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TRANSFORMATION OF REALISM: NARRATOR'S FUNCTION AND THE  
BLENDING OF DIALOGUE AND STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS  
IN TO THE LIGHTHOUSE AND BETWEEN THE ACTS

by

Alyssa M. McCluskey

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for a Degree with Honors  
(English)

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## ABSTRACT

This Honors thesis analyzes two narrative works by Virginia Woolf: her seventh novel, *To the Lighthouse*, and her final novel, *Between the Acts*. My analysis consists of two major components: I look at Woolf's post-impressionist poetics and I examine, by way of a critical approach based on narrative theory, the construction of these poetics. Throughout, my interest is that of showing the transformation of classic realist representation of reality in these two novels. This transformation, I argue, is very subtly constructed through the narrator's function, and the blending of dialogue and stream of consciousness.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first and foremost like to thank God for his strength and guidance through this process. Next I would like to thank my advisor, Carla Billitteri, for pushing me to put forth my best work and for helping me to hone my thesis into a work that I am proud of. I would also like to thank my family and Calvin for their support throughout these last few months. I owe each and every one of you a great deal, and I am so grateful to have you all in my life.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Between the Acts</i> (Virginia Woolf)	_____	BTA
<i>Letters of Roger Fry</i> (Roger Fry)	_____	LRF
<i>Moments of Being</i> (Virginia Woolf)	_____	MOB
“Post Impressionism” (Roger Fry)	_____	PI
<i>Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory</i>	_____	ROUTLEDGE
<i>To the Lighthouse</i> (Virginia Woolf)	_____	TTL
<i>The Diaries of Virginia Woolf</i> (ed. Anne Olivier Bell)	_____	TDVW
<i>The Singing of the Real World</i> (Mark Hussey)	_____	TSOTRW
<i>Virginia Woolf A-Z</i> (Mark Hussey)	_____	VW A-Z

## INTRODUCTION

When I began to seriously think about writing my Honors thesis, my initial idea was to write about something that concentrated on Virginia Woolf's novels. *Mrs. Dalloway* was, by far, my favorite text in the Honors sequence, and it was my first introduction to the stream of consciousness form of writing. I loved that the Honors sequence included a narrative, especially after spending a semester reading the works of John Locke, Sir Francis Bacon, and Karl Marx. A narrative was refreshing, and as an English major, I truly enjoyed reading this work. I was therefore interested in discovering more about Woolf as a writer. However, I began having doubts during the summer before my senior year. I became caught up in a desire to write a creative work of my own that I could present as my Honors thesis. After reading Elizabeth Strout's *Olive Kitteridge* in Deborah Rogers' "American Short Fiction" course during the spring semester of my third year at the University of Maine, I felt inspired to write a book of short stories. Like Strout, I hoped to create a character that would connect all of my stories together. Her main character, Olive, appears in all of Strout's stories and I found this strategy interesting. However, I eventually discovered that I knew very little about creative writing. Though I took Margery Irvine's "Creative Non-fiction" course at the same time that I began trying to write my thesis, I still struggled with creating a narrative flow.

The first story I wrote was taken from an experience that my mother had when she was pregnant with my younger brother. I had submitted a similar non-fiction story as a writing project in the Creative Non-fiction course, but wanted to elaborate on the experience and create a similar story from a fictional perspective. I therefore gave the

characters different names and tried to add in aspects of the story that I did not know. I attempted to create a peripheral character, a woman who meets the character that represented my mother in the doctor's waiting room, but I came to realize that this character was unconvincing. I also found it difficult to create dialogue for this character, as well as dialogue that my mother's character could use in her response. Similarly, my attempt at the narrative rhythm left me dissatisfied with the story. I did not think that it flowed in a way that would incite readers to enjoy it. In order to pursue an attempt at creative writing, I needed to learn more about the aspects of writing in the short story genre.

I therefore decided that trying to write a book of short stories for the first time was not suitable for an Honors thesis; I gave in to the fact that my abilities as an analytical writer were stronger than my abilities as a creative writer, and went back to my initial idea of researching Virginia Woolf and writing about her novels. In discussing this topic with my thesis advisor, Carla Billitteri, I decided to focus on dialogue and stream of consciousness in two of Woolf's novels: *To the Lighthouse* and *Between the Acts*. I planned to work with *The Waves* as well, which is a novel driven by the soliloquies of the characters. I eventually decided to focus on two novels instead of three for the sake of my thesis' focus. At the very beginning of this new project, my goal was to examine the ways the blending of dialogue and stream of consciousness led Woolf to establish her own unique writing style. This initial idea evolved as I conducted research and began writing. It eventually developed into a more complex research project that consisted of not only analyzing Woolf's writing style, but also discussing Woolf's views on realism, or post-impressionism as her poetics ought to be defined (and I will use this key

definition throughout my work). Thus, by expanding my project, I came back to my root interest in realism, that is to say, the presentation of reality in fiction. However, my awareness of the possibilities of realism as a literary mode had by now evolved for it had been enriched by my close reading of Virginia Woolf's work and her very precise departure from traditional modalities of realist narrative. Looking back, I realized I've come to full circle, although I had also modified the circle, because my first attempt at short story writing was influenced by Strout, who is herself a classical realist. Since my earlier desire was to write in the mode of Strout's realist dialogue, my research work on Woolf has enlarged my knowledge in the varieties of realism in twentieth-century fiction and enhanced my understanding of both the novel as a genre and realism as a mode.

In writing this thesis, I have called upon the classic scholarship of Erich Auerbach, Mark Hussey, Gillian Beer, and Rachel Blau DuPlessis. These are the most prominent Woolf scholars to date. Auerbach's work, *Mimesis*, is one of the earliest works to examine *To the Lighthouse*. It closely analyzes the narrator's function and the concept of time in the chapter "The Brown Stocking." He specifically looks at the scene where Mrs. Ramsay is measuring a stocking against her son, James. Hussey offers insight into Woolf's concept of realism in his work *The Singing of the Real World*. According to Hussey, Woolf's understanding of reality was multi-faceted and as a consequence, her approach to the mode of realism was not traditional but innovative. In other words, in her novels she strove to represent an existing reality not immediately apparent or consciously understood. In her text entitled *Virginia Woolf: The Common Ground*, Beer looks closely at a number of Woolf's works, offering insight into Woolf thinking and her view on modes of representation. She focuses on the definition of

Woolf's poetics in *To the Lighthouse*, specifically analyzing Woolf's definition of this novel as a form of elegy, rather than a novel. "In elegy there is a repetition of mourning and an allaying of mourning. Elegy lets go of the past, formally transferring it into language, laying ghosts by confining them to a text and giving them its freedom" (Beer 31). Beer goes on to note that Woolf's novels "brood on death, and death, indeed, is essential to their organization as well as their meaning" (31). The loss of Woolf's mother Julia, her sister Stella, and her brother Thoby led to her preoccupation with death, and it resonates in her works. Such an attempt was helpful in identifying where further influence of Woolf's view can be found in *To the Lighthouse*. DuPlessis, in *Writing beyond the Ending*, offers a fantastic explanation of Woolf's strategy in creating a group consciousness, or a "group protagonist" as she refers to this concept. This is specific to *Between the Acts*, in which Woolf experiments with a collective group of individuals and the consciousness created by all of them together. DuPlessis' work also focuses on modernist women writers and looks into the ways women writers began to steer toward this concept of a group protagonist; the social changes that began to arise at this point, for example, might explain why the protagonist takes this form. Finally, I researched Woolf's poetics from the standpoint of the cultural and intellectual influences surrounding her writing. Jonathan R. Quick's article "Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry and Post-Impressionism" was particularly useful in this context. Quick offers an explanation of how Woolf was influenced by the post-impressionist aesthetics that gained prominence by way of the art critic Roger Fry who first coined the term "post-impressionism" in his review of the exhibition of modern French art in 1910. These scholars offer insight into

Woolf's writing that are beneficial for a further understanding of her poetics, as well as her understanding of the representation of reality in fiction.

I also took a close look at narrative theory for the benefit of understanding Woolf's style as a writer. My main fields of interest included the narrator's function, dialogue, and stream of consciousness. I have studied a number of different texts such as the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, in which I found key definitions and explanations of the terminology and the conceptual apparatus I use throughout my work. Roger Fowler's work *Linguistic Criticism* and Robbert-Jan Beun and Roger M. van Eijk's article "Dialogue Coherence: A Generation Framework" were helpful in explaining dialogue in narratives and through speech acts. Both works are beneficial in understanding dialogue in order to fully understand the strategies Woolf uses in her novels. Similarly, I came to understand the stream of consciousness in the novel through works like Robert Humphrey's *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel* and Evander Bradley McGilvary's article "The Stream of Consciousness." Since this is a work that examines these various aspects of narrative theory, I felt that it was of the utmost importance to gather a basic understanding of these modes in order to better understand Woolf's poetics.

My main interest in narrative theory, as the title of my thesis indicates, was the blending of dialogue and stream of consciousness. I therefore began researching these two terms and looking at the ways in which Woolf uses these two aspects of narrative discourse. I closely examined the blending of dialogue and stream of consciousness in each novel. Through this close analysis, I discovered a transformation of Woolf's writing style regarding this blending; while *To the Lighthouse* showed less blending of dialogue

and stream of consciousness due to the greater amount of stream of consciousness that takes place, *Between the Acts* incorporated more of this blending by granting the characters more opportunities to explain their own thoughts through dialogue; this creates a more modern writing style that Woolf works with for her final novel. One sees a poetic dialogue, for example, through Isa Giles Oliver's character that would have been equally affective through the use of the stream of consciousness. However, I also noticed that it was the narrator's intervention that allowed her the opportunity to convey her own thoughts in this poetic style, rather than taking it upon itself to convey these thoughts to readers. In fact, the stream of consciousness in *Between the Acts* is best described as a "group consciousness," in which the characters' consciousnesses, as well as the narrator's consciousness, are considered one. Rather than focusing on each consciousness individually as she does in *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf uses a collaborative consciousness throughout *Between the Acts*. From the start, this was Woolf's plan in developing her final novel. Her diary entry on April 26th, 1938 says, "'We' . . . composed of many different things . . . we all life, all art, all waifs & strays—a rambling capricious but somehow unified whole—the present state of mind?" (135; vol. 5). Woolf's intention for this novel was to use the group consciousness to represent the entire body of characters. As I discuss in my third chapter, Virginia Woolf elaborated on this initial plan. This is the way she envisioned the singularity of narrative discourse in *Between the Acts*.

The more I worked on questions of narrative discourse, the more it became apparent that I needed to pay close attention to the narrator's function. This was particularly important when working on *To the Lighthouse*, where the narrator can be studied in its varying degrees of proximity to the characters. At times, when reading this

novel, it seems that the narrator is close enough to the characters so as to be able to understand their innermost thoughts and consciousnesses (this, in other terms, is manifested by Virginia Woolf's use of free indirect discourse). Yet at other times, the narrator simply observes the characters as if it was an invisible, spirit-like character. This invisible presence of the narrator, almost like a character of its own, developed my research and allowed me to focus on yet another aspect of narrative theory in addition to dialogue and the stream of consciousness. I also found that the narrator played the role of a similar presence in *Between the Acts*. The narrator is present both as an entity intimately connected to the characters and as an invisible character in its own right. Here I found that the narrator is far more complex and developed as a function/presence than in *To the Lighthouse*. This difference between the two novels I studied, is related to the fact that there is more blending of dialogue and stream of consciousness in *Between the Acts* than in *To the Lighthouse*. Similarly, there is more frequent use of dialogue in *Between the Acts* than in *To the Lighthouse*. All of this accounts for the different manifestation of the narrator in Woolf's last novel.

In the course of my analysis of narrative discourse, I also used the terms, "mind time" and "speaking time" to refer to Woolf's use of stream of consciousness (mind time) and use of dialogue (speaking time). My terminology echoes Erich Auerbach's analysis of Virginia Woolf's presentation of the "inner processes" of the character's minds. I want to emphasize with my use of "mind time," the amount of time that is taken by the exploration and presentation of the characters' "inner processes." Auerbach also uses the phrase "external occurrences" regarding Virginia Woolf's use of dialogue. By using "speaking time," I want to place a special emphasis on the amount of time that is taken by

the appearance of live speech in the form of dialogue. It is in these moments that the characters are given opportunities to communicate their own thoughts to other characters as well as to readers. I should, however, note that Auerbach includes in “external occurrences” the concept of “object time,” which Renée Watkins mentions in her work “Survival in Discontinuity: Virginia Woolf’s ‘*Between the Acts*.’” Object time, according to Watkins, refers to moments that occur outside of the mind. In other words, actions that take place in the physical world.

Much of my research was dedicated to Woolf’s own writing. Along with *To the Lighthouse* and *Between the Acts*, I read her book of essays, *Moments of Being* and a number of her entries in *The Diaries of Virginia Woolf*, volumes three and five. I found it important to read these other works by Woolf in order to further my knowledge about Virginia Woolf as a person, not simply as a writer. Through her diaries, I learned about the events that inspired her to write her novels and what her influences were. *To the Lighthouse*, for example, was strongly influenced by the summers she and her family spent at St. Ives, just off the Scottish coast. She also indicates how she went about developing her characters, who were based on her own mother and father. *Moments of Being* played a significant role in my understanding of Woolf’s concept of reality. Of all this text, the most important to me was “A Sketch of the Past.” Reading Woolf’s writing convinced me that it is, perhaps, not precise to talk about realism when it comes to her poetics. The term that more accurately describes her attention to the possibilities of representing “reality” in fiction is post-impressionism. As I have already mentioned and will discuss more in depth in my next chapter, post-impressionism was a term first used by the art critic Roger Fry to discuss a new school in painting; however, the aesthetic

qualities that Fry saw in post-impressionist painting can also be attributed to Woolf's writing.

My work consists of three chapters. The first chapter, "Major Terms and Concepts," is dedicated to explaining the concepts and the main terminology that I use throughout this work. The second chapter, "The Spirit-Like Narrator in *To the Lighthouse*," looks closely at *To the Lighthouse*. In this chapter, I give an overview of the novel so that readers can become familiar with the specific details of Woolf's narrative (events, characters, setting, plot lines). I will then look deeper into the work to find evidence of Woolf's post-impressionist poetics and examine in particular Woolf's use of a narrator that is able to both observe the story from the outside and, at the same time, know the characters' inner thoughts. Finally, I explain the uses of dialogue and stream of consciousness and how they complement each other and create a writing style unique to Virginia Woolf. This is similar to the third chapter, "Experimentations with 'We' in *Between the Acts*." In my third chapter I give an overview of the novel and analyze it as a form of post-impressionism. However, I also point out the qualities of *Between the Acts* that distinguish it from Woolf's earlier writing in *To the Lighthouse*. I examine Woolf's use of a particular construction of the stream of consciousness as (the group consciousness) and how she came to experiment with this innovative narrative strategy.

Working on this thesis has been a long, arduous journey. There were many challenges that I encountered with my research and my composition, but there were also moments when I found myself very satisfied with my work and when I realized that this was a huge undertaking that I should be proud of. Whenever I found the perfect passage

in Virginia Woolf's diary that supported my argument, I was elated. Whenever I found a great article that helped me understand one of the key terms that I was studying, I felt ecstatic. And when I completed a chapter after staying up until three o'clock in the morning, I felt that I had made a huge accomplishment. Overall, I look back on this work with the satisfaction that I put a great amount of time and effort into the biggest project that I have ever done, knowing that this work has allowed me to further my knowledge about poetics, analytical writing, and Virginia Woolf.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Major Terms and Concepts

This chapter discusses the terms that I will use throughout my analysis of Virginia Woolf's novels. I will introduce scholarship that will be used to support my claims in each chapter that specifically focus on *To the Lighthouse* and *Between the Acts*. I will also offer scholarship that helped further my understanding of narrative modes and strategies used throughout the two novels: realism, post-impressionism, the narrator's function, dialogue, and stream of consciousness are the key phrases that are essential to my work. Woolf manipulates these narrative strategies in both *To the Lighthouse* and *Between the Acts*, thus creating her unique approach to fictional discourse. In the course of my discussion, I will use the terms "mind time," "speaking time," and "object time" to describe Woolf's writing style. These will also be explained in this chapter. These terms are essential in understanding Woolf's poetics of narrating and will be repeated frequently throughout my work.

Ruth Ronen offers this definition of realism: "Realism in narrative contexts refers to the capacity of narrative to portray people engaged in action-oriented situations" (ROUTLEDGE 486). With this definition in mind, Woolf's novels appear to belong to the dominant mode of realism. Indeed, her novels are about "real" people who live in a world very similar to the one she herself lived in. In reading Woolf's work, one is exposed to the upper- and middle-class world that Woolf herself hails from; one sees average people going about their daily lives and learns about these characters from an inside perspective. Through the narrative strategies in Woolf's work, one sees a

departure from this traditional mode of realism. The characters in her novels act as they normally would in everyday life, but the way the narrator expresses their inner perspectives on the world is a concept that is unique to Woolf's aesthetics. She shows her characters' vivid thoughts and imaginations with such poetry that she should not be considered a realist, but post-impressionist.

Post-impressionism is a term that was first used to describe a new mode in painting. The phrase was coined by Roger Fry, an English art critic, in 1910. Fry used this phrase in a title of his exhibition of modern French art that included the works of Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, and Paul Cézanne as the three principal artists (Bowness 11). Since then, the definition of this term has widened; it "has gained general acceptance as a useful description of the phase in French painting which occurred between 1880 and 1906 and of this phase's immediate impact on the art of other countries" (11). In a letter to Woolf's sister, Vanessa Bell, Fry says, "I had never really studied that before, at least not with enlightened eyes, and find that what I thought before were weaknesses of early incapacity are really the results of a sensitivity one had never understood" (LRF 408). The "enlightened eyes" here refers to Fry's concept of aesthetic expression prior to his study and development of post-impressionism. When he initially attempted to clarify his term to an audience of doubters, Fry stated that post-impressionism helped the audience "to discover the visual language of the imagination. To discover, that is, what arrangements of form and colour are calculated to stir the imagination most deeply through the stimulus given to the sense of sight" (PI 857). With regard to literature, this stimulus takes the form of imaginary, "fantastic", dream-like, and therefore non-realist material that emerges from within the mode of realist narration.

This inclusion of non-realist material changes the realist novel, placing it in another category; that of post-impressionist fiction. As it was with the paintings Fry discussed, so is it too with the novels of Virginia Woolf. They “stir the imagination” of the reader—but most importantly, they give expression to the imagination and the fantasies of the characters, and seamlessly intertwine direct realistic observations with the characters’ flights of the imagination.

Post-impressionism had a major impact on Virginia Woolf as a writer. She greatly admired her sister, Vanessa Bell, who was a fairly famous post-impressionist painter. Through Bell, Woolf became acquainted with Fry, and the two eventually developed a friendship. As Jonathan R. Quick discusses “Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry and Post-Impressionism,” the friendship that developed between Fry and Woolf had a rocky start due to a romance between Fry and Bell. After the romance simmered out, Fry and Woolf strengthened their friendship. Quick explains how Woolf’s friendship with Fry came to influence her writing; when Woolf wrote her work *Monday or Tuesday*, a compilation of stories and essays, “Fry found much to praise in the new direction taken by these short pieces and frequently employed his skills as impresario in their behalf” (556). Fry was not only a friend to Woolf, but was also an individual who offered a reservoir of knowledge regarding aesthetics that shaped Woolf’s poetics. According to Quick, what Fry found in Woolf’s short pieces was an indication that Woolf had begun to use the new aesthetic sensibility that Fry himself was trying to promote in his writing on contemporary post-impressionist painting. Fry, therefore, was the first person to identify Virginia Woolf’s writing style as post-impressionist.

Post-impressionism manifests itself in Woolf's writing in her merging of realist and non-realist views, meant to achieve a more complex, if somewhat strange vision of reality. Woolf actualized the core characteristic of post-impressionism, defined by Fry as a movement toward a "purposeful distortion" of reality. Writing in 1917, Fry noted that "when one begins to study the forms in detail, one finds just the same kind of purposeful distortion and pulling of planes that you get in Greco or Cézanne and the same kind of sequence in the contours" (LRF 408). Vivid descriptions of scenery and in-depth analyses of various states of consciousness contribute to post-impressionist style. We will see these aspects throughout Woolf's two novels in the following chapters. The point of view of post-impressionism, therefore, seems to have greatly influenced Woolf's poetics and determined her writing style.

A familiar literary device to readers of fiction is the narrator. According to James Phelan and Wayne C. Booth, "The narrator is the agent or, in less anthropomorphic terms, the agency or 'instance' that tells or transmits everything . . . in a narrative to a narratee" (ROUTLEDGE 388). Insofar as the narrator is an "agent," I will use the pronoun "it" whenever I refer to the narrator in this thesis. The narrator tells the story to the reader. This is the basic understanding of the narrator's role. Phelan and Booth clarify the role of the narrator in a narrative is much more complicated than this. They write:

The narrator's centrality to narrative is reflected in the concept's important position in the standard communication model of narrative . . . which posits that the transmission of narrative begins with a real author who creates an implied author who constructs a narrator who addresses a

narratee; the implied author, through this construction and address, communicates with an implied reader; and the real author, through all of that, communicates with a real reader. (ROUTLEDGE 388)

It is a common assumption that the author acts as the narrator of his or her own narrative. This, however, is not so. Instead, the narrator is constructed by the author and tells the story from the perspective that the author created. In a way, the narrator is very much like a character within the narrative, though it is privy to certain information that the author decides it should know. The author develops a construct that has a personality and characteristics distinctive unto itself, setting the narrator on a different level than the characters in the novels. The implied author and implied reader referred to in this entry do not have a direct presence in my analysis; my primary point of reference in discussing Woolf's narrative strategies is the function of the narrator because in Woolf's novels the narrator and the narrator's point of view play a very significant role. As Erich Auerbach notes in his work *Mimesis*, the perspective and function of the narrator in Virginia Woolf's work is unique in that it maintains a "spirit-like" quality. I will explore this quality of the narrator more fully in the next chapter.

Throughout Woolf's work, the blending of dialogue and stream of consciousness is the most important means of manifestation of her post-impressionist aesthetics. When taken separately, however, stream of consciousness appears more frequently (or is more frequently used) than dialogue. I believe this is the direct consequence of Woolf's lack of interest in a straightforward or traditional realist mode of narration. Throughout her novels, dialogue is a mode that she uses in varying degrees. Dialogue, Bronwen Thomas explains, generally conveys a direct (and "realistic") representation of characters' speech

and personality, whenever some form of interaction or exchange of views is needed to further the narrative line of the story. “Dialogue fulfills the important narrative functions of characterisation and advancing the plot” (ROUTLEDGE 105). Thomas also points out that “notions of what constitutes effective dialogue change over time, and that literary representations play a crucial role in defining prevailing ideas and ideals” (ROUTLEDGE 105). This may, perhaps, be a result of the constant changes in our forms of linguistic and cultural interaction. In his book *Linguistic Criticism*, Roger Fowler offers insight on aspects of linguistic structure, specifically concerning interaction. Here, one learns a great deal about dialogue and the way it functions in speech acts. Interaction between characters is particularly important in the study of dialogue in Woolf’s novels, and Fowler’s work is helpful in further understanding the linguistic structure of dialogue in which interaction occurs. Chapter eight of his work, entitled “Some Aspects of Dialogue,” focuses on the concept of dialogic structures, the structures through which fictional characters appear to interact and structures which determine the author’s or narrator’s relationships with his or her readers and his or her characters. Fowler discusses three conversational features in his discussion on dialogic structures: sequencing, speech acts, and implicature.

“Sequencing” refers to the ordering of contributions to conversations. The ways in which a section of dialogue is structured (who speaks first, for example) influences the way that the entire dialogue will occur. “Given A’s first remark, what possibilities are open to B?” is one example that Fowler gives us (102). A small interchange can use structure to determine what happens, how much is said, and who says it. Fowler presents a real personal phone conversation as an example of dialogue. In this conversation, the

participant on the other side of the telephone often restricts Fowler to yes/no questions, limiting his ability to create a reply that has substance. Fowler also notes that the efficiency of a conversation is the result of an unconscious plan; abstract blueprints of the conversation, like that of the phone conversation, are known unconsciously (103). With phone calls, there is usually a general procedure in conducting the conversation. The sequencing of a conversation between Lily Briscoe and William Bankes in *To the Lighthouse* shows how a topic broached by one character leads to a discussion:

Had Miss Briscoe never been to Rome? Oh, she should—It would be a wonderful experience for her—the Sistine Chapel; Michael Angelo; and Padua, with its Giotto's . . . She had been to Brussels; she had been to Paris, but only for a flying visit to see an aunt who was ill. (TTL 74)

Lily's response to Mr. Bankes' question is not given; it is assumed by the reader through "Oh, she should" that Lily had never been to Rome. Mr. Bankes' descriptions of Rome leads to a general discussion of travels, in which Lily explains that she has visited both Brussels and Paris. The sequencing that occurs here, beginning with Mr. Bankes' question directed toward Lily, set off the topics discussed in their conversation.

"Speech acts" refer to the "performative dimension" in language-use. Fowler explains that language has a pragmatic function, in which utterances are used to perform actions as well as to communicate verbally. This is a concept that is easiest to grasp in the use of performative verbs like "promise" and "order," since these verbs indicate a more descriptive action done by the speaker than simply saying a statement. One example of a speech act would be to say, "I order you to shut the door." Yet speech acts can be based on such an explicit performative phrase: "Shut the door," would also fit the

description (105). An example of an explicit performative phrase, though one that remains unclear to the receiver of the message, appears during the boat ride *To the Lighthouse*: “‘Come now,’ said Mr. Ramsay, suddenly shutting his book. Come where? To what extraordinary adventure? She woke with a start. To land somewhere, to climb somewhere? Where was he leading them?” (TTL 207). It is through Cam’s consciousness that this performative phrase is analyzed. The speech act indicates a descriptive action in the most basic form. However, the speech act is unsuccessful in relaying the message, since Cam remains unsure of Mr. Ramsay’s meaning by “come now.”

“Implicatures” may be defined as “what is said ‘between the lines’” (Fowler 106). A character in a novel can say one thing, but mean something completely different. A good example of an implicature would be a sarcastic or ironical statement, where the words indicate one thing, but the tone shows that the statement holds a different meaning. This may be seen when Lily asks Charles Tansley to take her *To the Lighthouse*:

She was telling lies he could see. She was saying what she did not mean to annoy him, for some reason. She was laughing at him. He was in his old flannel trousers. He had no others. He felt very rough and isolated and lonely. He knew that she was trying to tease him for some reason; she didn’t want to go *To the Lighthouse* with him; she despised him: so did Prue Ramsay, so did they all. (TTL 89)

Knowing the motives of the speaker and the addressee are important to understand the relationship between utterances and contexts. In regard to novels and short stories, Fowler makes the point that these texts mix dialogue with monologic narrative and

commentary on the part of the author or narrator. Though there may appear to be a major contrast between passages of dialogue and passages of prose, Fowler points out that narrative discourse also engages in another area of dialogic interactions: discourse between the narrator and characters, and discourse between the narrator and readers. This point is identifiable in Woolf's writing; where the narrator translates thoughts of the characters through the stream of consciousness style, the reader is able to interact with the narrator. The discourse between the narrator and characters is different, since there is never any direct discourse. Dialogue in Woolf's novels is generally employed for the benefit of the characters' interactions with one another. The use of dialogue is different in each novel, with a stronger emphasis on the blending of dialogue and the stream of consciousness in *Between the Acts* than in *To the Lighthouse*, which will be examined in the chapters to come.

While Fowler's work offers a theoretical understanding of dialogue, an analysis of discourse offered by Robbert-Jan Beun and Roger M. van Eijk in "Dialogue Coherence: A Generation Framework" provides more insight into the narrative device. Coherent representation in dialogue is critical for understanding discourse. This article explains a study performed in order to fully understand dialogue coherence in speech. It "presents a framework for the generation of coherent elementary conversational sequences at the speech act level" (365). Many people will often note a void between science and language, but Beun and van Eijk bridge this divide by analyzing the use of dialogue psychologically and interpreting the act of speech; they focus on a computer-simulated game called the "cooperative *dialogue game* in which two players produce speech acts to transfer relevant information with respect to their commitments" (365). The idea is that

the players will attain a balanced cognitive state through the creation of speech acts and their interpretations. The abstract of this analysis further says “Cognitive states of the participants change as a result of the interpretation of speech acts and these changes provoke the production of a subsequent speech act” (365). Beun and van Eijk go on to explain that the mental constructs of the individuals taking part in the speech act, such as their personal beliefs and commitments, are significant to the dialogue game.

Furthermore, they state “Informational coherence relations concern a ‘believed’ relation between the units that corresponds to an existing relation in the world described by the discourse (co-reference, spatio-temporal relations, causality, and the like)” (367). Mr. Ramsay, for example, elicits a strong negative reaction in his son, James, when he states his believed relation regarding James, Mrs. Ramsay, and their planned trip *To the Lighthouse* the following day.

Stream of consciousness is a style of writing that Woolf uses frequently throughout her novels. Of the two novels that I will discuss in my thesis, *To the Lighthouse* is one such novel that is well-known for being written in this style. It is through each characters’ mind that one develops an understanding of their personalities and who they are as individuals. In this way, the characters’ thoughts are presented to us. “Stream of consciousness” was first used by psychologist William James in Principles of Psychology in 1890 “. . . the techniques of thought and consciousness presentation in discourse . . .” (ROUTLEDGE 571). Since then, a wide variety of theoretical definitions for this technique have taken place, but the most general definition of this concept is “Many illustrative passages contain a dense mixture, often in equal proportions, of surface description of the physical story world and of all three modes of thought

presentation: thought report, free indirect thought, and direct thought” (ROUTLEDGE 571). Stream of consciousness should be distinguished from interior monologue. Palmer concedes that there are so many interchangeable definitions for the two concepts, but there is at least one common distinction:

Stream of consciousness describes the thought itself and/or the presentation of thought in the sort of third-person passage . . . and which is characteristic of Woolf and the early episodes in *Ulysses*. Interior monologue (or what Cohn terms the “autonomous monologue”) describes the long, continuous, first-person passages or whole texts that contain uninterrupted, unmediated free direct thought such as “Penelope” (Molly Bloom’s famous monologue in the last episode of *Ulysses*) or the first three sections of Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury* (1929).

(ROUTLEDGE 571)

To be clear, my thesis will not be looking at interior monologue because Woolf’s novels discussed in this work do not contain first-person accounts of their respective stories. Woolf works with the presentation of thoughts from the third person perspective, thus categorizing both novels as the stream of consciousness style.

In his work on stream of consciousness, Evander Bradley McGilvary discusses the psychological confusion for the reader created by different characters’ points-of-view. The text appears erratic due to the thoughts that quickly go through several characters’ minds. However, McGilvary makes the point that this confusion, because it jumps from one character to another, is not found within the narrative itself. It is not chaos, but endless complexity in the transitions that occur between thoughts. Thoughts, McGilvary

also discusses, have objects that are associated with them. Oftentimes, it is easy to confuse these thoughts with objects, though they are very different from one another. “The different parts of thought walk with different pace” (227). For example, when we say a phrase like “parts of thought” what we mean is “parts of thought’s objects” because one cannot break up the thought itself. “It is one ‘span of consciousness’ that bridges over the gap made by the disconnectedness of thoughts” (228). Consciousness, therefore, is one continuous and whole entity; however, there are things that contribute to this consciousness that may be separated from one another. Woolf’s work reflects this in some instances, particularly when the consciousness changes from one character to another.

Robert Humphrey, in his work *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel*, indicates there are four basic techniques in stream of consciousness writing: direct interior monologue, indirect interior monologue, omniscient description, and soliloquy. The forms seen in Virginia Woolf’s novels fall under the definition of soliloquy, because the narrator always assumes that there is a formal audience present throughout its narrative. Direct interior monologue and indirect interior monologue hold one major difference between them: while direct interior monologue refers to the inner workings of a character’s consciousness without interruption from the author, indirect interior monologue shows a certain amount of a writer’s authority within the work of fiction. Direct interior monologue is often indicated through the use of the first person. Indirect interior monologue is indicated through the use of the third person. Through the indirect interior monologue, an author refers to the characters and seems to understand what each is thinking.

Soliloquy, according to Humphrey, must be distinguished from interior monologue because “the purpose of it is to communicate emotions and ideas which are related to a plot and action; whereas the purpose of interior monologue is, first of all, to communicate psychic identity” (36). Though it is apparent that Woolf uses the stream of consciousness style to allow readers insight into the psyches of her characters, the stream of consciousness primarily indicates a writing style that focuses on the telling of the story itself. Though these four basic techniques are important, one form that Humphrey does not mention is one that is significant to *Between the Acts* and distinguishes its style from the rest of Woolf’s works and from many other authors’ works as well. The form that I refer to is that of the group consciousness, which represents the consciousnesses of all characters in the novel as a whole entity.

The terms “mind time” and “speaking time” are used throughout my work to further distinguish between dialogue and stream of consciousness. In *To the Lighthouse* and *Between the Acts*, the reader sees moments where the characters’ thoughts are conveyed through the narrator (mind time) and moments when the characters themselves speak their own thoughts (speaking time). “Mind time” is actually a term that Woolf herself uses in *Between the Acts*; the phrase is used by the narrator to explain a character’s slow mental response to an action done by another character. Other terms, introduced by Auerbach, are also used in reference to these moments of mind time and speaking time; “inner processes” is the phrase he uses in describing mind time in Woolf’s novel, while “external occurrences” are the instances of speaking time (Auerbach 467). External occurrences also refers to time in which action physically takes place, which is referred to as “object time.” In relation to mind time, Renée Watkins developed this

phrase in her work to explain the reality which occurs outside of the mind in Woolf's novels. Object time is thus related to mind time, but opposed to it.

All these terms will be frequently referred to throughout my work to analyze Woolf's writing style and to discuss the changes her style undergoes in the fourteen-year period between the composition of *To the Lighthouse* and the composition of *Between the Acts*. Again, I will look particularly at the qualities of the novels that demonstrate how Woolf transforms her understanding of the the limits of "realistic" representation and her attempts to arrive at a different kind of realism influenced by the post-impressionist movement.

## CHAPTER TWO

### The Spirit-Like Narrator in *To the Lighthouse*

*To the Lighthouse* is a novel about two days, set ten years apart from one another, in which the daily processes of life are described through the stream of consciousness style of writing. Virginia Woolf's novel follows the Ramsay family, Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay, and their children James, Andrew, Jasper, Roger, Prue, Rose, Nancy, and Cam, who visit their vacation home on the coast accompanied by a number of guests. The guests staying with the Ramsays include the aspiring artist, Lily Briscoe, the botanist William Bankes, the philosopher Charles Tansley, the poet Augustus Carmichael, the young friends Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle (who ultimately marry over the course of the novel), and the house-keeper Mrs. McNab. In the opening scenes of the novel, readers meet Mrs. Ramsay, the matriarch of the household who seems to care greatly for the well-being of everyone staying under her roof. Upon meeting Mrs. Ramsay, we also meet her son, James, as he cuts pictures out of magazines. Their plan to visit the Lighthouse the following day leaves James content until his father, Mr. Ramsay, interjects: "'But,' said his father, stopping in front of the drawing room window, 'it won't be fine'" (8). Mr. Ramsay is considered a tyrannical presence throughout this novel, his bluntness clashing with his wife's approach as a parent and with his children's emotions.

The trip *To the Lighthouse* becomes a topic that recurs throughout this first section of the novel. As a guest who admires Mr. Ramsay's intelligence greatly, Charles Tansley interjects by reaffirming Mr. Ramsay's statement, reminding James again that there would not be any traveling *To the Lighthouse*, leaving Mrs. Ramsay frustrated that he

would disappoint her son by reminding him. Similarly, Tansley makes a poor impression on Lily Briscoe. While she paints, she imagines Tansley standing over her shoulder, saying “Women can’t paint, women can’t write,” a comment he made earlier in the day (TTL 51). The perception people have of him is related to his difficulty in saying things that are agreeable. Often, the reader finds Tansley searching for the right things to say, only to make statements that irk other characters in the scene.

Bankes, the reader discovers, holds a secret admiration for Mrs. Ramsay that is apparent to Lily. “For [Bankes] to gaze as Lily saw him gazing at Mrs. Ramsay was a rapture, equivalent, Lily felt, to the loves of dozens of young men (and perhaps Mrs. Ramsay had never excited the loves of dozens of young men)” (TTL 50). Yet the reader also finds that Bankes admires Lily, perhaps out of his desire for a family. One finds Bankes occupied by thoughts of the Ramsays’ children: “For Cam grazed the easel by an inch; she would not stop for Mr. Bankes and Lily Briscoe; though Mr. Bankes, who would have liked a daughter of his own, held out his hand . . .” (57). Mrs. Ramsay is the quintessential mother in this novel, and Bankes’ admiration of her is primarily due to her maternal role.

Though the novel uses stream of consciousness to convey the personalities of the characters, one character in particular does not have his own thoughts conveyed to the reader. Augustus Carmichael does not speak throughout the novel, nor does the narrator go into his mind to learn his thoughts. Carmichael is a poet, and it is common knowledge for all staying at the Ramsays’ home that Carmichael takes opium, though Mrs. Ramsay empathizes with him and his unhappiness. “What was obvious to her was that the poor man was unhappy, came to them every year as an escape; and yet every year, she felt the

same thing; he did not trust her” (TTL 43-44). This distrust stems from Carmichael’s intolerable wife, leading him to shy away from all women. Carmichael’s character is seen from an observer’s perspective; his actions are described through the consciousnesses of either Mrs. Ramsay or Lily, or sometimes through the narrator’s point of view.

Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle are two other guests staying with the Ramsays. They are young, and it is clear throughout the novel that Mrs. Ramsay hopes the two will, one day, marry. As she reads a story to James, Mrs. Ramsay wonders, “Was she wrong in this, she asked herself, reviewing her conduct for the past week or two, and wondering if she had indeed put any pressure upon Minta, who was only twenty-four, to make up her mind” about Paul (TTL 63). Paul and Minta seem to be constant companions throughout the first section of this novel, and it is at the end of “The Window” that the reader learns of their engagement. The final section goes into more detail about this match, particularly after Paul and Minta have been married for a number of years.

At the end of this first day, the novel transitions into the evening, when all are asleep, though Carmichael remains awake, reading by candlelight. With this transition, we also see time passing through the years, starting from when the Ramsays are all asleep and through a ten year period. Within this ten years, the reader learns a number of things about the characters: Mrs. Ramsay passes away, leaving her husband distraught. Prue and Andrew Ramsay also pass during this time; Prue dies in childbirth, and Andrew in the war. Lily is still unmarried and focusing on her artwork. Carmichael is the same, though more aged. The passing time takes us to a day ten years into the future, when the Ramsays and their guests are back at the summer home.

After ten years James and Cam are much older, but the influence of their father's tyrannical personality still lingers, leaving both Ramsay children bitter toward their father, particularly when Mr. Ramsay announces that they will, finally, take the trip *To the Lighthouse*. James no longer wishes to go *To the Lighthouse*; this is primarily a result of his father's demand to do so. Without Mrs. Ramsay's consciousness to take precedence in the novel, Lily Briscoe's character is focused on more closely. Lily, like Mr. Ramsay, suffers from the loss of Mrs. Ramsay. As she works to finish her painting, the one she began ten years prior, Lily thinks of the many things she would like to tell Mrs. Ramsay, but ultimately cannot. Her sorrow and longing for Mrs. Ramsay becomes more apparent as the section goes on: "Mrs. Ramsay!" she said aloud, "Mrs. Ramsay!" The tears ran down her face" (183). Paul and Minta are still married, though their relationship is not a happy one.

They were "in love" no longer; no, he had taken up with another woman, a serious woman, with her hair in a plait and a case in her hand (Minta had described her gratefully, almost admiringly), who went to meetings and shared Paul's views (they had got more and more pronounced) about the taxation of land values and a capital levy (TTL 177).

Mrs. Ramsay's desire to see everyone married, and the pressure she put on Minta, ultimately led to an unhappy union between the two young people. As a result of many things happening in the ten years separating these two days with the Ramsays, we find many changes have occurred for the characters in *To the Lighthouse*.

The characters in Woolf's novel are complex, and it is noteworthy to discuss how she came to develop them. *To the Lighthouse* was a novel that Woolf was impatient to

begin writing. Inspired by her parents and the summer home the Stephens family vacationed at during her childhood, Woolf began writing her fifth novel in 1925. In fact, her diary entry written on the day that *Mrs. Dalloway* was published suggests that Woolf began thinking about *To the Lighthouse* well before the completion of *Mrs. Dalloway*: “I’m now all on the strain with desire to stop journalism & get on to *To the Lighthouse*. This is going to be fairly short: to have father’s character done complete in it; & mothers; & St Ives; & childhood; & all the usual things I try to put in—life, death &c” (TDVW 18; vol. 3). Woolf’s desire to begin her novel is evident, and it is clear that this idea was on her mind for a long time. However, one of her diary entries suggests that it was somewhat difficult to focus on her new novel after just finishing two books; she finished *The Common Reader*, a non-fiction work of essays in April, then *Mrs. Dalloway* in May. Woolf also seemed to find it difficult to balance her post-publication responsibilities with finding solitude to write her novel: “I cant settle in, contract, & shut myself off” (TDVW 29; vol. 3). Despite the struggle to find a balance between her social obligations and moments of solitude in order to write, Woolf spent two years writing *To the Lighthouse*, and it was published on May 5, 1927.

In *To the Lighthouse* Woolf develops the stream of consciousness narrative, offering readers a narrator who is privy to certain conscious and unconscious thoughts of the characters in the novel. Woolf also explores other forms of stylistic qualities to assist in the design of her work: there are many aspects of the narrative voice and the level of realism found throughout Woolf’s novel, and the blending of dialogue and stream of consciousness which this thesis discusses that are specifically important in this study of *To the Lighthouse*. The characters of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay were greatly influenced by

Woolf's parents, Leslie and Julia Stephen. As the wife of a demanding writer, Julia Stephen is likened to Mrs. Ramsay, who is similarly the wife of a demanding professor. One thought Woolf notes in her diary entry for July 30, 1925 regards Mr. Ramsay's character: "The thing is I vacillate between a single & intense character of father" (TDVW 37; vol. 3). Leslie Stephen was thought to be an individual who was often occupied with his work, much like Mr. Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse*. Similarly, Lily Briscoe's character reflects Woolf's sister, Vanessa Bell. Woolf's admiration for her sister's work as a painter was very great, and she therefore portrays Lily in a way that falls in line with Bell's personality. Using these models for her own work, Woolf develops a story that focuses on the psychological perspectives of each character, primarily using the stream of consciousness technique.

The novel is divided into three sections: "The Window," "Time Passes," and "The Lighthouse." "The Window" is, by far, the most extensive section and it focuses on one entire day at the Ramsays' summer home just off the Scottish coast. This section covers the various events that happen throughout the day: James' disappointment at learning that a trip *To the Lighthouse* will not be possible; Charles Tansley's desire to say the right thing in front of others; Mr. Ramsay's tyrannical and strange behavior; Lily Briscoe's attempt to paint Mrs. Ramsay and James as they stand by the window; Paul Rayley's and Minta Doyle's engagement to one another; William Bankes' silent admiration of Mrs. Ramsay.

The second section, "Time Passes" accounts for the ten years between the first and third sections; it allows "The Window" to come to a close, then explains the goings-on during this time period. It begins with nighttime overtaking the household,

transitioning into the ten years where the house remains empty while the Ramsays and their guests return to their permanent homes. In “Time Passes” Woolf uses a “spirit-like” narrator, a phrase I borrowed from Auerbach, to explore the dark rooms of the Ramsays’ home. During the time when the house is silent, beginning with the nighttime that comes on at the end of the day and transitioning smoothly into the length of time where the house remains unoccupied, this spirit-like narrator explores the empty rooms, making observations. The narrator’s presence then transitions slowly into the mind and consciousness of Mrs. McNab. From here, Mrs. McNab acts as the observer of the empty house as she cleans, noting the clothes that the Ramsays left behind and recalling memories of Mrs. Ramsay.

“Time Passes” is also where one becomes aware of Mr. Ramsay’s state of deep sorrow after losing his wife. This sorrow extends into the third section of the novel, where we find that the Ramsays have returned to their summer home and Mr. Ramsay feels compelled to sail *To the Lighthouse* after so many years. We become aware of the huge toll that Mrs. Ramsay’s death took on Lily Briscoe as well. Lily attempts to finish the painting that she started ten years earlier, trying desperately to hold onto the memory of Mrs. Ramsay.

This last section of the novel, “The Lighthouse,” relies primarily on the stream of consciousness narrative. For the most part of the section, we are deep in the minds of Lily, and then James. Much of the narrative events are channelled through them. For instance, we experience the trip *To the Lighthouse* by way of James’ stream of consciousness. James perceives the trip as another demand that his controlling father makes of him and his sister, Cam. James’ contempt for his father’s demanding and

seemingly uncaring nature is pervasive throughout the novel, but it becomes clear throughout the novel.

Dialogue is less important than stream of consciousness in this novel and one also finds that there is very little blending of dialogue and stream of consciousness in *To the Lighthouse*. We also see Woolf's unique perspective on realism. Indeed, the very fact that stream of consciousness is so predominant in this novel is that it creates a foundation for distorted realist storytelling. Through stream of consciousness, vivid descriptions of scenes appear more frequently, allowing readers to envision colorful scenes rather than the drab, daily lives depicted through dialogue. The characters' minds offer readers more detailed information than dialogue.

As Gillian Beer has pointed out in her work *Virginia Woolf: The Common Ground*, this text is a fascinating example of Woolf's belief in the permeability of subject and object, or in other words, person and environment. In her work, Beer writes about "the fictitiousness of the separation between object and subject" in *To the Lighthouse* and she notes that "The separation of the object and the subject, and the drawing of a line less erroneously, less 'fictitious,' than in previous attempts, defines the nature of elegy in this work" (30). The presence of death in this novel is such an example of this concept. Lily's calling out to Mrs. Ramsay in "The Lighthouse" shows the way Lily is physically separated from Mrs. Ramsay. However, the subject of Mrs. Ramsay is still one that can be broached, and may elicit an emotional response as a result.

Woolf herself remarks in her diaries that she may invent a new name to replace "novel" in describing *To the Lighthouse*: "But what? Elegy?" (TDVW 34; vol. 3) "Elegy" is a term one often hears regarding melancholy poetry, yet here Woolf is calling

*To the Lighthouse* an elegy rather than a novel. Again, the presence of death, particularly Mrs. Ramsay's death, brings a sadness to the text that might warrant "elegy" as an accurate description. Jane Goldman, in her work *The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf*, refers to Woolf's decision to place a female artist at the center of a modernist work of literature as ground-breaking. She also points out that Woolf places Lily, "in a, previously male-dominated, elegiac tradition" (169). An aspiring artist, Lily does not rely on the prospect of marriage to further herself in the world. Rather, she works to make a name for herself through her painting and rejects the convention of marriage. Lily's consciousness brings us a knowledgeable understanding of how she, as a character, develops throughout the novel. Here one finds Woolf working with a new form of writing that she develops in such a way that makes it very different from her contemporaries, and one that specifically gives one evidence of Lily Briscoe's world view. For example, the tree which Lily paints, according to Goldman, symbolizes "patronage—political and literary—and under its shade ('umbra'), pastoral figures have languished from Theocritus to the present" (170). Goldman further states that when Lily decides to place the tree closer to the middle of her pallet, the social and political struggles of women are unconsciously invoked and expressed through her painting. Thus one learns more about Lily's world view as a result of such symbolic actions that she takes. Though our society would not take this feminist tone in Woolf's work to be outside of the norm, it would have been considered a digression from realism at the time that she was writing, and is therefore an example of post-impressionism. We see her contemplate the issues that she previously felt very strongly about; for example, Lily admits to loving William Bankes in the final section of the novel, after she detests the

reader feels from her about the convention of marriage. It must be noted that it is all through the narrator that one learns all of these thoughts that Lily expresses in the course of this novel.

Erich Auerbach analyzes the fifth section of Part One in *To the Lighthouse* in his work *Mimesis*. In this section of the novel, the reader finds Mrs. Ramsay and James by a window at the Ramsays' summer home. Mrs. Ramsay is measuring a brown stocking against James; the stocking is for the Lighthouse-keeper's son, if they should make the trip out to the Lighthouse the following day. For this reason, Auerbach names his chapter "The Brown Stocking." While Mrs. Ramsay measures the stocking, her thoughts begin to wander. She thinks of her son James, the boy in front of her who fidgets restlessly while she tries to measure the stocking. Her thoughts are also occupied by the furniture in the room, wondering if it would be a good investment to buy better chairs when they will just sit there in the winter time. The narrative then moves from Mrs. Ramsay's thoughts to the thoughts of others. These "others" include the character William Bankes, but one also notices that there is a part of this section where it is unclear to whom the thoughts belong.

"Who is speaking?" This is a question that Auerbach seeks to answer in "The Brown Stocking." He specifically refers to the passage just after Mrs. Ramsay has measured the stocking and deemed it far too short.

Never did anybody look so sad. Bitter and black, half-way down, in the darkness, in the shaft which ran from the sunlight to the depths, perhaps a tear formed; a tear fell; the waters swayed this way and that, received it, and were at rest. Never did anybody look so sad. (TTL 32)

According to Auerbach, one might assume that the speaker is Virginia Woolf, since she, as author, wrote the paragraph. However, this is a concept that has since been analyzed and discussed to the point that other Woolf scholars have concluded that Woolf does not take on this persona in her own writing. As author, one expects Woolf to have a complete knowledge of each character. Woolf did, after all, create them. Yet the speaker in this paragraph does not indicate that it knows why Mrs. Ramsay looks sad. Instead, the individual speaking “acts the part of one who has only an impression of Mrs. Ramsay, who looks at her face and renders the impression received, but is doubtful of its proper interpretation” (Auerbach 469). If Woolf meant to be the speaker in this passage, one would expect her to have a greater knowledge of Mrs. Ramsay. Instead, Auerbach suggests that the speaker is not Woolf; in fact, the speaker does not even appear to have human qualities. Its qualities seem to fall closer to that of the spiritual. These spirits appear to know a person’s innermost thoughts, seeing into their souls and conveying information from characters’ inner consciousnesses to the reader. Yet they are also able to simply observe and wonder, just as they do in Part Two of the novel, “Time Passes,” as they move about the quiet house at night, seeking and exploring. “Almost one might imagine them, as they entered the drawing-room questioning and wondering, toying with the flap of hanging wall-paper, asking, would it hang much longer, when would it fall?” (TTL 130). The spirits in this section act collectively as the narrative voice, and the wonderment that they experience as they explore the house describe a concept that Auerbach refers to as objective utterances.

Auerbach states that objective utterances are “glances cast by one person upon another whose enigma he cannot solve” (470). The “he” that Auerbach refers to is the

narrative voice at that particular moment in the novel, though it is more accurately referred to as “it.” For example, the “people” who wonder and discuss Mrs. Ramsay start with a gossipy sort of language, transitioning into more intimate and personal words at the end of the paragraph, which states “. . . this swoop and fall of the spirit upon truth which delighted, eased, sustained—falsely perhaps” (TTL 32). It is likely that, though it begins with the things “people” wonder about Mrs. Ramsay, the narrative voice takes a turn somewhere in the passage, changing into the spiritual narrator previously discussed. Regarding *To the Lighthouse*, the narrator acts as the one communicating all that is happening in the novel.

The realist novel, one might argue, is the type of novel Woolf writes with *To the Lighthouse*. Woolf gives her readers a family, its guests, and the general goings-on that occur in day-to-day life. Children playing, walks on the beach, trips to visit the Lighthouse, and thoughts of cleaning the house are all realistic for this social status. However, there are many aspects of Woolf’s novel that indicate a digression from realism. Such examples include the narrator’s role as an observer and the world views depicted by Mrs. Ramsay, Mr. Ramsay, and Lily. Potential reasons for this digression include the changing reality in which Woolf was writing. In “Virginia Woolf and Our Knowledge of the External World,” Jaakko Hintikka argues that the society at Woolf’s time became aware of a growing complexity and depth of reality. It therefore became difficult for Woolf to find a proper method to represent each of her characters’ world views; such world views would have to be different from her own and different from her potential readers’. Woolf, Hintikka, writes,

[Was] fighting to reach, and to maintain a grasp of her own of, the rapidly changing, unexpectedly complex, and frighteningly precipitous reality uncovered to us by physics, psychiatry, history, and even mathematics and logic, where gaping paradoxes had suddenly been discovered . . . ( 7)

This struggle with the perception and adjustment to a new sense of reality was a major cause in the development of Woolf's writing technique; Hintikka particularly refers to the digression from the tradition of the author's omniscience regarding her characters. Instead, we find a poetic transfiguration of Woolf's characters, in which there is an inclusion of multiple world views by the different characters, indicating a post-impressionist form that reflects the changing world views of reality outside of the novel.

Woolf's post-impressionism is a reflection of her thinking, which was well beyond that of other philosophies of her time. As her autobiographical essay, "A Sketch of the Past," indicates, Woolf realized she was after her own, unique form of realism, something that would include what is experienced behind "the cotton wool of daily life" and the simple perception of reality that the readers are used to find in more normative fiction writing. She refers to this kind of realism as "*moments of being*," by which she means the paradoxical awareness of what is consciously perceived (being) and what is unconsciously lived (non-being). She states, "Often when I have been writing one of my so-called novels I have been baffled by this same problem; that is, how to describe what I call in my private shorthand—'non-being'" (MOB 70). These moments of "non-being," according to examples offered by Woolf herself, seem to refer to the events that occur but are not readily recalled. Woolf describes "*moments of being*" by explaining a day when she vividly remembered certain details about her walk along a river and enjoyed books by

Chaucer and Madame de la Fayette (MOB 70). On the other hand, Woolf refers to “moments of non-being” using her example of lunch with her husband, Leonard, of which she could not remember their conversation. “A great part of every day is not lived consciously” she further says (MOB 70). These are unremembered, unconscious events that are part of one’s daily life exist, but are unable to be readily accessed by the mind. In another sense, this could also refer to the ways one’s mind wanders and gives one alternative realities to live through. This ties back to *To the Lighthouse*, when Mr. Bankes recalls his phone conversation with Mrs. Ramsay; the reader is taken to a different time and place as a result of Mr. Bankes’ imagination.

Woolf’s fascination with the possibility of representing a more complicated sense of reality is apparent early on in *To the Lighthouse* to the point where Mr. Ramsay’s work is explained to Lily Briscoe by Andrew Ramsay. In “The Window,” one learns that when Lily thinks of Mr. Ramsay’s work, she is reminded of a kitchen table as a result of Andrew’s description: “It was Andrew’s doing. She asked him what his father’s books were about. ‘Subject and object and the nature of reality,’ Andrew had said. And when she said Heavens, she had no notion what that meant. ‘Think of a kitchen table then,’ he told her, ‘when you’re not there’” (26). When one thinks of a kitchen table, it is generally through an observer’s eyes. One cannot know for sure if the kitchen table is still in the kitchen because he or she is not physically there. However, the memory of the kitchen table from a time in which one is present creates the reality that Andrew describes here. Similarly, this is an example of Woolf’s sense of reality she describes in “A Sketch of the Past.” Her view is about the existence of things that one cannot recall to memory easily, and about the things that one knows exist when they are out of sight.

Beer's concept of object and subject mentioned previously can help us understand Woolf's view more fully: regarding Andrew Ramsay's explanation of reality to Lily Briscoe, one knows that the object (the kitchen table) is there. The subject refers to a more exact knowledge of what is happening to the kitchen table at the time. If one is not in the kitchen, one does not know what the subject is; however, one knows that the object is there because it is readily available in the memory as something that exists in the kitchen.

This representation of reality is mostly accomplished by way of the stream of consciousness. In fact, as Auerbach had pointed out, Woolf's intent was for her characters to represent reality through the direct expression of their own thoughts, impressions, and experiences. Of course, one could argue along with Auerbach that it is the spirit-like quality of the narrator that allows the transmission of the stream of consciousness of the characters. From Auerbach's perspective, the narrator is the conveyor of each character's thoughts, the narrative device that allows Woolf to offer a number of world views. Even if contemporary narrative theorists disagree with Auerbach (they do not think of the narrator as having any part in the stream of consciousness of the characters) it is nevertheless a fact that Woolf's stream of consciousness allows the reader to see, through the narrator's inhabitation, into the characters' minds. For instance, we experience Mr. Ramsay's rambling thoughts as he walks around the house: within the consciousness of Mr. Ramsay, the reader understands a little better the way that Mr. Ramsay sees the world; he is systematic and orderly. Mr. Ramsay's consciousness dwells on the "splendid mind" that he himself has; he understands his own intelligence based on the twenty-six letters of the alphabet, estimating that he "reached

Q” (TTL 37). He also wonders what comes after Q, stating further that “Z is only reached once by one man in a generation,” which suggests that he does not consider himself the most intelligent individual in England, but very close. There is also Lily Briscoe’s perspective, particularly regarding her distaste for the convention of marriage. This shows a drastic contrast to Mrs. Ramsay’s own perspective on marriage; Mrs. Ramsay is adamant that everyone ought to marry, while Lily does not fathom the idea of marriage for herself.

Despite Mrs. Ramsay’s perspective on marriage, she also has a more forward-thinking, modern world view. After the children go to bed, the reader sees a poetic transformation in Mrs. Ramsay’s character: she changes from the woman who ensured the well-being of her family and guests to a woman who focuses completely on herself and revels in her aloneness. “All the being and the doing, expansive, glittering, vocal, evaporated; and one shrunk, with a sense of solemnity, to being oneself, a wedge-shaped core of darkness, something invisible to others” (TTL 65). Mrs. Ramsay’s world view may not be quite as conservative as one initially thinks. In fact, her world view is a little unclear. For example, in chapter eleven of “The Window,” the narrator tells readers that as Mrs. Ramsay sits down to her work, she is reflecting on the thoughts sitting in her mind. The phrase that she seems to dwell most on is “We are in the hands of the Lord,” which leaves her feeling annoyed (66). Her consciousness suggests that it was not herself saying this phrase, which makes her wonder who it might have been that said it. Yet at the beginning of the novel, one might assume that such a phrase would be in line with Mrs. Ramsay’s character; after all, she occasionally refers to the guest, Charles Tansley, as “the atheist” in what could be considered a condemning statement.

Yet this passage suggests that Mrs. Ramsay questions her own beliefs; she asks herself “How could any Lord have make this world?” referring to the many treacherous things that occur in the world, particularly those that cause her sadness (64). One might refer again to Hintikka’s article and his point about a changing philosophy with discoveries coming to light in a number of scientific fields: perhaps Mrs. Ramsay’s thoughts on this subject reflect Woolf’s own doubts. Hintikka points out that these discoveries and the changes in society led Woolf to her innovating writing style; Mrs. Ramsay’s world view reflects these changing times, as does Lily Briscoe’s. In fact, Lily’s world view is even more influenced as a result of these changes because she is more willing to act on them than Mrs. Ramsay. While Mrs. Ramsay contemplates the possibilities in her mind, Lily openly rejects marriage, unwilling to fall into a convention that she does not agree with. Lily, in mind and language, is true to her beliefs, and these beliefs were developed as a result of the new discoveries arising in various modes of thinking.

Auerbach’s concept of the spirit-like narrator, particularly in “Time Passes,” is also evidence of Woolf’s post-impressionist style. Once again, the reader notes the spiritual nature of the narrator as it moves through the Ramsays’ quiet house, noting the darkness creeping in through the cracks in the doors and Mr. Carmichael’s light remaining lit as he reads Vergil. The narrator takes the reader through the house, noting the stillness of each room. “Nothing stirred in the drawing-room or in the dining-room or on the staircase” (130). Other observations in this section reflect the difficult times that occur before the Ramsays return to this house, thus providing evidence of the post-impressionist influence on this work: “The nights now are full of wind and destruction;

the trees plunge and bend and their leaves fly helter skelter until the lawn is plastered with them and they lie packed in gutters and choke rain-pipes and scatter damp paths” (TTL 132). This vivid picture offers readers to use imaginative creativity in interpreting this passage’s meaning. The description is of a storm, but it also indicates a tumultuous time for the Ramsays between the two visits to the summer home. The language suggests that a character is describing the house’s stillness; however, this is not so. The narrator holds qualities of a character in the novel, but is merely an observer that is privy to certain thoughts belonging to actual characters. Through this form, the reader envisions the empty rooms as they are: completely empty of any other human character. The narrator speaks as if it is present, perhaps because the narrator is technically there, but not as a concrete character. In the context of this novel, the reader must consider the narrator as invisible and spirit-like, as if it is a gust of wind blowing through the house.

A particular aspect of Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* that must be taken into account is the comparison between “mind time” and “speaking time” given in the novel as a whole. Throughout the novel, it can be estimated that for every one or two sentences of dialogue, Woolf gives a paragraph or more of “mind time,” where she describes what a character is thinking as a result of the dialogue. This “mind time” gives us a view into the characters’ minds. Auerbach, as was stated in the previous chapter, refers to this “mind time” as inner processes, “movements within the consciousness of individual personages” (467). Inner processes account for a large portion of this novel, since it is written in the stream of consciousness style. Exterior occurrences, a term in this text that explains visual or audible things that happen in the scene, is “speaking time.” These “personages” in whose minds inner processes occur may have nothing to do with the

exterior occurrences and may not even be present at the time. For example, Mr. Bankes' sudden appearance in the passage referenced by Auerbach, at a moment when the reader is transported to a completely different time and place, is unrelated to the inner processes belonging to Mrs. Ramsay as she measures the stocking. Other exterior occurrences that may be secondary and relate to different times and places, like this passage in which Mr. Bankes speaks with Mrs. Ramsay over the telephone, which in reality occurred at a time well before this scene with the stocking, are framed by what goes on in Mrs. Ramsay's consciousness.

By "frame," I refer to framed narrative. I follow here Katherine Young's explanations. Framed narratives, Young writes, occur "in narrative situations when events are narrated by a character other than the primary narrator or when a character tells a tale that, although unrelated to the main story, contains a moral message for the listener in the text" (ROUTLEDGE 186). It is essentially one narrative that takes place within another. Woolf uses such a framed narrative in her desire to play with the concept of time: while one reads about Mrs. Ramsay measuring a stocking, one is suddenly transported into the past and into a completely different location and a completely different consciousness. Instead of the drawing room at the Ramsays' summer home, one is in William Bankes' apartment in London, talking on the telephone with Mrs. Ramsay about a train ticket and watching men work on a neighboring building. The word "flashback" comes to mind when trying to describe this occurrence. This flashback, taking place right in the middle of Mrs. Ramsay's consciousness and having little to do with this consciousness, is therefore framed by the scene in the drawing room. Similarly, one sees this in chapter five of the third section of the novel, "The Lighthouse," when

Lily Briscoe, having set down her brush, cries out for Mrs. Ramsay. In the middle of this dialogue, chapter six interrupts by introducing Macalister's boy. The narrator describes how the boy, on the boat heading toward the Lighthouse, cuts a section off one of his fish to use for bait (TTL 183). This section is placed inside brackets, then transitions into chapter seven, where the reader once again finds Lily as she continues to cry for Mrs. Ramsay. Like the transportation to Mr. Bankes' home, the moment of Macalister's boy on the boat is framed by Lily's despair over losing Mrs. Ramsay. The dialogue (speaking time) blends here with stream of consciousness in a unique way.

The blending of dialogue and stream of consciousness occurs in *To the Lighthouse* subtly. The reader learns the personality of each character in *To the Lighthouse* through other characters and through each characters' own consciousness. The narrator's use of speech tags, such as "he said" and "she said" indicate dialogue in a novel, which is another aspect that one notices in *To the Lighthouse* through each character's consciousness. In Ian Gregor's article "Voices: Reading Virginia Woolf," he notes the last chapter in "The Window," when Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay sit reading. Gregor notes that the Ramsays express their relationship with more eloquence in silence than they do in words, even though it is apparent that Mrs. Ramsay longs to break their silence on many occasions. There is little dialogue between Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay; in this section of *To the Lighthouse*, Mrs. Ramsay breaks the silence to tell Mr. Ramsay about Paul's and Minta's recent engagement. "'They're engaged,' she said, beginning to knit, 'Paul and Minta'" (TTL 124). Yet the conversation does not go on for much longer. In between these sections of dialogue, one truly learns the characters' perspectives on the subject. Mr. Ramsay responds to this comment with "So I guessed," a response that

indicates Mr. Ramsay predicted this to happen. As Fowler would have put it, Mrs. Ramsay began this sequencing of dialogue, to which Mr. Ramsay responded unconsciously. As their silence continues, it becomes clear to the reader through the narrator's translation of Mrs. Ramsay's thoughts that she wishes he would say more: "Anything, anything, she thought, going on with her knitting. Anything will do" (124). Due to the lack of dialogue between the two characters, the use of stream of consciousness best demonstrates to the reader the Ramsays' lack of communication in their marital relationship.

In *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf establishes a unique style that is unlike other modernist writers of her time. There is a strong connection between the narrator's function and the transformation of realism that she achieves in this novel. The turn away from the narrator's omniscience, a privilege that the narrator generally has within the novelistic form, is specifically a reflection of the changing times in Woolf's years as a writer and contributes to Woolf's digression from realism. As Hintikka pointed out, new discoveries in the sciences brought a new way of perceiving the world: physics, psychiatry, history, mathematics, and logic were fields in which new information arose, shaking many people's understanding of reality and developing new philosophies (Hintikka 7). For adults, adapting to a new perception is often more difficult than for the younger generation growing up through these changes. Through Mrs. Ramsay, Woolf uses new world views to shape Mrs. Ramsay's own world view; for example, though Mrs. Ramsay says "We are in the hands of the Lord," her doubt at this statement being true is also apparent. Through the narrator, one reads of Mrs. Ramsay's inner struggle to determine why she would say such a thing when inwardly, her true self, does not believe

it. With new discoveries in a variety of scientific topics, Mrs. Ramsay's skepticism is unsurprising. Mrs. Ramsay's world view reflects the changing world view of the society at the time when Woolf was writing her novels; due to the shift, confusion is understandable.

The spiritual quality of the narrator's observations indicates an elegant strategy for the narrator to observe the exterior occurrences, yet to also understand the inner processes of each character. It offers a humble opinion of what takes place in the scene; rather than telling the reader why Mrs. Ramsay is sad, the narrator itself speculates on how sad she looks as it watches a tear fall. As Hintikka suggests in his article, Woolf gives up the omniscience of the narrator regarding its characters. Instead, the narrator acts specifically as the conveyor of exterior occurrences that it witnesses, as well as inner processes given to it through the characters' consciousnesses. The privileges Woolf gives her narrator are very specific. Removing the aspect of the narrator's omniscience contributes to Woolf's unique writing style because it further relates to the digression from realism that is seen so frequently throughout the novel. With the narrator's spirit-like characteristics, the ways that Woolf constructs dialogue and stream of consciousness in her novel follow a similar pattern of post-impressionism. One does not understand characters by each character's own dialogue, but learns about other characters through the consciousnesses of others.

The blending of dialogue and stream of consciousness in *To the Lighthouse*, or "mind time" and "speaking time" as it was referred to earlier, offers an interesting perspective on how Woolf structures her work. One notices that the stream of consciousness takes precedence; the reader is exposed more to the "mind time" of each

character than to the “speaking time” when characters interact with one another through dialogue. However, within the stream of consciousness the reader finds the inner processes in which the characters speak. Rather than using dialogue to allow each character the opportunity to portray themselves, Woolf uses the stream of consciousness of each character to portray other characters. One learns about Mrs. Ramsay’s beauty, for example, through Mr. Ramsay’s consciousness as he watches her knit. Similarly, one understands Mr. Ramsay through his children, his wife, and Lily. On the whole, Mr. Ramsay appears to be an unlikable character as a result of his demanding nature due to the perspective of others toward him. Regarding the stream of consciousness, it is interesting that the characters partake in an inner dialogue, which is indicated by speech tags such as “he thought” and “she thought.” If one considers that certain aspects of the stream of consciousness may be considered forms of dialogue with the reader, through the function of the narrator, the characters are essentially involved in a dialogue with Woolf’s potential readers.

The dialogue of each characters’ mind builds relationships between characters and the narrator, characters and potential readers, and narrators and potential readers. As a result of the narrator’s ability to know what lies in each character’s consciousness, the narrator and characters develop a deep relationship through their shared knowledge of inner processes. The narrator is the individual exposed to the vastness of each character’s innermost thoughts, which they do not share with other characters via dialogue. In this way, the narrator becomes the focal point; it is the link connecting the reader to Woolf’s characters. Through the inner dialogue of each character in *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf’s potential readers understand her characters and their perspectives, by way of the narrator.

Mrs. Ramsay, for example, becomes a completely different individual as she knits after the children have all gone to bed. Her transformation from the outwardly mother figure, concerned with the household running smoothly, changes into an inwardly philosophical individual contemplating life and truth. Readers learn that Lily is a woman with a strong distaste for marriage, preferring to pursue her work as an artist rather than follow the conventions of her time. This is all conveyed and interpreted through the narrator, who then puts the thoughts into a narrative form, portraying it as an inner dialogue.

It should therefore be assumed that the narrator's function and the blending of dialogue and stream of consciousness all play significant roles in defining *To the Lighthouse* as a work of post-impressionism. These three aspects of novelistic discourse are connected in complex and fascinating ways: without the narrative voice, the stream of consciousness does not take on its creative way of understanding each of Woolf's characters in her novel. The stream of consciousness incorporates some dialogue between characters, but it becomes clear to the reader that the most important information is given through the inner processes of each character. In many ways, the reader learns most about Woolf's characters through the consciousnesses of other characters: James's opinion of his father, for example, leads the reader to understand Mr. Ramsay's personality. However, the reader also learns about the characters through their own consciousnesses, as one sees with Lily as she tries to paint. Her inner processes read very much like a monologue, in which she contemplates her own work and the perspectives that other characters take of her, such as Charles Tansley and his discouraging words reverberating through her mind.

Woolf's transformation of realism and her shaping of post-impressionist poetics are clear throughout this entire text. Woolf's explanation of reality in "A Sketch of the Past" is indicated in the scene where Lily tries to understand Andrew's description of Mr. Ramsay's work. He uses the mental image of a kitchen table, which Lily continues to associate with Mr. Ramsay's work long after her conversation with Andrew. This is an instance where Woolf herself tries to explain her own view of reality through her characters, while noting specifically through Lily's character the difficulty of this concept. The novel offers readers a number of examples that indicate Woolf's post-impressionist poetics, namely the vivid thoughts of the characters that are not spoken aloud, but are conveyed to the reader through the narrator. As I pointed out, instances of these poetics are to be found in Mr. Banks' flashback to his apartment, when he speaks to Mrs. Ramsay on the telephone and Mrs. Ramsay's detailed thoughts about the house's furniture as she sizes the stocking against James. Auerbach notes the spirit-like narrator that both observes actions, yet knows the inner thoughts of the characters. Woolf's blending of dialogue and stream of consciousness that creates a unique writing style for her novels, though in this particular work the use of stream of consciousness is more prominent than dialogue. In my next chapter, I will show how *Between the Acts* marks a transformation of style, insofar as Woolf uses this blending more evenly and to a different effect in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Experimentations with “We” in *Between the Acts*

Virginia Woolf’s final novel, *Between the Acts*, is a novel that is stylistically different from her previous works as a result of her experimentations with the narrator’s function and the blending of dialogue and stream of consciousness. The novel is not separated into chapters, but unnumbered scenes indicated by spaces in the text. The novel is set at Pointz Hall in the English countryside just before the start of World War II and takes place over the course of one full day. A community gathers together for the annual pageant, written by a woman named Miss La Trobe. The residents of Pointz Hall are the Oliver family: Mr. and Mrs. Giles Oliver live at Pointz Hall with their children and Giles Oliver’s father Bartholomew Oliver, the family patriarch. The Olivers volunteer to have the pageant performed on their estate, inviting the rest of the community members to join them there. Bartholomew Oliver’s sister, Lucy Swithin, also lives in Pointz Hall with the Olivers, though she is reputed to be “batty.” Her quirky tendencies and ramblings give her this reputation, of which Giles Oliver has little patience. Early on in the novel, one finds that Giles and Isa Oliver are in the midst of a torpid marriage; Isa’s preoccupation with the “gentleman farmer” Rupert Haines leads her to differentiate between two different forms of love that she experiences: an inner love for Mr. Haines and an outer love for her husband, the father of her children. The result of these different loves leads to an inner conflict of love and hatred for her husband that recurs throughout the novel. However, it must be noted that Giles and Isa are not the central characters to this novel. No preference is given to any specific individuals;

instead, Woolf focuses on all characters and their developments in relation to others throughout the pageant and throughout the story.

Readers are also introduced to a number of other characters who are significant to the novel. Mrs. Manresa and her friend, William Dodge, attend the pageant. While Mrs. Manresa is well-known for her ostentatious and flirtatious personality, Dodge is quiet and reserved. They seem to compliment each other well. Though it is never blatantly expressed, Dodge is said by other characters to be homosexual. This is a particularly difficult thing for Giles Oliver to grasp; he cannot bring himself to say the word aloud, and he disapproves of the bond that his wife develops with Dodge during the pageant's performance.

The pageant itself takes place outdoors; the actors are played by volunteers of the community. Though it does not have a formal name, the pageant looks at the history of England starting in the medieval ages and moving up to the present day. Bart Oliver reminds his family frequently that they play an important role as well as audience members. The audience members participate during the intermissions *Between the Acts*; readers see their commentaries on the play and the portrayal that they give of a world outside of the play itself. At the end of each scene, an intermission takes place in which the audience interacts with one another and forms a sort of togetherness that represents the community. Everything comes together at the end of the play when the actors turn a number of borrowed mirrors on the audience, catching them off-guard with their portrayal of present-day England. The only person who remains un-offended at this moment is Mrs. Manresa, who seemingly is the only individual in Woolf's novel comfortable with herself. Following this final scene in the pageant, the community's

pastor, Reverend Streatfield, comes onto the stage to address the significance of this final scene and the rest of the play, only to be interrupted by airplanes flying overhead.

The airplanes are a reminder of the imminent start of World War II, a war which will bring a change that will affect the community and the entire country in years to come. As Watkins notes, the village and the pageant Woolf showed in *Between the Acts* was “the threatened English community” on the verge of World War II (259). The threat refers to the impending war that is foreshadowed throughout the novel. *Between the Acts* was heavily influenced by Woolf’s preoccupation with the wartime that she and the rest of England experienced; her diary entries describe the news she and Leonard Woolf heard about London bombings and the fear that overtook much of English society. With this in mind, we can appreciate how in this novel Woolf conveys the complex reality that was so close to her own experiences living in England just before World War II begins. This is a time that Woolf herself experienced by living in a small country town in England. She uses the model of the community in Rodmell, the town in which she and her husband stayed at this time, to develop the community that gathers together at Pointz Hall. Writing about *Between the Acts*, Mark Hussey indicates that Woolf’s preoccupation with war, as well as a preoccupation with death stemmed not only from World War II but also from the direct effect of losing her nephew, Julian Bell, who was killed in the Spanish Civil War (VW A-Z 27). In *Moments of Being*, Woolf also expresses the hardships she faced in losing other significant people in her life: her brother, Julian Thoby Stephens, her mother, Julia Stephens, and her sister, Stella Stephens. Though they did not die at the same time, these were the years when the presence of death was very trying for Woolf.

Woolf's diary entries are filled with updates about political issues surrounding the war that occurs throughout England. By contrast, her diary does not discuss her own writing with the same amount of detail. Bombing by German aircrafts destroyed her London home in 1940, as well as another house that she once lived in. In this novel, readers find that Giles Oliver is critical of Europe and the war threats that their society faces at the time: "Only the ineffective word 'hedgehog' illustrated his vision of Europe, bristling with guns, poised with planes" (BTA 37). With such a catastrophic time at hand, it is understandable that Woolf tries to focus on her work. Woolf attempts to evade the presence of the death that dwells on her mind by throwing herself into her work.

In a similar fashion in the novel the English village comes together to perform a pageant, a play that represents the history of England through a number of scenes depicting historical moments. Here, we see a parallelism between Woolf's "evasion" of the wartime period, where the staging of the play focuses on the past rather than looking forward to a bleak future. In a time when people fear for England's future, it is important to look back on the history of England and the struggles that it has overcome. Miss La Trobe, the playwright of the novel, may herself be a parallel of Woolf. Miss La Trobe throws herself into her writing and directing of this play, perhaps in the hopes of avoiding the impending war that the community knows is approaching. In this way, creativity overcomes the obstacles that the writer anticipates that she will soon face.

Woolf began *Between the Acts* in April 1938; a diary entry from this time indicates that she felt a strong desire to write this novel, regardless of disheartening feedback that she expected from her husband and her publisher: "But I wanted—how violently—how persistently, pressingly compulsorily I cant say—to write this book"

(113; vol. 5). In writing this novel, she adopted an attitude that gave her the freedom to write without worrying about receiving negative feedback. The circumstances surrounding the composition of this novel made the war references far different from any of Woolf's previous novels. As Hana Wirth-Nesher notes in her article "Final curtain on the war: figure and ground in Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts*" war is "a major motif in [Woolf's] earlier works, such as *Jacob's Room*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, and *To the Lighthouse*, *Between the Acts*, composed and revised when war was imminent and then actual, is haunted by it" (183). But death itself does not play a significant part in the novel. Instead, it focuses on the performance of the pageant and the daily thoughts that its characters dwell on in relation to one another.

As with *To the Lighthouse*, the narrator in *Between the Acts* observes the actions of the characters, but also knows the inner thoughts of the characters and communicates these thoughts to readers. However, the narrative voice in Woolf's final novel is different from that of the narrative voice in *To the Lighthouse*. The narrator is, as in *To the Lighthouse*, a character present throughout the novel as simply an observer, but also an entity that is impressionable as a result of characters within the novel. The narrator often adopts language that one would usually hear from a characters' perspective: near the beginning of the novel, readers are introduced to the nurses as they talk to one another on the terrace, pushing the perambulator and conversing. In this scene, one notices the way the narrator is able to identify with the characters. As the narrator describes the nurses' movements, it transitions into a brief moment of dialogue: "How cook had told 'im off about the asparagus; how when she rang I said: how it was a sweet costume with blouse to match" (BTA 8). After this dialogue, the narrator transitions back into its own voice,

but takes on language that could have been used by the nurses: “. . . and that was leading to something about a feller as they walked up and down the terrace rolling sweets, trundling the perambulator” (BTA 8). “Feller” is the word that stands out in this sentence for this word indicates a digression from a formal writing style used by the narrator in previous sections of the novel. Similarly, when the narrator presents Giles Oliver’s frustration at being surrounded by “old fogies” like his aunt, Mrs. Swithin, and his father, Bart Oliver, we realize that this expression could have been used by the character himself, because in formal writing one does not expect such a phrase to appear.

One also sees another instance of informal language shortly after the passage where the nurses walk along the terrace; as the narrator describes Pointz Hall and the surrounding areas, it goes into great detail regarding the terrace. The narrator states, “There you could walk up and down, up and down, under the shade of the trees” (BTA 8). The pronoun “you” is used in this description, which is not often seen in formal writing. One might argue that this gives the narrator qualities best-suited for a character in the novel. However, it is more accurate to say the narrator observes other characters and reflects the qualities that are attributed to them. The narrator shares similar attributes to characters as a way of proving its creditability; it proves that it best understands the characters in the novel through a close connection on a societal level. It essentially shows readers that it is cut from the same cloth as the characters are, and is therefore the best source of information about them.

Though the narrator shares similarities with the characters, it still observes from a somewhat different point of view. Watkins first pointed out in her 1969 study that in this particular novel Woolf created a new and curious point of view, “neither confined to a set

of single subjectivities taken up one by one, nor the point of view of an omniscient narrator” (358). We take this to mean that this narrator holds qualities that are unique unto it in comparison to the narrator one usually sees in fiction. The narrator does not have an omniscient perspective of the novel; rather, it is privy only to that information that is either in front of it, or that is portrayed through the minds of the characters as a whole. The readers find in *Between the Acts*, Watkins explains, the hypothetical group-consciousness. This consciousness is “aware of the crucial thoughts and feelings each member is contributing to the shared experience of the moment” (358). Indeed, Woolf’s diary stated that her aim in writing this novel was to create “a rambling capricious but somehow unified whole—the present state of mind” (135; vol. 5).

Rachel Blau DuPlessis, building on Watkins’ observations, gives further insight into the genesis of Woolf’s group consciousness. DuPlessis thinks that the use of the “choral or group protagonist” is a major strategy used by modernist women writers. This group protagonist, according to DuPlessis, was a device that first developed in order to steer away from society’s gender assumptions, particularly the assumptions made of women. Woolf believed that women writers are influenced by the social changes that women, as a group, have undergone. She states that while women used to rely on winning love to achieve self-worth, they have since gained the ability to earn wages and develop careers for themselves. As a result, the narratives of these women writers reflect the corresponding society, creating stories that took place in more democratic societies. “The communal protagonist is a way of organizing the work so that neither the development of an individual against a backdrop of supporting characters nor the formation of a heterosexual couple is central to the novel” (DuPlessis 163). *Between the*

*Acts* is a novel that shows the ways Woolf uses this group protagonist to refrain from the development of one main character. This is a development when this novel is compared to *To the Lighthouse*. In her earlier work, Woolf chooses two characters to act as protagonists: Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe. There is a clear focus on these characters and their consciousnesses. The lack of such a focus on specific characters in *Between the Acts* indicates Woolf's development of a new strategy in her final novel, and thus a transformation of her style as a novelist.

An example of this group protagonist theory can be found in one of the last scenes of the novel. The last scene of the pageant, in which the actors hold up mirrors to reflect the audience themselves offers a clear representation of the group protagonist at work. "So that was her little game! To show us up, as we are, here and now" (BTA 126). There is something noteworthy about these sentences: first, the language of the narrator indicates an understanding of the group as if it is one of them. These sentences are specifically the narrator's words, yet it portrays itself as an audience member rather than strictly an observer of the occurrences happening in the scene. This may, perhaps, be an indication of the narrator's close ties with the characters in the novel. It also steers clear of the usual, third party narrator that literary works are often accustomed to using. At the same time, this shows strong evidence of the group protagonist at work. For nearly every audience member, with the possible exception of Mrs. Manresa, these sentences describe the thoughts that are likely running through every audience member's mind at that moment. It is therefore an effective and efficient way for Woolf to portray a large group of people's collective thoughts on the same subject and fits in with her new experimentation with the group protagonist acting as one entity.

The group protagonist falls alongside the stream of consciousness form, though the consciousnesses of the characters are even more intertwined. They are so intertwined that they affectively act as one individual consciousness; one might, again, take Mrs. Manresa's character into consideration at this point. Early in the novel, the group protagonist offers a description of Mrs. Manresa's features, stating:

Her hat, her rings, her finger nails red as roses, smooth as shells, were there for all to see. But not her life history. That was only scraps and fragments to all of them . . . She had been born, but it was only gossip said so, in Tasmania: her grandfather had been exported for some hanky-panky mid-Victorian scandal; malversation of trusts, was it? (BTA 27-28)

This particular instance transitions from Isa's silent address of Mrs. Manresa to the group's collective observations of the woman. Perhaps it is described from the perspective of Isa herself, but it is the opinion of the group consciousness taken into consideration in this passage. Furthermore, the opinion of the group consciousness is further expressed when the narrator states: "But what a desirable, at least valuable, quality it was—for everybody felt, directly she spoke, 'She's said it, she's done it, not I,' and could take advantage of the breach of decorum . . ." (28-29). This further indicates the general opinion of Mrs. Manresa. The group consciousness holds the ability to express such an understanding as it does with Mrs. Manresa instead of creating a focus specifically on one particular consciousness.

This is similarly found when the narrator describes Miss La Trobe. While the actors dress for their parts in the bushes, Miss La Trobe paces back and forth in anticipation. "'Bossy' they called her privately, just as they called Mrs. Swithin

‘Flimsy.’ Her abrupt manner and stocky figure; her thick ankles and sturdy shoes; her rapid decisions barked out in guttural accents—all this ‘got their goat’” (BTA 44). Initially, one might think that this is Miss La Trobe’s own understanding of how others see her. Instead there is a transition from Miss La Trobe’s own murmurings and mutterings regarding those she sees around her to an explanation of her character as she is perceived by others. One sees the narrator’s explanation of the group consciousness’ perception of a character, just as the narrator communicated the general understanding of Mrs. Manresa’s character to the reader.

There are also instances where one sees the dialogue and stream of consciousness moving from one to the other and working together to create an effective way of understanding the thoughts of each character. For example, during one of the intermissions of the play, the narrator describes how the audience mills about; yet it also notes that some of the audience members have chosen to remain in their seats. Of these characters, one finds Colonel Mayhew and Mrs. Mayhew discussing a gap of time in which the pageant fails to represent: “‘Why leave out the British Army? What’s history without the Army, eh?’ he mused. Inclining her head, Mrs. Mayhew protested after all one mustn’t ask too much. Besides, very likely there would be a Grand Ensemble, round the Union Jack, to end with” (BTA 107). It is interesting that Colonel Mayhew himself states his opinions for the readers, but Mrs. Mayhew is understood through the narrator’s perspective. The wording used by the narrator in this passage indicates an understanding of Mrs. Mayhew herself; one again sees the narrator adopt an informal writing style that is likened to the way Mrs. Mayhew may have said the statement in her own words. Not only does this indicate the narrator’s close relationship with its characters, it also gives

readers a better understanding of Mrs. Mayhew as a character: not only does the narrator help the reader understand the actions that take place along with her words by describing her head inclining, but it also shows Mrs. Mayhew's relationship with her husband. While the Colonel is picky about Miss La Trobe's choice in historical material, Mrs. Mayhew defends the pageant by telling her husband that "one mustn't ask too much."

Throughout the novel, one finds that the narrator generally allows Woolf's characters to express themselves individually through their speaking words. Isa's muttered comments are such an example of this expression. Instead, Woolf uses a different strategy in which the overall understanding of the characters' shared perspectives are expressed through the narrator, and the characters' individual feelings are spoken. The reader is not solely dependent on the narrator to convey the inner thoughts and feelings about the characters. Dialogue plays a more crucial role by allowing the characters to express themselves more fully than the characters in *To the Lighthouse* were able. Though there are still instances where the narrator's voice overpowers the dialogue, there is far more verbal interaction between characters:

"Bart, my dear, come with me . . . D'you remember, when we were children, the play we acted in the nursery?" He remembered. Red Indians the game was; a reed with a note wrapped up in a pebble. "But for us, my old Cindy"—he picked up his hat—"the game's over." (BTA 67)

There is a lyrical quality to the dialogue, and it remains so throughout the novel. The narrator remains a significant part of the novel as well, though it allows more self-representation on the part of the characters. Throughout this novel, one finds that the characters interact frequently through dialogue with one another. In my previous chapter

on *To the Lighthouse*, I observed that the narrator creates a relationship with each character, to the point where the narrator is able to communicate the thoughts and feelings of the characters better than the characters themselves are able to. *Between the Acts* offers a different strategy where it is more important for the characters to create identities for themselves through dialogue because the concept of the group consciousness does not allow the narrator to have an intimate relationship with individual characters. For example, Mrs. Manresa is a character who expresses herself solely through dialogue, but the reader develops an understanding of her through not only her dialogue, but also through the consciousnesses of other characters. The narrator presents Mrs. Manresa as the only character who is the most comfortable with herself; in the scene where the mirrors are turned on the audience, the reader finds that the only individual who is not shocked at seeing his or her reflection is Mrs. Manresa. In fact, Mrs. Manresa takes the opportunity to fix herself in the mirror: “. . . All evaded or shaded themselves—save Mrs. Manresa who, facing herself in the glass, used it as a glass; had out her mirror; powdered her nose; moved one curl, disturbed by the breeze, to its place” (BTA 126). As a woman who does not hide her true self, the perception of others as well as Mrs. Manresa’s own portrayal of herself through her interactions with other characters make it possible for dialogue to be the primary way for Mrs. Manresa to be represented.

In a similar way, the character of William Dodge is depicted thusly; this is perhaps due to his friendship with Mrs. Manresa. It appears that throughout the novel, Dodge’s character is understood through the eyes of other characters: Giles Oliver sees him as simply a “homosexual,” but cannot bring himself to say the word. Isa sees Dodge as a person that she can feel close to, though her husband does not necessarily approve.

Furthermore, Dodge's character says very little throughout *Between the Acts*. This is an interesting detail, considering his close friendship with Mrs. Manresa. It is likely that Woolf chose to give Dodge this quality to compliment Mrs. Manresa's outspokenness. Regardless, Dodge is also a character that one does not learn about through his own perspective, nor through the perspective of the narrator. Instead, one learns about Dodge more so through the perspective of those around him both through the narrator and through the other characters themselves.

Furthermore, the novel transitions into a passage filled with dialogue belonging to the audience member, Mrs. Lynn Jones; Mrs. Jones' voice reminisces about time that has long gone by; the tone in this section of the novel indicates a happy remembrance. In this section of the novel, one sees dialogue take precedence over the narrative voice. Woolf sets aside this narrative voice to bring out the voice of Mrs. Jones, allowing her the opportunity to speak through dialogue. Evidence of a group consciousness continues to shine through; while Mrs. Jones reminisces, it is not clearly stated that she is speaking to one particular person. Instead, the pronoun "they" is used to indicate who Mrs. Jones is speaking to. "I remember . . ." she nodded in time to the tune. "You remember too—how they used to cry it down the streets." They remembered—the curtains blowing, and the men crying: "All a blowing, all a growing," as they came with geraniums, sweet william, in pots down the street" (BTA 108). Who is the "they" that also remembered? These, perhaps, are the voices Woolf refers to in her diary. *Between the Acts* was meant to be a novel of voices, from which the group consciousness was developed. This passage allows one to see how the voices are depicted through the perspective of the narrator and represented by the all-inclusive "they."

Throughout *Between the Acts* the narrator is able to observe the actions of characters as if it is literally present among them, noting their gestures and actions, yet it goes even deeper by knowing what is going on within the minds of each character. It also remains closely connected to the characters in the novel by understanding each of their consciousnesses as well as the consciousnesses of the collective body of characters. However, the narrator is also not a force that the novel hinges on in order to fully understand the characters. Unlike in *To the Lighthouse*, dialogue plays a greater role in *Between the Acts*, leaving the narrator with less of a necessity to convey the thoughts and feelings of the characters in Woolf's final novel. That is not to say that the narrator abstains from this part completely; there are many instances in *Between the Acts*, such as Giles Oliver's inner feelings about the imminent war, that the narrator communicates to the reader through Giles Oliver's conscious thoughts. It can therefore be argued that despite the use of dialogue that takes away from the reader's dependency on the narrator, it is still to a great extent that the narrator is necessary to this novel in the same way that it is necessary to *To the Lighthouse*. The difference between the two narrators is that the characters have more opportunities to convey their own thoughts and feelings in Woolf's final novel and in some ways are only able to give their own perspectives through dialogue.

Again, dialogue plays a much more significant role in *Between the Acts* than it does in *To the Lighthouse*. There are many instances where the characters are able to communicate their own thoughts and feelings either through outright speech or by mutterings and murmurings. Isa is one character who frequently mutters and murmurs her thoughts aloud. If William Dodge had not heard Isa's murmurings before the

beginning of the pageant, one might have assumed that these murmurings were not truly heard by any other characters. Yet one finds that the thoughts Isa might have left to the narrator to communicate to the reader was developed and delivered satisfactorily to the reader directly. The way dialogue and stream of consciousness work together in *Between the Acts* is quite unique; in many cases, dialogue may be employed for sections of speech only to be finished by the narrative voice. In other cases, dialogue might be given to one character, only to have the narrator communicate the response that the receiver of the dialogue gives to the character who initially spoke. Such an example of the latter cases would be the interaction between Colonel and Mrs. Mayhew. While Colonel Mayhew's speech is given to the reader straight from the character himself, the narrator takes it upon itself to communicate Mrs. Mayhew's response to her husband's criticism about the pageant.

The stream of consciousness is an entity within the novel that adopts a unique form by taking on the group consciousness and representing the voices of all. This strategy was new to Woolf; her diary entries suggest that she wished to create a novel of voices, and to change the form of "I" to "we," as DuPlessis examines in her work. Woolf ultimately does this to a moderate extent; though there are many instances of the group consciousness that are offered to the reader, the traditional stream of consciousness style is also apparent in many sections of the novel. Though Woolf allows for more dialogue between characters within her final novel, the descriptions of her characters' consciousnesses might be likened to the way Woolf expressed the consciousnesses of her characters in *To the Lighthouse*. This is unsurprising, given that Woolf, as a writer, has already established a form of writing that is her own. Yet her attempt at a new form of

writing is apparent, and it sets it apart from Woolf's earlier works by the profound structure and symbolism that is seen throughout *Between the Acts*.

It is difficult to disagree with Leonard Woolf's assessment of his wife's final novel: he believed that "*Between the Acts* had more depth than her other novels and that its 'strange symbolism gave it an almost terrifying profundity and beauty'" (VW A-Z 27). With this in mind, there were certainly a number of influences that led to Woolf's different themes. World War II and the loss of loved ones were among the primary things that Woolf may have taken into consideration. Her ability to create a community that lives during a time in the middle of two world wars is an interesting one, and is likely the result of her own experiences living in a small community like the one she creates in her novel. Her writing style is particularly interesting; having written a number of novels before *Between the Acts*, it is apparent that Woolf attempted to write a novel that could top all of her previous works. The writing alone, including the use of the narrative voice, her own perspective on realism, and the blending of dialogue and stream of consciousness, are all aspects of the novel that indicate Woolf's ever-changing techniques as a writer.

Regarding realism in the novel, Woolf continues to experiment with post-impressionism in *Between the Acts*. The concept of another world is frequently referred to in this novel; such a world is only attainable through a consciousness deeper than one actually understands. Mark Hussey works to convey a better understanding of Woolf's view on reality in *The Singing of the Real World: The Philosophy of Virginia Woolf's Fiction*:

The apprehension of a numinous 'reality' has usually manifested itself as a yearning for transcendence of the world of time and death on the part of a particular character, or a suggestion in the narrative structure of an abstract 'gap' in actual life that cannot be directly referred to in language, but is certainly a potential experience of human being. (96)

Such an understanding of reality is found throughout *Between the Acts* by the representation of the inner conflicts of each character. The opening scene, in which Mr. and Mrs. Haines visit Pointz Hall to see Bart Oliver, refers to an existence between Isa and Mr. Haines that excludes Mrs. Haines: "The words made two rings, perfect rings, that floated them, herself and Haines, like two swans down stream. But his snow-white breast was circled with a tangle of dirty duckweed; and she too, in her webbed feet was entangled, by her husband, the stockbroker" (BTA 4-5). The narrator has no other way of describing the connection between Isa and Mr. Haines, except through metaphor; there are no words to clearly describe the experience that they are having at this moment in the novel. The experience is more like a sensation; it is a feeling that Isa, Mr. Haines, and even Mrs. Haines have in this moment. No physical action occurs at all, which makes the feeling difficult to explain. The reality which Woolf represents in this scene is one that does not exist in the physical world; it exists on a deeper level.

For a deeper level of reality, one might look at Mrs. Swithin, who becomes so engrossed in her book that she finds it difficult to transition back to conscious reality smoothly:

It took her five seconds in actual time, in mind time ever so much longer, to separate Grace herself, with blue china on a tray, from the leather-

covered grunting monster who was about, as the door opened, to demolish a whole tree in the green steaming undergrowth of the primeval forest.

(BTA 7)

This section indicates Mrs. Swithin's temporary confusion with her different realities. Isa Oliver creates a reality with Rupert Haines in her own mind. In "A Sketch of the Past," Woolf explains this reality that is hidden behind the "cotton wool of life" by stating, "From this I reach what I might call a philosophy; at any rate it is a constant idea of mine; that behind the cotton wool is hidden a pattern; that we—I mean all human beings—are connected with this; that the whole world is a work of art; that we are parts of the work of art" (MOB 72). This hidden pattern is the reality beneath the one that the characters understand of themselves throughout *Between the Acts*.

Hussey states that throughout her work, Woolf "vacillates between faith in a meaningful world and a sense of life's absurdity, of a world in which human beings are blown aimlessly about" (TSOTRW 96). Hussey also refers to the historic consciousness expressed in *Between the Acts*, in which history is viewed as spiritual and ever-present. For example, one sees this spirituality in Miss La Trobe's pageant. The pageant represents the history of England up until the present time. It begins with a girl, representing a young England, who explains what is to be expected of the pageant: "Gentles and simples, I address you all . . . / Come hither for our festival/ This is a pageant, all may see / Drawn from our island history" (BTA 53). After the audience watches the actors' portrayals in the satirized representations of historic events, the final scene offers the audience a look into the present by displaying mirrors that reflect the

audience members. This is a great moment in the novel; here is when the divide between the scenes of the pageant and the scenes that occur “*Between the Acts*” is crossed.

There are instances in *Between the Acts* that reveal evidence of Woolf’s view on reality. I have already discussed Mrs. Swithin and her experiences reading her favorite book. The book itself is about history, and the content takes a significant toll on Mrs. Swithin to the point where she is unable to recognize Grace, her maid, as tea is brought to her in the morning. As she immerses herself in thoughts of dinosaurs and rhododendrons, she is occupied so fully by the images that it takes her a while to transition back into the real world that she is part of. Initially, one might think that this is a result of Mrs. Swithin’s age; after all, Grace calls her “Batty” in the novel. Yet one finds with other characters there continues to be an alternate reality that they cherish nearly as much, if not more, than the tangible realities they experience throughout their daily lives.

By these alternate realities, Isa’s character might be taken into consideration when her thoughts dwell on the gentleman farmer, Rupert Haines. Isa’s preoccupation with her thoughts of Mr. Haines, particularly in the first section of the novel when the Haineses are visiting the Olivers’ home, indicates a sort of disjointedness from the rest of the world. Mrs. Haines is even aware of the way Isa and Mr. Haines are drawn together. Though she plans to stamp it out of Mr. Haines’ mind on the car ride home, Isa’s feelings toward Mr. Haines remain throughout much of the novel; these feelings are coupled with Isa’s conflict regarding her husband. In a way, she considers the two men to be part of different dimensions of reality, which she refers to as “inner love” and “outer love.” While Mr. Haines represents the “inner love” that is unable to be acted upon, Giles Oliver represents that tangible “outer love” that is represented by the material things that Isa has

on her table. It is also represented through Isa's and Giles' children, since Isa frequently refers to Giles as "the father of my children." Just as Woolf describes the ways the reality beneath the "cotton wool of life" causes conflict within an individual, so it does in the characters in her novel.

In *Between the Acts*, one sees Woolf's own employment of the term "mind time" when the narrator introduces the reader to Mrs. Swithin for the first time. The narrator notes the transition of Mrs. Swithin's thoughts from "monsters" in her favorite book to the maid Grace's delivery of tea (BTA 7). Here one sees a comparison between the perception of time in one's thoughts and the time by which all live and move in reality. This "actual time" that Woolf notes in Mrs. Swithin's case is likened to the speaking time discussed in the previous chapter. Like speaking time, actual time refers to occurrences happening in the world outside of one's own mind, including other characters and other objects. In this case, actual time takes Grace's character into consideration. Though the measurement of time in Mrs. Swithin's mind may be longer, she and Grace also have a shared understanding of a concept of time that occurs in this shared occurrence.

Watkins notes the reference to mind time in Woolf's novel, referring to actual-time as "object time." She states "Here as in that work, the result is a mysterious conflict between the mind time which people live by and the object time they know they live in" (360). Perhaps here one can take Isa's feelings toward the "romantic gentleman farmer" Rupert Haines into consideration; though these feelings occupy her thoughts, Isa frequently recalls her love for her husband, referring to Giles Oliver as "the father of my children" (BTA 10). This is not a reference to time, but the conflict is similar to that which Watkins refers. Isa knows that her love for her husband is tangible and accessible

in the real world that she lives in, but her love for Mr. Haines exists only in her imagination as a sort of love that cannot be expressed. Isa differentiates between her love for Mr. Haines and her love for her husband as “inner love” and “outer love.”

In this novel, the narrator not only observes the characters’ physical movements and expressions, but is also privy to certain inner thoughts and feelings that the characters dwell on. From time to time, the narrator steps aside and allows the characters to express themselves frequently through dialogue. Overall, however, *Between the Acts* presents a conspicuous blending of dialogue and the stream of consciousness, which is the result of Woolf’s creation of a collective narrative, or the narrative of a group consciousness. In order to create this group consciousness, Woolf constructed a novel where all barriers amongst minds disappeared, and all characters are granted the opportunity to connect with one another. Without this elimination of barriers between inner and outer speech, and without the blending of stream of consciousness and dialogue, the creation of a group consciousness, or the group protagonist, would not have been possible. The narrative device of group consciousness sets Woolf apart from a number of her contemporaries; Woolf uses these approaches to experiment with a post-impressionist poetics. Woolf therefore transforms realism through the narrator’s function and the blending of dialogue and stream of consciousness to create a forward-looking modernist novel; which is, in fact, a work of literary post-impressionism.

## CONCLUSION

In writing this thesis, my goal was to analyze the blending of dialogue and stream of consciousness in Virginia Woolf's novels. The stream of consciousness style is one that is frequently noted in Woolf's works, and it was a style that I wished to further analyze and learn more about in relation to how dialogue is used in narratives. This idea developed into an analysis of not only these poetic constructions, but also of Woolf's view on realism and the ways that her work is distinguished as some of the first literary works to be considered post-impressionist.

Dialogue and stream of consciousness were two concepts that remain prevalent throughout *To the Lighthouse* and *Between the Acts* in order to know each character on a personal level. One learns the actions of the characters as well as the thoughts of the characters through the narrator. Given the opportunity to continue and expand my work, I would examine more closely the parallelisms in the narrative strategies of these novels. For example, there are certain parallels that could be noted between Augustus Carmichael and Mrs. Manresa. Though these two characters vary greatly in personality, the narrative strategies used to portray them are similar in that they are both observed specifically from an outsider's perspective. The narrator never ventures into these characters' minds, leaving the interpretation of their personalities to other characters' consciousnesses and the readers themselves. Another addition I would make would be to include an analysis of *The Waves* in light of Woolf's post-impressionist poetics. *The Waves* progresses through a series of soliloquies by the characters, allowing readers to understand their perspectives of the world and the events that they experience with little or no interference

from a narrative voice. This narrative strategy reflects yet another unique writing style Woolf uses, which would be interesting to examine further in light of the analyses of *To the Lighthouse* and *Between the Acts*.

The woman artist portrayed in Woolf's two novels would also be something that I might expand on further. There is a parallel that exists between Lily Briscoe and Miss La Trobe, who are seen as the creative beings in each respective novel. Their personalities also run parallel to that of Woolf's own personality, who is a woman artist in her own right as a writer. Developing a closer analysis of the portraits of the woman artist that Woolf uses throughout her works would be an interesting endeavor. Furthermore, I would look more closely at the group consciousness, which is a major component of my current work. I think it would be interesting to develop this idea further and to examine how it developed from modernist women writers' works, as DuPlessis stated in her text. It would also be worth researching how the group consciousness is used in contemporary works at the moment. The group consciousness is surely a mode used in contemporary fiction, and it would be interesting to see how it is used compared to the way Woolf uses the mode in her literature. It is through Woolf that I first became aware of the group consciousness, and I feel that it would be a worthwhile endeavor to find uses of this mode in contemporary works and analyze the ways in which artists and writers use it in their own unique ways just as Virginia Woolf did in her novels.

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