften and fall in. But though they are gone, the night is full of them; robbed of color, blank of windows, they exist more ponderously, give out what frank daylight fails to transmit— the trouble and suspense of things conglomerated there in the darkness; huddled together in the darkness; reft of the relief which dawn brings when… all is once more decked out to the eye; exists again. (Woolf, 27-28)

The existing world does not exist to the individual who sees it not. However it is not non-existent either. The unseen world is the world that exists outside of significance. The loss of significance is reinforced by the quote following this passage: "as perhaps at midnight, when all the

boundaries are lost, the country reverts to its ancient shape… and the hills had no names" (Woolf, 28). The "ancient shape" is the land that existed before there were humans to lay eyes upon it, to receive it. "Midnight" is the setting for this insignificance of ancient forms, and lack of light is directly linked to the absence of human beings. Insignificance dwells in the night to the same extent as it does in ages long past, meaning objects that exist contemporaneously with human beings may be equally as insignificant as pre-historic objects if they are not actively being perceived. Sight is one of the most foundational methods of receiving a reality. Following the implications of this passage, the real world exists all night, but it does not *exist* until it is actively being seen again.

Conclusion: The Madness of an Age

It appears as though Woolf has come to an explanation regarding the profound egotism of her time. This egotism exists on the *other side* of madness, the madness that is not obviously mad, but yet that is just as mad. This madness appears to afflict a greater number of individuals in Woolf's novel, possibly due to the fact that it is disguised, wearing the mask of intelligence rather than that of lunacy. To wear the mask of lunacy, as the classical madman does, would be more honest. Lunacy is at least in the same family as madness. Like the Venus flytrap, popularized madness is both deceitful and seductive, perhaps making it more dangerous and more sinister than its counter-part. It is also, in the context of Woolf's epistemology, the more inaccurate of the two regarding clarity of reason.

Affect, the location of an individual in the objective world (and the emergence of significance according to this location) is at least theoretically half of the process of understanding. The object, while not thoroughly interpreted, has in it some opacity; it is foggy still, but an image of the true thing is at the very least discernable, granted it is not yet ready to be "turn[ed] round, slowly, in the light." However in the case of the human being who has no foothold, but rather attempts to claim knowledge on an object that has not been experienced is no different than the man who describes with utmost confidence, certainty, and arrogance some unknown shore having never left his own. So too, does this man stand in his affectual location, within some circumference, claiming to understand and audaciously identifying what lies beyond the borders of his sphere of experience. No character reflects the flawed ideology of rationalism better than Sir William Bradshaw. While Dr. Holmes is a close second. It appears as though the most blatant manifestation of this arrogance in *Mrs. Dalloway* lies in the medical profession,

perhaps due to the opportunity for a dramatic clash of this madness with its counter-part (represented by Septimus) or due to exposure here of an inherent sexism within the treatment of women.[11]

A subtle irony exists within this epistemology. As the result of ideological domination juxtaposing inherent sexism in post-Victorian London, it was designated manly to use logic and womanly to use affect. It seems to be the case that men were supposed to only have logic and rationalism present in their composed facets, and women were thought to only be capable of affect. This propensity towards affectual characteristics was supposedly a sign of the woman's inherent weakness, and thus inferiority to men.

In fact, it would not be a stretch to add that women were often seen (especially by the medical profession) as *dominated* by their bodies, "they were believed to be completely governed by their ovaries and uteruses" and "the basic idea, in the nineteenth century, was that female psychology functioned merely as an extension of female reproductivity, and that women's nature was determined solely by her reproductive functions." (Ehrenreich and English, 30-31). It stands to reason that, due to the combination of sexism and a need for categorization and distinction regarding the facets of each sex (it almost seems as though men and women were considered only capable of containing a select few if any characteristics that were remotely similar) all that was considered positive was attributed to masculinity and all that was considered negative to femininity. And so madness was also attributed to women, the passions being understood as a womanly trait.

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[11] Hugh and Richard both send for doctors to treat their ill wives, at one point Richard reminds Clarissa, "'An hour's complete rest after luncheon'… because a doctor had ordered it once" (Woolf, 132).

The irony rests within Woolf's painting of epistemology. This picture hoists affect above logic, depicting sensation as the more valuable asset regarding discovery and understanding. In turn, that "animalism" attributed to women is now a thing to praise, it is the "power of feeling," and not only is post-Victorian society in *Mrs. Dalloway* wrong in restricting the female gender to bodily attributions, but they also judge the value of these attributions incorrectly. The affectual qualities that are categorized as "feminine" are more foundational for knowledge acquisition, beginning the entire process, and therefore more valuable than the socially celebrated "masculine" facets of Woolf's time.

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