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# “life Is A Luminous Halo”: Gender And Androgynous Time In Virginia Woolf

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**“LIFE IS A LUMINOUS HALO”: GENDER AND ANDROGYNOUS TIME IN  
VIRGINIA WOOLF**

by

**ASHLEY WHITMORE**

**DISSERTATION**

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

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MAJOR: ENGLISH

Approved By:

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## **DEDICATION**

*For John and Isla, unconditionally.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Though there might be no consensus for an exact definition of modernism, many would agree that formal experimentation characterizes many works of modernist fiction. Experimentation with time is just as an important and common characteristic of modernist literature as is stream-of-consciousness narrative, fragmentary writings with multiple perspectives, challenges to social norms, and aspects of ambiguity. Yet studies of representations of time in modernist texts either look at solely male-authored texts, such as Joyce's *Ulysses*, Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*, and Ford's *The Good Soldier*, or only use a very small sampling of female-authored works. Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* are two works that are occasionally featured, but rarely are representations of time connected to representations of gender in such analyses. However, when the narrative representation of a linear framework of time, a representation that often works to divide and measure in texts, is abandoned, other boundaries that were once viewed as sturdy and impermeable, such as the division between genders and even individuals, become flexible and may even collapse. There is a strong connection between Woolf's gender politics and her experiments with time. In particular, the temporalities<sup>1</sup> of the novel that are created through the ways the author, narrator, and characters structure and organize time, as well as how characters experience time. Representations of "material" time (in the figure of clocks, watches, and calendars, for example) in Woolf's literature become an important construction to grant alternative modes of expression as well as break down restrictive barriers that once repressed feminine experience. In addition, analyses of Woolf's novels *Jacob's Room*, *Orlando: A Biography*, and *The Waves* reveal that

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<sup>1</sup> In this dissertation, the word "time" is used to denote the passing of time from to present, and the relationship between future, present, and past. "Temporality" will be used in discussions of characters' relationships to time, as well as the process and result of the organization of time.

these texts, which span from 1922 through 1931, showcase Woolf's evolving thoughts on time and gender and their important relationship. Analysis of these texts showcase Woolf's desire to explore beyond the boundaries of traditional cyclical feminine time and restrictive masculine societal time, and may serve to highlight the same struggles that occur in her other novels. While Woolf's portrayal of time in her novels does challenge the linear controlling models of constructed time that has been characterized as "masculine,"<sup>2</sup> she does not completely eliminate men in the development of a new un-masculinized, but not purely feminine, time. Rather, men's experiences are an integral part in her narratives, and the breaking down of societal temporal norms opens up those experiences to women and vice-versa. In breaking down the barriers of this constructed masculine societal time, other socially constructed boundaries begin to break down as well, with perhaps none as noticeable as the boundaries between male and female. Thus, in searching for a feminine time, Woolf's novels create an androgynous time, a time that flows without prejudice between genders and acts to connect rather than divide. This is a time that is not controlled by external figures nor is a reaction against that control. It is rather a time that relishes in the breakdown of binaries, a time that exists when one is operating in multiple temporalities of external and internal life. In Woolf's novels, it becomes the time where real connection can be made between individuals as it is a time that acknowledges and incorporates others into one's own personal time.

The androgynous temporality that develops over the course of these three novels is reminiscent of French philosopher Henri Bergson's concepts of time. Bergson was highly influential in the first half of the twentieth-century, winning the Nobel Prize in literature in 1927. He lectured in England, and his works were translated into a number of languages, including

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<sup>2</sup> In *Time is of the Essence: Temporality, Gender and the New Woman*, Patricia Murphy argues that time becomes masculinized in the late nineteenth century as a linear progression that can be measured.

English. Thus, his ideas enjoyed widespread popularity during the time of Woolf's writings and his intricate concepts of time align with modernist authors' preoccupation with the subject. In *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, his doctoral thesis, Bergson argues that time is erroneously spatialized despite not being a unit of space. In opposition to what Bergson calls "real duration" – that is, the time that one lives and experiences – time is too often presented as a mechanistic concept with linear, fixed, and measurable qualities. The attempt to measure time, to even represent time, ignores the flux and movement that is duration. Mary Ann Gillies notes this problem, writing, "the act of writing necessarily spatializes experience" because "[l]anguage cannot capture the flux of life because it relies on analyzing, organizing, and spatializing experiences [i.e. organize them on the page] so that they might be communicated to others" (103). Despite the difficulty, Bergson believed that writers could use language to showcase the lived experience of time, writing in *Time and Free Will* that successful writers could convey "under this appearance of logic [in language] a fundamental absurdity, under the juxtaposition of simple states an infinite permeation of a thousand impressions which have already ceased to exist the instant they are named" (133). Such a project finds a fertile home in the narrative formal innovations of the modernist era as the conventional linear storylines cannot properly represent a subjective temporality.

This is not to say, however, that Woolf immediately succeeds in representing a life void of gendered and temporal boundaries. There is first the attempt to give voice to women in a male-controlled society in *Jacob's Room*. Woolf creates a female narrator for Jacob's story and gives many central scenes of the novel to women, a move that juxtaposes feminine and masculine lives and time. The female presence in the novel conveys the attempt to dissolve gender boundaries and results in a push past singular temporalities into the developing



androgynous conception of time. This androgynous time is able to move beyond the male political power of socially constructed time and instead privileges Bergson's concept of *durée* or duration, granting importance to the individual's unique sense of and experience with time that is in constant flow. The use of spatial language to describe time influences our understanding of time: Bergson conceptualizes time operating as a flux, but argues that in language we are actually setting up time as separate static moments placed next to one another with no actual flow occurring between moments. In contrast, Bergson argues that the continuous flow by which we acquire experiences is immeasurable. Duration is always in motion and one cannot measure time with static measurements. This is a time that can move quickly and then slowly, that can project an individual forward while still granting the person access to a past that is involved in the present.

Bergson argues that duration is in contrast to external time, the time that one must take part in to participate within society. This external world of spatialized time is not entirely forced upon people but is a reconstructed spatialization of *durée*, an external reality of an inner world because the spatialization is needed to understand life and to interact with others. Gillies expands on this trait of Bergsonian time:

In other words, though real living goes on in the indivisible realm of *durée*, this world is broken into segments so we can explain, analyse, and even understand the nature of experiences. Although the conscious reconstruction of our experiences distorts them, this distortion is inevitable, because of the impossibility of ever halting the flow of *durée* and because of the equally inevitable human need to violate this flow in order to assert our will over the natural environment. (12)

As we live in communities, we must make sense of our lives in the external world even if it removes ourselves from *durée*, just as writers must continue to make sense of time even if language is unable to fully represent the concept. Gillies goes on to argue that Bergson, though

obviously favoring the experience of *durée*, “establishes a middle ground in which the two theories can live in a somewhat hostile, uncomfortable truce” (13). My argument focuses not on this Bergsonian middle ground, how or even if he establishes it, but rather on the crossing point of the internal and external. That point of contact, when one is still open to *durée* but also open to others around him/her, is where Woolf develops an androgynous time that experiences the subjective temporality of the individual while also connecting to the individual temporality of others. When androgynous time is fully developed in *The Waves*, it asserts both individuality and connectivity through an assertion of ego. The contradictions of internal and external, male and female, others and self need to connect while still maintaining unique identities, to access both history and present without benefiting one over the other.

Woolf is not the only modernist female author who is interested in representations of time. Many female modernist writers, such as Jean Rhys, Dorothy Richardson, and Elizabeth Bowen, experimented with different forms of temporality and memory to develop alternative representations of time that work against a culturally constructed conception of time that upholds masculine and ruling-class power. However, while these women’s novels share modernist characteristics of fragmentary writings with multiple perspectives, stream-of-consciousness narratives, and, of course, a-linear temporality, Woolf is not often analyzed in relation to her fellow female modernist writers and their discussions of temporality in both plot and/or narrative technique.

Dorothy Richardson published *Pointed Roofs*, the first volume in the thirteen piece *Pilgrimage*, in 1915. With this publication, Richardson is credited as writing the first complete stream-of-consciousness novel. To represent the life and interiority of a young modern woman, Richardson’s narrative technique must adapt to representing the variety and flux of influences

that occur in the interior of a subject. Miriam Henderson experiences events in an immediate time rather than retrospectively as a figure in the present reflecting on the past. However, the timeline of the novel is not as simple to follow as a linear *Bildungsroman* would suggest. Scenes follow one another with no smooth transition and no temporal marker. Days, months, and years disappear, unaccounted for in the text. Miriam's reality is constructed through her mind and, as such, obeys a different set of temporal rules.

Like Richardson, Jean Rhys uses stream of consciousness to present feminine experiences. Rhys's novels of the 1920's and 1930's showcase power relations through temporality. Men are those who control and are distributors of time, while women are both monetarily and temporally poor, fighting a constant battle with time that will mark them as sexually undesirable and thus unable to make money off a youthful sexuality. Rhys then moves from presenting time as a means of control for the oppressive class to a nonlinear temporality in *Voyage in the Dark* and *Good Morning, Midnight*; thus, time becomes a device that women writers use to subvert masculine repression while asserting through narrative experiments their unique subjectivities and experiences. Rhys's narration also delves into fragmentary recollections from her heroines as they struggle to assert their identities into societies marked by ordered time.

The plots, actions, and development of female protagonists are largely influenced by representations of time in many of Elizabeth Bowen's novels, including *The Last September* (1929), *The House in Paris* (1935), *The Death of the Heart* (1938), and *The Heat of the Day* (1949). War creates a suspended time in *The Last September*, while constant references to time and time-keeping devices in *The Heat of the Day* represent the desire to control time in an environment where the destruction of war has created a violent tear between the past and future.

In addition, Bowen's central characters are women who are often troubled by the passing of time in relation to their own lives. While Rhys's female characters are often aging outside of an accepted sexually desirable age, Lois in *The Last September* and Portia of *The Death of the Heart* are stumbling into an age where they are considered sexual beings and are unsure of how to handle this new identity.

While experimental representations of time are occurring in Richardson, Rhys, and Bowen's works, Woolf is unique in attempting to override the power of socially constructed time. Bowen and Rhys's novels often present isolated female protagonists whose tragic fates might be a result of temporal breakdowns, while Richardson creates a community that is all-female. However, Woolf is interested in breaking down the binaries that separate a masculine time of control and order and a feminine time of nature that places women outside of history and culture. In her attempts to disrupt these binaries, as well as the binaries of gender, Woolf's androgynous time operates in the hazy middle ground of an individual's subjective internal sense of time and the socially constructed measured time that controls an entire society.

In *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf brings up androgyny in the androgynous mind, a mind that is not purely one sex or the other. To keep the two sexes divided is disruptive and "interferes with the unity of the mind" (97). In fact, keeping the two sexes separate is hard work and can have alarming consequences, perhaps most especially for women. Woolf writes,

Again if one is a woman one is often surprised by a sudden splitting off of consciousness, say in walking down Whitehall, when from being the natural inheritor of that civilisation, she becomes, on the contrary, outside of it, alien and critical. Clearly the mind is always altering its focus, and bringing the world into different perspectives. But some of these states of mind seem, even if adopted spontaneously, to be less comfortable than others. In order to keep oneself continuing in them one is unconsciously holding something back, and gradually the repression becomes an effort. But there may be some state of mind in which one could continue without effort because nothing is required to be held back. (97)

This state of being in a single-gendered mind is strenuous work as the separation does not occur naturally but rather is shaped by societal influences. This separation of the male and female aspects of the mind mirrors the separations between women and history, women and a time outside of their socially defined position. Instead, a truly creative mind would have access to both sexes. Likewise, androgynous time operates without any barriers, or rather through barriers to break down divisions of the different temporalities of self. There is a fusion of self, as well as the possibility of fusion with others, in androgynous time that is not possible in purely internal or external temporalities. In regard to the androgynous mind, Woolf writes, “It is when this fusion takes place that the mind is fully fertilised and uses all its faculties. Perhaps a mind that is purely masculine cannot create, any more than a mind that is purely feminine, I thought” (290). In order to truly create, one’s mind must access all capabilities of the mind, regardless of the boundaries that might be imposed. Aspects of both genders are needed for a true creation. Woolf uses Samuel Taylor Coleridge as an example of such a mind. His androgynous mind is instrumental in creativity, as Woolf writes that it is “resonant and porous; that it transmits emotion without impediment; that it is naturally creative, incandescent and undivided” (292). The forcible distinction and separation between the feminine and the masculine is unnatural and harmful to true creativity and experience, but, at the same time, this separation is normalized through societal expectations. Yet there are glimpses into androgynous minds and what they can produce, as Woolf writes that a sentence of Coleridge’s “explodes and gives birth to all kinds of other ideas, and that is the only sort of writing of which one can say that it has the secret of perpetual life” (293).

This well-known passage from *A Room of One’s Own* has garnered some critical debate. Elaine Showalter writes in “Killing the Angel in the House: The Autonomy of Women Writers”

that Woolf's idea of the androgynous mind is an attempt to avoid femininity. Showalter argues that

Virginia Woolf developed a literary theory which had the effect of neutralizing her own conflict between the desire to present a woman's whole experience, and the fear of such revelation. It is a theory of the androgynous mind and spirit; a fusion of masculine and feminine elements, calm, stable, subtle, unimpeded by consciousness of sex or individuality. She meant it to be a luminous and fulfilling symbol, but like most highly principled utopian projections, her vision of the serene androgynous imagination lacks zest and vigor. Whatever else one may say of androgyny, it represents an escape from the confrontation with femininity. (341)

Showalter argues that this androgynous mind stamps out the creativity of the female mind and de-privileges feminine experience. Women writing with the aim of androgyny do not showcase the anger that experience would surely produce, or so Showalter claims. Showalter's criticisms attempt to give voice to the female experience but, at the same time, work to claim that there is only one female experience of anger and hostility and only one appropriate way to express it in writing. When Woolf fails to express these feelings in a way that Showalter recognizes, Woolf is accused of avoiding her sex. This essentialist view is particularly the type of narrowing viewpoint that Woolf herself warns against. Such an argument essentializes sex and does not allow for the coming together of different aspects of self, an important factor of androgynous time.

Toril Moi argues that Showalter's reading of Woolf is still operating under a patriarchal mindset and does not appreciate the deconstructive nature of Woolf's writing. Moi writes in *Sexual/Textual Politics* that Woolf "radically undermine[s] the notion of the unitary self, the central concept of Western male humanism and one crucial to Showalter's feminism" (7). Moi argues throughout her introduction to *Sexual/Textual Politics* that Showalter's feminism is

influenced in a large part by Western patriarchal ideology and, as such, cannot understand the deconstructive nature of Woolf's writings. Moi writes,

What feminists such as Showalter and [Marcia] Holly fail to grasp is that the traditional humanism they represent is in effect part of patriarchal ideology. At its centre is the seamlessly unified self – either individual or collective – which is commonly called 'Man'. As Luce Irigaray or Helene Cixous would argue, this integrated self is in fact a phallic self, constructed on the model of the self-contained, powerful phallus. (8)

Showalter's reading does not recognize intentional ambiguity, Moi argues, and instead insists on solid and unified identities: "Showalter wants the literary text to yield the reader a certain security, a firm perspective from which to judge the world. Woolf, on the other hand, seems to practice what we might now call a 'deconstructive' form of writing, one that engages with and thereby exposes the duplicitous nature of discourse" (9). Woolf's idea of androgyny certainly does not allow for a completely unambiguous or solid identity; for the concept to be realized one must allow for an un-centered self that is not static. Woolf does not present one authentic human experience, as Moi argues that Showalter desires from feminist writers, but rather allows for a multitude of experiences that do nothing to take away from the "authenticity" of the character. If Woolf is interested in opening up human experience, then solely focusing on one half of the gendered population, of one half of that experience, and of one half of the gendered mind would only provide the limited illustrations of life that she is attempting to move beyond. Showalter's reading of Woolf's androgyny limits its potential by seeing it as separating one gender from another and privileging a non-feminine experience, when, in fact, it embraces all the multitudes and contradictions that make up the human mind and experience. Woolf's objective is not to portray a purely feminine life experience but instead to dissolve the boundaries that mark a life as purely feminine or purely masculine, as well as a life lived completely within one's own concept of time or within another's time.

The successful fusion of others is apparent in *The Waves*, but before the intermingled relationships in that novel, Woolf writes of the individual stories of Jacob Flanders and Orlando. The individual is particularly important in Bergson's theory of time as one's body is a meeting point of past and present. In *Thinking in Time: An Introduction to Henri Bergson*, Suzanne Guerlac comments on the importance of the body to Bergson's philosophy, writing that "Our bodies, as centers of action, come into contact with matter (or images) in the present" (120). Time acts on the body in the present but also contains the past in memory, both physical and mental. Through repetition, a body can remember an often performed physical gesture, thus having the past reappear in the present. In addition to the body's physical memory, Guerlac argues that in Bergson's thought the body conceptualizes time through consciousness, developing a mental memory. She explains, "Consciousness serves the body as center of action by synthesizing the heterogeneous rhythms of duration into temporal horizons of past, present, and future" (122). Thus, the individual is the center for conceptualizing the passing and experiencing of time; if one's unique body and mind conceptualize time for that individual, then time is a subjective experience.

This concept of individual time becomes important in memory. Past, present, and future are always connected, but each experience of individual moments is always different. As one lives, one's past becomes larger as it conserves past experiences. Yet, when one has a memory or re-experiences the past, one does not simply relive the memory exactly as it was the first time it was lived because that past memory has changed due to the living that has occurred from the time of that memory to the present time of remembering. Duration connects past and present, providing access to past memories while contrasting the continual difference in their experience. As Guerlac explains, "Memory does not proceed from the present back into the past. It proceeds



from the past into the present, by actualizing itself” (140). The past is then never completely separated from the present – it continues to assert its importance and occurrence in one’s life even after the event has transpired. Memory, therefore, is an important event in the interior of an individual and one that comes into play often in Woolf’s novels.

Bergson’s influence on Woolf, and modernist writers in general, has been noted in criticism, but the freedom that such a philosophy grants Woolf in connecting her characters, expanding time, and creating an androgynous time has not been explored. Mary Ann Gillies explores Bergson’s importance to British modernist writers, including Woolf, in *Henri Bergson and British Modernism*. Gillies clearly conveys how Woolf incorporates Bergson’s philosophies of time, intuition, and memory in her literary works. In relation to time, Gillies argues that Woolf’s “moments of being” are intense and rare moments where time swells into a brief moment of time, and real living occurs. Gillies writes that “These brief moments appear to arrest the flow of time, but they also bring about a conflation of times as each individual moment is related to previous moments that are resurrected almost instantaneously” (109). Gillies states that these moments are moments of pure duration, instances where past and present coexist and the individual can feel and experience that coexistence. However, Gillies insists on the *moments* in Woolf, ignoring the flow that continually moves throughout these moments. While arguing that Woolf’s representations of these moments are intended to depict the temporal and not the spatial, Gillies maintains the importance of individual moments in time in Woolf’s literature and argues that Woolf’s interests lie in representations of time’s importance on individuals and that this occurs in single, separate instances. Gillies writes, “Each is a brief, sharp representation of a clear, extraordinary experience. Adding such moments together creates a sustained moment of being that, for example, may encompass a lifetime in one day of a character’s existence (*Mrs*

*Dalloway*), or the combined lifetimes of several characters as revealed by the intersection of selected moments in their individual lives (*The Waves*)” (109-110). While Bergson’s influence on Woolf can be seen in her use of subjective temporalities and the mixture of past and present, this dissertation will argue that it is erroneous to believe Woolf’s concept of time is a string of individual and separated moments following one another. While there are certain instances in an individual’s life that are of great importance, Woolf represents the flux of time by representing the connections among individuals in *Jacob’s Room*, *Orlando*, and *The Waves*.

The androgynous time that is developed and explored in *Jacob’s Room*, *Orlando*, and *The Waves* is able to flourish outside of traditional heterosexual romance plots. These three novels, like all of Woolf’s novels after *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day*, do not contain plots that revolve around heterosexual romantic relationships. Moving beyond the romance plot, Woolf has more freedom to experiment with breaking down the barriers between genders and exploring such relationships beyond marriage and courtship. In *Writing Beyond the Ending*, Rachel Blau DuPlessis argues that the heterosexual romance plot restricts and frames gender, shortening the important timeline of female experience to that of being courted and married. DuPlessis writes, “The romance plot separates love and quest, values sexual asymmetry, including the division of labor by gender, is based on extremes of sexual difference, and evokes an aura around the couple itself” (5). DuPlessis argues that certain writers, like Woolf, grant female characters alternatives to ending their story at marriage and present a “‘bisexual oscillation’ in the psychic makeup of characters, in the resolutions of texts, in the relationships portrayed” (37). This “bisexual oscillation” of characters can be seen in novels that contain groups or strong relationships between characters where gender boundaries break down. DuPlessis claims that Woolf’s later novels move from a single character into a “common

protagonist.” DuPlessis writes that a common protagonist, consisting of a group of people of various ages, genders, and sexualities, “creates a structure in which couples, individuals, walls between public and private, polarized sexes, and closures in family houses are subject to strong oppositional formations” (48). DuPlessis cites *The Years*, *Between the Acts*, and *The Waves* as novels that have this communal protagonist. Thus, DuPlessis here hints at the importance of both community and time that moves beyond a small linear representation of life in Woolf’s novels and the ability to break down gender constraints as well as move beyond the heterosexual love plots for female writers and characters. While it is easy to see the groups that make the communal protagonist in *The Years*, *Between the Acts*, and *The Waves*, *Jacob’s Room* and *Orlando: A Biography* also feature a narrative that is developed because of a group and, as such, presents a “bisexual oscillation” of characters that together present a complicated point of view. This dissertation will focus on the similarities and developments in Woolf’s representations of time and its connection to gender in *Jacob’s Room*, *Orlando*, and *The Waves*.

*Jacob’s Room*, published in 1922 after *The Voyage Out* (1915) and *Night and Day* (1919), signifies the beginning of Woolf’s experimental novels and, as such, presents an ideal spot to first mark her interest in temporal representation as well as the importance of the non-romantic relationship between genders. This is not to say that there are no heterosexual relationships in *Jacob’s Room* (or the two other novels to be analyzed in this dissertation), but rather that the development and progression of the plot are not moved along by a stereotypical male/female romance and are instead interested in the communal impressions of women in telling the story of a man. These impressions appear to illuminate the figure of Jacob, often connecting years through recollections and flashbacks. After *Jacob’s Room*, Woolf wrote *Mrs. Dalloway*, the novel that solidified her position as an important British novelist, and *To the*

*Lighthouse*, her bestselling novel. Both novels are often included in critical analyses, but *Orlando*, which Woolf called a “joke” in her diary, has not shared the same critical attention despite the interesting representations of a-linear time and unstable gender. Though *Orlando* focuses on one protagonist, the switches in gender as well as the suspended time suggest that, more than a joke, Woolf used the novel as a vehicle to further her experiments with time and gender in ways that perhaps a “serious” novel was not ready for. Following *Orlando*, Woolf published *The Waves* and developed her interest in time to show how the movement of time, though subjective, can be felt by a group of people made up of men and women. Though the group contains individuals of different sexes and sexualities, time connects their experiences throughout years and space.

While it is important to note that Woolf’s interest in temporality has not gone unnoticed by critics, often these critiques resort to explaining Woolf’s temporal representations as either cyclical in nature or episodic with “moments of being” falling in a progressive line with other essential moments. Jill Morris, like Gillies, argues in *Time and Timelessness in Virginia Woolf* that Woolf’s concept of time is deeply influenced by Bergson’s duration. Again, Bergson’s concept of duration as the inner temporality of a being, a non-quantitative essence that does not act in accordance with constructed temporal measurements, is very helpful in bringing to light Woolf’s own experiments with time. However, Morris uses cyclical metaphors, such as the change of seasons or the movement of day to night, that oversimplify Woolf’s concept of time found in her novels.

In addition, Morris’s readings of the novels tend to simplify the complicated construction of narration that is present in Woolf’s novels. For example, she argues that *Jacob’s Room* is the weakest of Woolf’s experimental novels because of its lack of unity in creating a full character in

Jacob Flanders and in the inclusion of a narrator who Morris claims is the mouthpiece of the author. Morris ends her argument on *Jacob's Room* by contending that the past is more important than the present in the novel. While *Jacob's Room* is Woolf's first entry into the narrative experiments that she will continue to develop and arguably perfect through the rest of her career, Morris's criticism is misplaced. The absence of a fully developed central character is not an error on Woolf's part but rather showcases the common Woolfian theme of the inability to truly know a person. What's more, time plays a major factor in communicating this inability as well as aligning the other voices of the novel, voices made up of women who encountered Jacob throughout his life. It is striking that these voices that make up Jacob as a figure are predominantly female. Instead of being entirely episodic, as Morris argues, time in *Jacob's Room* radiates from the center of inquiry (in this case, Jacob) to those outside of him who all have their own observations that combine to present an illuminative picture of this man throughout his life. Morris quotes Woolf from the latter's essay "Modern Fiction": "Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end" (qtd in Morris 14). This quotation does not imagine life and time as a linear progression, but neither does it suggest a cyclical nature. Instead, the image of a "luminous halo" suggests a center point composed of an individual that still keeps with the individual's time of Bergson's duration. From this individual, time and life radiate out to engulf all around it, including people, events, past, and future. This halo does not move forward or backwards, or even in a circle. It instead radiates and grows, encompassing a past, future, and present, multiple temporalities, and multiple subjectivities. However, the importance of this quotation is not explored in Morris.

In *A Specially Tender Piece of Eternity: Virginia Woolf and the Experience of Time*, Teresa Prudente furthers the discussion of Woolf's representations of time by investigating time as both a theme and as a narrative technique in Woolf's novels. Prudente uses Paul Ricoeur's concept of a-linear time to explore the different constructions of time in Woolf's novels that work to create "moments of ecstasy." This a-linear time is an expansion of the temporal moment that works to include the past and present into one singular moment. Prudente writes, "The instantaneous quality of the act of remembering in the ecstatic moment leads to the overlapping of the two dimensions of time, past and present, and to the expansion of that instant" (25). This expansion of time can be connected to the halo of time, but this halo is ever moving, ever fluid. The present expands, but to suggest its crystallization, as Prudente does, is to ground the present moment to a fixed point. Prudente is interested in the way time's ineffability comes to light at ecstatic moments in the text, and her insight into these moments of ecstasy is enlightening in their relationship with a-linear time. Yet, like Morris, Prudente's project is not to expose the relationship between Woolf's narrative temporality and gender as her examinations of Woolf's narrative techniques does not show an interest in the tensions between masculinity and femininity.

Since time is an important and noted factor in Woolf's writings, comparisons to Proust are numerous in criticism. While these writings normally focus on memory rather than specifically on representations of time, Michel Dion looks at the connection between time and memory in "Between the Dialectics of Time-Memory and the Dialectics of Duration-Moment: Marcel Proust and Virginia Woolf in Dialogue." Looking at *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, Dion writes that "The basic characteristic of Woolf's time is that time is projected" (155). The future cannot be controlled, and it is this unpredictability that influences how that

future existence will be experienced. However, this argument assumes a linear timeline that Woolf's narratives do not follow. The future of Woolf's narratives is not completely divorced from the past or the present moment. Dion later argues, "Nothing relevant can be said about moments of human life if we do not adopt the domination of the moment over the three traditional ways to look at duration (present, past, and future)" (156). Still, like Prudente, Dion does not go far enough in moving that moment beyond an episodic relation of time as large moments that, while swollen with the past, follow other large moments in a linear progression.

In addition to not exploring the connection between gender and time, Dion's essay is characteristic of much of the shorter criticisms on Woolf and time: these pieces routinely fail to move beyond *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs. Dalloway* in their analysis. In particular, careful analysis of *Jacob's Room*, *Orlando: A Biography*, and *The Waves* has not been produced in the numbers that *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs. Dalloway* have enjoyed. For example, Judy R. Rosen's brief paper "Deviation and Acceleration: Time in the Story and Narrative of *Orlando*" offers interesting insights on the role of time in *Orlando*, but the brevity of the article does not allow for the rich reading the text deserves. In addition, Rosen is unable to place *Orlando* outside of a linear temporal reality. Instead, Rosen's criticism relies on a conventional linear timeline which is exactly what the narrative and the character of the biographer in *Orlando* are working to subvert.

In her essay, "Time Passes: Virginia Woolf, Post-Impressionism, and Cambridge Time," Ann Banfield opens up her argument with a quotation from *Orlando*, though the process of time that she describes in the essay does not match up effectively with the time concept that is presented in the book. Banfield argues that Woolf's conception of time is one that passes as "a series of still moments" which evolve from short stories to the novel via the form of an

“interlude” (471). Time in Banfield’s argument remains stifled, measurable, linear. She writes, “Each of the succeeding novels adopts a formal structure which is based on some version of clock time and in which the sequence is represented by successive representative moments: the leaps of centuries of English history and literary history that structure *Orlando*” (504). However, this concept of time does not readily apply to *Orlando*. Literary history and the progression of centuries do occur in conventional order in *Orlando*, but it is an oversimplification to characterize the novel’s movement as a set of still moments placed in linear succession. Time in *Orlando* is neither linear nor easily measurable; it is fluid, slippery, elusive, and is definitely not made up of still images that come to life like a flip book. Rather, time accumulates and flows continuously throughout the narrative. Time’s fluidity is represented in Orlando’s “The Oak Tree,” the poem that he/she continually works on for centuries. The single manuscript contains edits, stains, and even blood, marking evidence of Orlando’s past life that still continues to exist in the present. Time does not act as a fence, separating one event from another, and thus the passing of years in *Orlando* represents a true life that forever is marked with past experiences and memories, like the badly stained manuscript. Despite the fluidity of time in *Orlando*, time in Banfield’s argument is similar to Gillies and Morris: episodic, with still moment following still moment.

Of course, Woolf and her fellow modernists were not the first to address issues with time in their writings. Time and literature have always had a complicated relationship. In general, authors and readers must make some basic assumptions about the nature of time. When reading a novel, one can usually assume that events progress as time passes. The reader must enter into a new and author-created mode of time to understand the temporality of the book and be able to place events in relation to the “timescape” of the narrative. There is the intrinsic logic that the



reader will read the beginning of the book first and, as time passes, will reach the end in a somewhat linear fashion. Time passes in the narrative as well as in the environment of the reader. In addition, the author is charged with the task of representing time in language – a difficult, if not impossible, task. J. Hillis Miller contends that representing time in a language that is not spatial is nearly impossible. Miller cites Heidegger’s argument in *Sein und Zeit* (*Time and Being*, 1927) that words used to represent time in Western languages ultimately “transform time into space” (87). As a result, time “escapes direct representation” regardless of our attempts to put it into language (87).

This problem with representing time is a reason why literature is preoccupied with temporal depiction – how can time be put into language? However, while some, perhaps the majority, of writers present an uncomplicated representation of time in their writing, others choose to make obvious the difficulty of representing such an abstraction in language. Miller notes that fifth-century theologian and philosopher St. Augustine produces one of the earliest reflections on time in *The Confessions*. Like many that will follow, St. Augustine is able to detail many characteristics of time but admits that he, in the end, cannot explain it. Nevertheless, Miller argues that this inability grants great creativity to literature. Miller asserts that while scientists and philosophers disagree about time, their aim is a universal definition. On the contrary, literary works present a plethora of temporal representations without the anxiety of finding that universal definition.

While time will continue to be a factor for writers, it was not perhaps until Laurence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*, published in volumes from December 1759 through January 1767, that the conventional representation of time was notably subverted. Sterne manipulates time as a structural device of the novel and subverts many of the assumptions of time that one has when

entering into a novel. Sterne plays on the notion that the reader has two different temporalities to keep in mind: his/her own and the temporality of the novel itself. Though *Tristram Shandy* is attempting to tell the linear tale of the title character's birth, the events of the novel unfold in a nonlinear fashion. Characters' times are suspended as Shandy inserts his own digressions and tangents, and the narrator calls attention to his own writing of the novel. In addition to various unusual reproductions of time, Sterne gives a nod to the difficulty of representing time in language by experimenting with a graphic depiction of the concept. In an attempt to illustrate the first five volumes of the novel, *Tristram Shandy* illustrates time in five unique wavy lines that suggest the nonlinear plot of the novel. Sterne's experimental novel is continually calling attention to itself as a constructed text in these depictions of time, as well as its other subversions of traditional novel traits, such as the narrator's three separate and important roles of narrator, character, and author of the text. These subversions of time in both plot and narrative overthrow narrative assumptions and direct attention to the artificiality of the novel and plot, a concept that Woolf will later address in *Jacob's Room* and *Orlando*. In fact, in her time-bending biographical parody *Orlando*, which plays with many of these same subversions, Sterne is listed as an influence.

Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* is a unique piece of work that subverts a number of traits characteristic of the novel, subversions that will become popular again during the beginning of the twentieth century. Entering the twentieth century, modernist literature showcases specific anxieties of a new time, including incorporating into its literary form representations of the urban existence and crowds, a result of the Industrial Revolution. The opening of the twentieth century occurs in the wake of the quickening pace and transformed experience of time that came as a result of inventions like the steam engine, railroad, electric light, telegraph, telephone,

automobile, airplane, and machine gun. In *The Culture of Time and Space 1880 – 1918*, Stephen Kern argues that the boom in technological innovations during the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century created changes in thinking about time. Such changes, he argues, were accompanied by “independent cultural developments such as the stream-of-consciousness novel, psychoanalysis, Cubism, and the theory of relativity,” which also inspired change in thinking about time and space (1). In *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism*, Pericles Lewis argues that modern innovations enabled people to bridge great distances while representing the visible and audible world in new forms, as well as create a quicker lifestyle (11). As a result of urbanization, there is a move from rural time to a time system revolving around large, urban factories, which results in the break-up of the day as workers have to clock-in and clock-out. The creation of time and motion studies, which combined the scientific management work of Frederick Winslow Taylor with that of Frank and Lillian Gilbreth, solidified the image of the stopwatch as the symbol of modern work. By monitoring movements with the tick of the clock, factory workers became dehumanized and as standardized as the products being made. In *Modernism and the Culture of Efficiency: Ideology and Fiction*, Evelyn Cobley argues that the desired efficiency produced by timing the worker’s output instead resulted in workers losing “not only their autonomy but also their human dignity...Instead of being encouraged to use their own judgment as skilled craftsmen, the workers felt reduced to mere automatons asked to carry out repetitive actions in a standardized workplace” (51). Thus, the conception of time that certain modernist writers will work against becomes a means of control and even oppression. Patricia Murphy writes,

Class- and race-specific as well as masculinist, the Victorian construction of temporality represented the time that governed the social order, the time that tracked the men who dominated the system, the time that influenced standards in the political, religious, scientific, and literary arenas. Those individuals who were

not members of the British power base were, in effect, disassociated from its time.  
(23)

Constructed time becomes even more aligned with “the British power base” when in 1884 the World Standard Time, located in Greenwich, England, was established, further solidifying time as something that is measured, ordered, and is a British unit of control. In his article “‘The Shortcomings of Timetables’: Greenwich, Modernism, and the Limits of Modernity,” Adam Barrows suggests that by the twentieth century Greenwich Mean Time became a symbol of authoritative control and a way to manage populations from a distance. Reading Joseph Conrad’s *The Secret Agent*, James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, and Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*, Barrows argues that these modernist writers, all representative of a strain of modern feeling about time, cast time as problematic in these novels as it fails to become completely synchronized. Greenwich Time is seen in these three texts as having political, commercial, and imperial control. Barrows contends that these texts present and try to negotiate among various temporal demands, and these negotiations show that time cannot fit into one standardized measurement. This is because, as Barrows shows, an individual’s conception of time cannot fit into a measurement that has been created to accomplish specific goals, such as the maintenance of global commerce. Conrad, Joyce, and Woolf attempt to move their treatment of time from the “standard” system to a process that, Barrows writes, is “within more meaningful, contextually determined, and variable social patterns” (263). Thus, standardized time becomes harmful to those outside of the realm of power because of racial, gender, and/or class differences. While standardized time meant to unify peoples for political and commercial gains, it actually worked to keep many out who did not fit with the male-dominated political agenda.

However, as the growth of cities and the urban lifestyle continued to expand in the twentieth century, creating faster, busier, and more populous cities than their Victorian

counterparts, writers began to deviate from traditional narrative techniques in order to discover and experiment with literary methods that were seen as better suited to represent life in such an industrial and urban age. In particular, the spread of urban life affected the written representation of the metropolitan landscape, created new narrative techniques to represent the quickness and fragmentation of city life, and saw experiments with the exploitation of the non-naturalness of time.

Thus, many of the formal innovations that occur throughout modernist literature experiment with narrative time. In *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890-1930*, Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane posit that modernists are concerned with the disjunction that occurs between internal and external time, writing that modernist texts are routinely “intersecting historical time with time according with the movement and rhythm of the subjective mind” (50). In contrast to the literary movements of realism and naturalism, Bradbury and McFarlane argue that modernist literature works “spatially or through layers of consciousness, working towards a logic of metaphor or form” rather than proceeding with a sequential order of events (50). Representing time as linear, therefore, had to be abandoned for many writers in their attempts to replicate the interior logic of literary characters. These experiments with internal and external temporality are characteristic of the modernist literary form that often experimented with nontraditional writing to find modes that would better represent the interior of characters as opposed to just their actions.

Both the public conception of temporality and of personal interiority underwent an extensive change in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century. The rise of sciences like psychology and anthropology brought suggestions that human nature is not a given at birth and does not remain stagnant during an individual’s life. Rather, these disciplines advocated that

human nature is not controlled by clear rational thought but is instead directly influenced by a variety of factors, including early childhood experiences, cultural norms, and environment. The emergence of psychology, specifically Freudian psychoanalysis, largely influenced the way the interior mind of an individual was to be understood. The dissemination of the theories postulated by thinkers like Freud and Jung suggested that the human psyche undergoes a rich and complicated struggle that is always in progress. In particular, Freud's theories on the unconscious, as well as a psyche made up of the Id, ego, and superego, called into question the power of rationality over an individual's thoughts and motivations, as well as suggesting a continual development of self that begins at birth. Indeed, the constant flux of Bergsonian temporality, the flow of time and, in particular, the assortment of egos in Woolf's *Orlando* and *The Waves*, mirror the constant development of the Freudian self. These new ideas changed the way the interior psychology of individuals was imagined and hence its depiction in literature. Individuals were now understood to be made up of a multitude of drives, desires, and impulses and hence were complicated beyond categorization. While novels of the Realist movement focused on complicated characters and their internal struggles, modernism intensified the attention to the interior life of characters and experimented with new narrative techniques to illustrate these characters and mirror the movements in their inner consciousnesses.

Modernism also moved on from the Realist portrayal of interiority by focusing on the effects of sensory impressions on the individual subjectivity. In exploring the importance of external factors to the individual's subjectivity, modernism recognized the importance of sensory impressions on the development of subjectivity. This occurred not only in literature, but also in photography, painting, and music. Classical music of this period, such as the musical compositions of French composer Claude Debussy, strove to suggest an atmosphere and

sensations rather than detail epic stories through dramatic scores. The visual arts also became concerned with the notion of suggestion rather than objective depiction. At the end of the nineteenth century, subject matter for art changed as cameras became more affordable and portable, producing candid photographs that captured otherwise unremarkable moments in day-to-day life. However, photography as an art in the late nineteenth century experimented with sensory impressions in the composition of photographs. Photographers would manipulate a photograph with the aim of creating an impression rather than recording an image as reality. Impressionist painting, while often taking the candid subject matter of photography, attempted to produce the sensation of a moment rather than record an objective reality of a subject. Impressionist painters, such as Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Claude Monet, and Camille Pissarro, experimented with brush strokes, saturation of color, and shadows that convey time's movement in their works. Instead of presenting an objective picture of reality, impressionist techniques suggest numerous impressions and feelings evoked by an image. Monet showed such an interest in time and the immediate impression in his paintings of the Rheims Cathedral, painted at various times of day which highlighted the differences that time causes to the same object. Despite being a medium that produces still images, Impressionist painting was concerned with recreating the subjective impressions and sensations of mood that occur in fleeting moments.

Continuing this experiment that was not thoroughly explored in realism, Modernist literature recorded impressions in vivid detail without analyzing the scene for the reader. Thus, readers can experience the external stimuli in full detail and witness its effect on the character. Rather than deciphering symbols for readers, Modernist literature strove to convey the impression of life at specific moments using sensory impressions rather than giving detailed reports that strove to present an objective reality of specific situations. These impressions are

personal, unique to individuals, and true to the idea that each might have a different impression of that moment because of one's unique subjectivity.

Hence, the complexities of representing time was not unique to Woolf, but rather was very much part of the intellectual and artistic spheres she inhabited. Like her fellow modernist writers' texts, a number of Virginia Woolf's writings deal in some way with time. Woolf's preoccupation with time sustains her entire writing career and comes to light in different forms, including exploring the effects of passing time on individuals and a community (*Jacob's Room*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, *The Waves*, *The Years*, *Between the Acts*), condensing entire lives into one day (*Mrs. Dalloway*), and expanding lives over the course of three hundred years (*Orlando*), just to name a few. However, often her writing is described as cyclical in nature, which is too simplistic a term to truly describe the importance of her representations of temporality as well as their effect on characters. The influence of Bergson can be detected in Woolf's depictions of time that often illustrate the juxtaposition between a character's internal sense of time with the movement of external time. Depicting the interiority of characters, Woolf finds space to illustrate the feminine/masculine and the connection between individuals that could be achieved by abandoning static, impermeable subjectivities. This concentration on the relationships between internal and external, and feminine and masculine results in an androgynous time. This is a representation of time that focuses primarily on the space between the internal and external temporal worlds, the point where one leaves his/her *durée* to enter the shared time of the external world and encounters others while occupying dual temporalities.

Chapter One will look at Woolf's first experimental novel, *Jacob's Room*. *Jacob's Room*, Woolf's first entry into the experimental fiction that she will continue developing throughout her career, contains narrative characteristics that will appear again in her later works. For one, the



narrator of *Jacob's Room* is, like the fictional biographer of *Orlando*, not a completely removed omnipresent bodiless voice. Though the narrator has access to the interior thoughts of numerous characters across wide-ranging time and space, she is occupying her own temporality. Like *Orlando's* biographer, at times the narrator of *Jacob's Room* recounts events as if they are occurring in her real time. These intrusions of the narrator work to expose the construction of the novel, as well as the importance of the mixture of gender to convey the story of Jacob. The narration of *Jacob's Room* does have access to a wide variety of characters, often female. In fact, it is the minds of women that construct the narration of the novel. Women are instrumental in this narrative, but it is through the interplay of the impressions from both men and women that the portrait of Jacob is created. The untraditional sense of narrative time that speeds up and slows down narration as the story sees fit also allows the narrator to move from character to character, male to female, to present such an androgynous construction. Through this feminine and masculine portrayal of Jacob, the reader can put together an androgynous construction of the character and point of view. However, the narrator is unable to forge a connection with Jacob. While the mix of gendered views suggests the importance of both sexes, it also highlights the absence of androgynous time.

Clocks, both personal and public, are placed throughout the narrative of *Jacob's Room*, forcing awareness of a culturally constructed time through their mechanical sound and their simple presence. In *Orlando*, clocks act as a solid root, tying down a specific and negative experience to a certain time. However, clocks in *Jacob's Room* represent the intrusion of the outside world, a culturally constructed world with certain expectations that are often gender-ruled. Time controls and restricts social situations. Though exact time is being told throughout the narrative (the year is routinely given and often the exact time is reported), it is juxtaposed

with sudden flashbacks that make this certain time quite unstable. This move into a timelessness is often accompanied by a nature metaphor or natural scenes, such as waves. Thus, as my analysis reveals, there are two realms of time that are juxtaposed in *Jacob's Room*: first, the Bergson duration of individual characters and, second, the culturally constructed and often restrictive time of man-made devices, such as watches and clocks. The narrator weaves through these times, but Jacob lives his life solely in external time so that she is unable to connect to him and bridge the gap in androgynous time.

After completing *To the Lighthouse*, a novel that is featured in many analyses of representations of time, Woolf wrote *Orlando: A Biography*. Chapter Two will argue that Woolf's *Orlando* is a narrative as affected by time as it is by gender, and it is the concept of time that Woolf uses as a device to undermine the conventions of the traditional Victorian biography. This recreation of biography is done through the development of a nonlinear timeline that combines fact and fiction, past and present, subject, writer, and even reader. Through this subversion of time, *Orlando* becomes a living fictional biography.

*Orlando* presents an experience of time that cannot be condensed into simple, quantifiable measurement. When time is unmeasured, it is internalized by individuals, and it links past, present, and future. Freeing time from conventional clutches allows for the development of the genre of biography to expand past its factual obligations and present a complicated, multi-dimensional character and lived experience. The denial of temporal boundaries transcends into the individual to create Orlando, a figure who is able to live through many ages and who possesses many selves in one body. The biographer, Orlando, and other transgender, trans-time characters of the text present a subjectivity that is wrought with

contradictions and complications rather than the one-dimensional illustrations of figures that literal representations often present.

*Orlando* also expands on Bergson's duration and the difference between interior and exterior time. While this concept of time comes into play, time is felt differently between the countryside and city, as well as when Orlando is alone and when he/she is in the company of others. The speed of time changes in accordance with location and company, showcasing that it is a device that is as affected by external cues as it is by internal moods. Orlando's gender is one such external cue that notably changes the effect of time on Orlando, shifting the once male ambassador back to the confines of her British countryside home. However, despite these changes, Orlando's male self and female self are not completely separated from one another: in fact, Orlando is the same person he/she ever was, with access to the same, though accruing, memories, past and present. In *Orlando*, there is the possibility of an androgynous portrayal of life in the trans-time and transgender storyline.

Chapter Three will argue that temporality plays an integral role in the 1931 experimental novel *The Waves*. Like *Jacob's Room* and *Orlando*, *The Waves* tackles the relationship between the individual and others. With six individual voices, characters are defined both by oppositions as well as by incorporating others into their own identities. Similar to *Jacob's Room*, another character is created solely through the impressions of these six individuals. Despite their common childhood, what brings these characters' narratives together, what acts as a center of a luminous halo is Percival, a friend the others idealize and admire as the masculine hero of the British Empire who dies an ironically un-heroic death after a fall from his horse in colonial India. This mixture of individuality and merging with a group is represented in the continuing figure of the waves in the nine interludes that break up the narrative. These interludes create markers of

time that are external to the plot. In addition, like *Jacob's Room* and *Orlando*, *The Waves's* plot moves in a linear fashion as it follows the characters from childhood to adulthood. Eric Warner identifies that the narration of the six characters is told in a “sustained present tense” (92). This “sustained present tense” also bridges any gap among the six characters and voices of *The Waves*. These are individual characters with different life experiences that are often affected by their gender. Societal time marks each gender differently. For example, Susan's aging is accompanied by motherhood while Jinny's sexual desirability is accompanied by an anxiety about time as it will mark the end of her sexual identity. In contrast, Rhoda, who does not take on the feminine roles of mother or sexual object, struggles to exist in this life and cuts her own time short by committing suicide.

Though these are individuals with different experiences, there is an absence of impermeable boundaries among the characters. While *Jacob's Room* tackled the issue of the inability to make one's self known to others, *The Waves* poses the question of whether it is possible to be an autonomous self without others. This question is only possible because of the experimental temporal representation of a continuous present that does not separate the narratives of all six characters. Because of the breakdown in temporality that leads to the breakdown in boundaries, the narrative is able to flow among these characters, among the masculine and feminine minds. Like *Jacob's Room*, the narration occurs predominantly in the minds of these characters, is constructed by the interplay between masculine and feminine and internal and external time. Here, *The Waves* has provided a glimpse into androgynous time. While the sum of the characters is intrinsic in *The Waves*, Woolf also gives readers a glimpse of what androgyny could look like outside of the fantastical world of *Orlando*. In Bernard, the artist figure of the group, Woolf creates the most successful androgynous form of identity. More than

the others, Bernard believes that it is impossible to define the self without considering its relationship with others. Such relationships are established because of the permeable nature of mind, self, and others, between the outer and inner worlds. Bernard feels both the masculine and feminine qualities of his subjectivity, suggesting that such devotion to art and aesthetics is needed to break down societally imposed divisions.

In analyzing these three novels, this dissertation will argue that the development of Woolf's experiments with temporal representation becomes evident. Though each plot follows a linear progressive timeline, time within that plot is often subjective, sometimes swelling with intensity and other times moving at a blazing speed. Yet, it is not just these individual moments that are important, but also the flux of time that connects such moments; it is not just in the moments that one lives in, but also the threads that connect. This flow of time, while subjective, connects individuals regardless of gender. Thus, time permeates through subjectivities that, like time, are always in flux. Such a representation of time also affects the binary of male/female and internal/external, breaking the boundary that divides and, instead, creating the connection so as to establish an androgynous time.

## CHAPTER ONE:

**“YET OVER HIM WE HANG VIBRATING”: NARRATING ABSENCE IN A TIME OF WAR**

In 1920, Woolf writes in her diary of her desire to develop "a new form for a new novel ... no scaffolding; scarcely a brick to be seen; all crepuscular, but the heart, the passion, the humour, everything as bright as fire in the mist" (13-14). Woolf's desire to create a novel of a different form was to become *Jacob's Room*, often hailed as her first experimental novel. Her first two novels, *The Voyage Out* (1915) and *Night and Day* (1919), are, by most accounts, standard Victorian fare. Though these early novels do contain Woolfian subject matter and narrative styles that will reemerge in her later works (such as the inability to communicate, the destructive forces of heteronormativity, and Woolf's desire for *The Voyage Out* to be a novel about what people don't say)<sup>3</sup>, they do not feature the formal experiments of her later novels. After the longer tales of *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day*, *Jacob's Room* is streamlined in length but cluttered in voice. Though the focalization changes in *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day*, these changes are restricted to a handful of integral characters that are closely aligned to the plot. However, in *Jacob's Room* there is a constant shifting of point of view among a variety of characters that expand beyond the small nucleus of the assumed protagonist, Jacob Flanders. Despite the number of figures that occupy the novel, no character, including Jacob's, is a fully constructed character. Though the reader witnesses the normal developments of a young professional British man's life, including attending Cambridge, working in London, and traveling abroad, Jacob is ultimately as much a stranger at the conclusion of the novel as he is in the beginning. Indeed, Jacob is unknowable despite the narrator's attempt to recreate his life

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<sup>3</sup> The young writer Terence Hewett desires to write a book about "...Silence...the things people don't say" in *The Voyage Out*; "But the difficulty is immense" (209).

from the viewpoints of those who have had contact with him. These viewpoints are collected from mostly the women who knew Jacob, but their shadowy reminiscences ultimately obscure him until he is vaporized into an absence. In addition to the chorus of female recollections that make up the retelling of Jacob's life, the presence of the female narrator works to contrast feminine a-linearity with the linear lifeline of Jacob, as well as to deconstruct the solidity of masculine culture. What's more, *Jacob's Room* is a novel filled with ghosts, empty shadows of characters who are intentionally void of thorough characterization. Existing haphazardly in a social temporality, they resemble Henri Bergson's concept of external representations of self, selves removed and cut off from their own *durée*. While the collection of female voices highlight a feminine time that works against social masculine time, the narrator is unable to bring to light anything but these external selves, a collection of ghosts that are dehumanized because of the influence of masculine social time and the lack of androgynous time.

As an important figure of both modern literature and feminism, Woolf used formal innovations and representations of female characters that have been widely analyzed. However, criticism has not adequately analyzed the relationship between the representation of time and gender in Woolf's novels. Time and gender are tied together in many of Woolf's novels, a formal innovation that begins in *Jacob's Room* with the use of a female narrator chronicling a young man's life using both the past tense, which suggests she is narrating at a time when Jacob is already dead, and the present tense as she inserts herself in the same temporality with a living Jacob. In *Jacob's Room*, Woolf creates a rupture in time by telling a story of a prewar life from a postwar vantage point, a move that presents in stark contrast the different lives of men and women. While illustrating the different lives of men and women in the early twentieth century is not revolutionary in and of itself, both the masculine and feminine timelines of the story

highlight the destructive forces of the culture in power as they affect both men and women. Rather than analyzing how Woolf represents the passing of time as a formal innovation, this chapter will look at how the organization of time in modern society controls both men and women, which leaves them unable to fully operate in their own *durée* and, as a result, cannot fully connect through androgynous time despite the narrator's continued attempts. As such, temporal and gender binaries persevere and, in turn, restrict identities and force competition rather than connection. Unable to move beyond the feminine natural time of Betty Flanders and the societal controlled masculine time of Jacob, these two temporalities are set side by side, with Betty ultimately left at the end and holding up Jacob's empty shoes, significant of the emptiness of masculine culture and Jacob's temporality. There is nothing left of him, just the external markers of a man.

Criticism of *Jacob's Room* has routinely focused on the formal narrative innovations of the novel, including the seemingly incomplete characterization of Jacob Flanders and the fragmentary nature of the plot. Jacob's death in the war has influenced multiple critics to view the novel as a modern elegy.<sup>4</sup> The female narrator of *Jacob's Room* has garnered critical attention for her role in highlighting the formal innovations of the novel, especially in her somewhat featureless depiction of Jacob.<sup>5</sup> While still concentrating on the narrator, Vara Neverow moves the focus off just *Jacob's Room* to include the narrators of *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*, claiming that the narrator of *Jacob's Room* is the "sister" to these latter

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<sup>4</sup> See Roger Moss's "*Jacob's Room* and the Eighteenth Century: From Elegy to Essay," Kathleen Wall's "Significant Form in *Jacob's Room*: Ekphrasis and the Elegy," and Alex Zwerdling's "*Jacob's Room*: Woolf's Satiric Elegy."

<sup>5</sup> Barry Morgenstern, Judy Little, Thomas C. Beattie, and Vara Neverow all read the narrator of *Jacob's Room* as a significant character that comes to the forefront of the novel at the expense of Jacob, the assumed title character. Morgenstern argues that the narrator showcases her autonomy outside of Jacob's narrator by her frequent *a priori* asides that give the reader glimpses of her prejudices and perceptions. Little writes that the narrator's autonomy ultimately feminizes Jacob to the role of the muted Other, while Beattie argues that the narrator's separation from Jacob suggests that Woolf was attempting to instill a balanced and unemotional view in the novel.



narrators, all political voices that are especially critical of contemporary patriarchal culture. These women are daughters of educated men, have had the same education, and are a band of outsiders, alienated from the type of education and social advantages that middle- to upper-class men have access to because of their gender and class (71). These critics view the narrator as moving beyond the omniscient spectator into a female character who acts as a mouthpiece for Woolf's political and social views.

Though Neverow highlights a number of similarities between these narrators, the narrator of *Jacob's Room* is strikingly different from that of *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*. The narrators of the latter two situate themselves clearly within the texts, sketching out a solid position on which to stand. Though the narrator of *A Room of One's Own* asks the reader to call her "Mary Beton, Mary Seton, Mary Carmichael or by any name you please" (5), the text was based on two papers to be read aloud and the speech-like style of the text lends itself well to the vision of a female lecturer at a woman's college. It is most difficult in this text above all others, perhaps, to imagine that the narrator is not Woolf herself. The narrator of *Three Guineas* is easily imaginable at her desk, writing the letter while deciding what to do with her three guineas. The narrator of *Jacob's Room* is not so easily recognizable, her identity occupying both a fluidity and materiality that makes it difficult to imagine her as a specific figure. Her materiality, like that of the narrator in *Orlando*, is interesting in that her role as narrator does not immediately call for her actual physical presence. The narrators' presences call attention to the work of creating these biographies, as Orlando's biographer recounts pasting together strips of diaries and Jacob's narrator details the difficulty of recording others' impressions of the main character. In addition, the narrator of *Jacob's Room* has a material presence yet also narrates scenes throughout the novel with the certain omnipresence that grants her access to scenes and inner thoughts of Jacob

that such a grounded material presence would not allow. In *The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf*, Jane Goldman argues that though Woolf is often thought of as a mystical writer, she grounds her themes and arguments in the material world in her novels. Yet the materiality of the narrator complicates her position and her ability to provide a biography of Jacob Flanders as she is rooted to her own material position. Her knowledge of the War colors her impressions of Jacob's life, and she does not attempt to remove these impressions from the biography. This suggests that not only the narrator's gender, but also her temporal position in telling Jacob's story is important in analyzing her role in the text, the construction of the narrative, and her relationship with Jacob. However, current criticism has overlooked the relationship between the narrator's gender and temporal position.<sup>6</sup>

Ultimately, it is gender and time that are the great divides between the narrator and Jacob, and though these social constructs are strong and act as barriers between the two, the narrator attempts to dissolve the barriers that divide. She dutifully records Jacob's life, attempts to present him as a figure of interest, but she is unable to connect to him because of Jacob's full participation in societal external time. Unable to operate on the same temporal planes and connect, with no common knowledge, no sharing or blurring of boundaries, Jacob and the narrator remain divided. The narrator attempts to bridge the gap, but ultimately her temporal instability highlights the rigidity of masculine social culture which dehumanizes both men and women to become commodities.

The portrayal of time and gender needs to be further explored in *Jacob's Room*. Androgynous time in Woolf's novels begins with *Jacob's Room*. Androgynous time is able to

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<sup>6</sup> For instance, Morgenstern does not adequately discuss the life disparities between Jacob and the narrator that result because of the difference in gender, noting that the narrator's voice is tinged by a cynicism that is not evident in Jacob's life but colors her interpretation and conveyance of his story. Likewise, Beattie overlooks the narrator's negative, and perhaps jealous, feelings of patriarchal privilege in his reading of the last chapter of *Jacob's Room*.

move beyond socially constructed time and the cyclical time of nature to dissolve the boundaries and restrictions that such constructed time enforces on both men and women. However, androgynous time in Woolf does not solely privilege an individual's unique sense and experience of time, though that is intrinsic to the development of androgynous time. The development of androgynous time in Woolf mirrors Henri Bergson's conception of psychological internal and societal external time. Bergson argued that individuals operate in two different temporalities, the psychological time of *durée* and the external time of society. An individual's *durée* is unique to that individual, apprehending the passing of time according to the intensity and meaning of the moment, while external time is essentially the time of the masses, a measured linear time that is controlled and limited. For Bergson, one's true time is his/her *durée*, but since one cannot solely operate in one's interior, one must participate in society, in the common "objective" time. However, the self that is in that time is a representation of self, a "ghost" that exists and reacts in a measured temporality that is not one's own. Androgynous time consists of the mixture of these two times, operating at the point of contact of internal and external and, as such, combines one's time with the time of others. Therefore, androgynous time becomes a time of connection. In *Jacob's Room*, the development of androgynous time is attempted in the telling of Jacob's story through the female voice of the narrator. However, the narrator runs into difficulties in representing Jacob as he is fully invested in his external self in masculine societal time, a ghost floating through school, church, dinners, and Greece.

Woolf will continue to explore different temporal experiences in her next novels. In particular, *Orlando: A Biography* and *The Waves* will convey how gender and place affect how one experiences one's own *durée*, a project that *Jacob's Room* begins. *Orlando* and *The Waves* experiment more ambitiously than *Jacob's Room* with androgynous time, going further to blur

the lines between gender and individuals to present a temporality that appears to exist regardless of sex and location. *Jacob's Room*, on the other hand, sets up the groundwork for what will come later, by illustrating what has been characterized as feminine time in contrast to masculine time of progress and order.<sup>7</sup> Feminine time is classified by its non-linearity, cyclical movement, association with nature, and disassociation with culture. Connecting non-linearity to femininity is prevalent in literature, literary theory, and feminist theory. The non-linearity of femininity does not replicate the modern landscape of the early twentieth-century urban living environment of set work schedules and train schedules, and the implementation of inventions that manipulate time, such as telegraphs, telephones, and electric light. This time of progress and civilization becomes characterized as masculine time, a time that can easily be measured and separated. Thus, masculine time can easily become the time of modernization as it keeps schedules, separates night and day, and work time from leisure time. This is the temporality of the public sphere at a time when women were still regulated to the private sphere of their own home. It is a time that has advanced with modern life and has disassociated itself from nature. Instead of simply presenting the two timelines as binaries and privileging one over the other, Woolf shows the dangerous patriarchal power of masculine time and the way in which both men and women are victims of a society that wishes to dehumanize and use its citizens for its own benefit.

Jacob's story is being told by a league of women, but it is still a uniquely masculine story. The narrating voice may belong to women's culture and discourse, but that voice is telling a story whose discourse comes from the symbolic structure of patriarchal imperialist culture (244). In her argument, Judy Little uses Mikhail Bakhtin's *The Dialogic Imagination* to look at the interplay of discourses in the text that come from the dialogic nature of language. In terms of

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<sup>7</sup> See the Introduction of this dissertation on how feminine time has been defined as cyclical and stemmed in nature while masculine time has been characterized as orderly, progressive, and measured.

gender, Little argues that “Jacob’s language is inevitably ‘half someone else’s.’ Though his gender and much of his culture are different from the narrator’s, he must use her discourse occasionally, since he is ‘only’ a character, and the narrator is, after all, telling his story” (244). In actuality, Jacob uses an Other’s discourse more than occasionally as all of his thoughts and dialogue are being filtered through a female narrator who often notes her inability to record Jacob’s thoughts and words with complete accuracy. Jacob’s story is only available to the reader through feminine discourse, a narrative move that begins a move towards androgynous time in the mixing of gendered voices and experiences. The mixture of feminine and masculine discourses makes it possible to bring to the forefront both male and female experiences of life before the war as well as convey the effects of a patriarchal militaristic society on both men and women.

The governing timeline of *Jacob’s Room* superficially follows the blueprint of the traditionally masculine *Bildungsroman*, a timeline that is rather linear and traditional. It is a timeline to mark the progress of Jacob’s life: his attending school, professional and romantic development, and his travels. However, his youth is a detriment to an interesting *Bildungsroman* in that his short life guarantees that he does not accomplish very much of interest; nor is the audience rewarded with a picture of a matured, wiser, experienced Jacob. While his life during his living appears to be orderly and guaranteed when compared to the women of the novel, their lives go on beyond his death. Though they do not suffer the same fate as Jacob, their destinies are not ones that are chaotic or a-historical; in fact, they are directly tied to history. Patricia Murphy writes, “Class- and race-specific as well as masculinist, the Victorian construction of temporality represented the time that governed the social order, the time that tracked the men who dominated the system, the time that influenced standards in the political, religious,

scientific, and literary arenas. Those individuals who were not members of the British power base were, in effect, disassociated from its time" (23). The women of the novel are not members of this power base but live under its influence. However, Woolf and her narrator show how even a young man with the right class and gender can still be manipulated and disassociated from the power base. Jacob's linearity makes him an easy pawn for the British war machine, while at the same time alienating him from the women in his life. Separated from his own duration, Jacob lives solely as his ghostly representation of self in external time, a time that breeds alienation despite its role as public time. There is no mutual understanding between the sexes at the end of the novel but rather a number of unconnected strings and unfulfilled relationships that leaves a young man's mother and friend sorting through his belongings after his death.

In addition, the approach to both time and gender is directly affected in *Jacob's Room* by World War I. It is impossible to talk about *Jacob's Room* and time without talking about war.<sup>8</sup> Though at times the narrator recounts instances in Jacob's life in present tense as if she is there in real time, the devastation of World War I creates a wide gulf between the present and the past and directly affects the narrator's temporal position and thus her narrative position. As such, her telling of Jacob's story is directly affected by her own present time and knowledge. In the absence of the young man, the female narrator comes to the forefront of the text. In *Jacob's Room*, the timeline leads up to the war but is narrated from a post-war temporal position, so the future affects the narrator's past perception as well as her focus on what to highlight from the past. Woolf shows how the violence of the warfront seeps into everyday life, be it in the loss of characters such as in *To the Lighthouse*, the actual presence of a returning soldier, like Septimus Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway*, or the ominous sound of airplanes in *Between the Acts*. *Jacob's Room* is

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<sup>8</sup> Mark Hussey's edited collection *Virginia Woolf and War: Fiction, Reality, and Myth*, and Karen L. Levenback's *Virginia Woolf and the Great War* are two studies that explore the woven influences of war in Woolf's texts and her reactions to and representations of violence and conflict.

different in that the majority of the novel takes place before World War I, so instead of witnessing the interplay between battle life and civilian life, Woolf pulls back the curtain and argues that British society creates a world that is both harmful and violent to both men and women, a world that ultimately uses men for political gain and profit and positions women as subordinates. Though men and women are both being manipulated, they are often placed in opposition to one another as enemies. By using a female narrator to tell a male's story and in the combination of masculine and feminine language, *Jacob's Room* showcases these harmful binary oppositions. Woolf also explores the differences between life and thus time experienced by men and women by showcasing the traditional binary of natural feminine time with historical masculine time, as well as how feminine life is stunted by arbitrary timelines enforced by societal expectations. In addition, the female narrator's temporal experience is directly affected by her sex, perhaps most notable in her life that extends beyond Jacob's.

The narrator of *Jacob's Room* persists in creating a narrative after a violent event that resulted in the death of almost a million British soldiers and deeply affected those left at home. As a result, the narrator is narrating an absence – an absence of Jacob, an absence of life, and most importantly for the aims of my reading, an absence of life because of a disruption of time. Does Jacob Flanders accomplish anything remarkable in his short life? No, nothing out of the ordinary; he is, in fact, quite like a number of young British middle-class men. Is his character one that inspires unusual curiosity or compassion from the reader? Again, the answer would have to be negative as his character is not imbued with any sort of depth or pathos. Yet his figure is at the center of the novel, occupying a space traditionally reserved for those important lives that biography deems worth immortalizing in print. But what makes Jacob Flanders worthy of

occupying a novel? What in his life is notable, important, unique, exciting, worthwhile? Why do we hang over him vibrating, as the narrator asks (73)?

In short, the match is never lit. The reader's expectations quiver around Jacob, waiting for a revelation or important insight, but the narrator is narrating from a time and place that is already absent of Jacob, as well as absent of young men just like him because of the devastation of the First World War. Working her way to the past from the present, her a-linearity is a stepping stone to an androgynous time that does not quite work in *Jacob's Room* as there is not that final connection. Jacob's time never comes and is instead cut short, severing him from his expected future and from any strong ties to others. His assured future promised him by an inherited patriarchal past is denied by the same institutions that placed him in a position of privilege. Jacob will not enjoy the life that men in his position have enjoyed previously as suddenly the expected masculine timeline is disrupted. In her introduction to *Novel Gazing: Queer Readings in Fiction*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick writes of life expectancies that will be cut short because of, in her example, various illnesses. While the lives that Sedgwick writes of are queer, different lives have different life expectancies and trajectories. Though Jacob's life might have been promised to be long and enjoyable at another time in history, because of the time of his birth and the progression of political events, his life is cut short. The question of how to prevent war that is posed in *Three Guineas* cannot be answered here, and, as a result, Jacob and his fellow men suffer and die. It is not only young men's timelines that are disrupted in *Jacob's Room*, but women's as well. Betty Flanders outlives her son, and the streets and dining rooms are empty of eligible men for Clara Durrant and of customers for women like Florinda, denying them both a certain financial security as well as imposing a patriarchal timeline that de-privileges and restricts their life experiences.



Thus, while *Jacob's Room* compares scheduled societal time with a-linear time, the entire timeline of the book is shadowed by World War I. *Jacob's Room* is Woolf's first novel that she both wrote and completed post-World War I. While World War I does not feature prominently in scenes as it does in her next two novels, such as in *Mrs. Dalloway* in the character of Septimus Smith whose "madness" and fate are directly tied to his identity as a returning soldier, or *To the Lighthouse* and its "Time Passes" section that covers the war and Andrew Ramsay's death in battle, Jacob's eventual death in the war and the narrator's knowledge of it run throughout the entire novel. Because of the unique temporal position of the female narrator, *Jacob's Room's* scaffolding is, while not absent, different, built not on the character of Jacob but rather on his absence, and it foreshadows the claims Woolf will make later in *Three Guineas*, in particular that traditional education has molded young men to engage in militaristic violence. This striking absence of the ostensible main character is made visual from the onset by Woolf's sister Vanessa Bell's illustration on the first edition's dust jacket. The image consists of half a chalice on the corner of a table surrounded by three simple flowers. The entire image, as well as the title and author's name, is surrounded by drapes. The colors are kept minimal, containing only the terracotta color of the drapes, chalice, table, and petals, black coloring in the lettering and middle of flowers, and the background color used as negative space to make up the images. Absent in this illustration is any image of Jacob or a young man. Elizabeth Willson Gordon notes that the dust jacket "was not well received" and quotes Leonard Woolf that the design "did not represent a desirable female or even Jacob or his room, and it was what in 1923 many people would have called reproachfully post-impressionist. It was almost universally condemned amongst the booksellers" (29). If readers were disappointed by the lack of Jacob on the cover, the lack of Jacob in the pages could have been completely mystifying.

The absence of Jacob continues from the cover to the first pages of the novel. When the narrator introduces Jacob, she introduces him as a void. He is refusing to play with his older brother Archer, a refusal, Little suggests, that already indicates his resistance to patriarchy (247). The narrator presents Archer's cries for his brother, "Ja—cob! Ja—cob!," cries that will persist throughout the rest of the novel. After Archer's third shout, the narrator describes the voice as having "extraordinary sadness. Pure from all body, pure from all passion, going out into the world, solitary, unanswered, breaking against rocks—so it sounded" (8-9). There are multiple reasons for this sadness. At the most basic level, the sadness is purely a young boy's inability to locate his little brother and playmate. However, Archer's sadness and his calling out of Jacob's name foreshadow the deep sorrow that will afflict Jacob's friends and family at the end of the novel when Jacob has died in war. The last page of the novel shows Jacob's friend Mr. Bonamy crying out, "Jacob! Jacob!" just as Archer called out some twenty years earlier. The actual vocalization of Jacob's name foreshadows this conclusion, as well as Archer's sadness at Jacob's inability to survive the game of patriarchy, as evidenced by Jacob's refusal to "play." Finally, Archer and Mr. Bonamy's cries for Jacob suggest the reader's frustration that is experienced throughout the text of searching for Jacob but always coming up empty-handed. The novel is suffused with sadness over Jacob's absence and the inability for the narrator to know Jacob.

This sadness is only possible because, despite the shallowness of Jacob's characterization, he is loved throughout the novel. The desire his brother feels for him on a beach in Cornwall is mirrored throughout by other characters who love and desire Jacob in one way or another. His company is sought by other young men at school, his love and respect desired by young women. Even the narrator, who often presents Jacob's and his culture's mistakes, expresses some admiration for her subject. Despite his ghost-like quality, Jacob is a figure that

looms large within the novel, his pull attracting a number of friends, women, and the narrator's attention. Again, there appears to be nothing especially unique about Jacob that would solicit the narrator's desire except for his maleness which grants access to cultural and intellectual institutions that the narrator's female gender denies her. The admiration of these masculine benefits, along with his masculine physicality, is evident in the narrator watching Jacob walk through the Cambridge grounds one night:

But Jacob moved. He murmured good-night. He went out into the court. He buttoned his jacket across his chest. He went back to his rooms, and being the only man who walked at that moment back to his rooms, his footsteps rang out, his figure loomed large. Back from the Chapel, back from the Hall, back from the Library, came the sound of his footsteps, as if the old stone echoed with magisterial authority: "The young man—the young man—the young man—back to his rooms." (46)

This section highlights the simple yet desirous qualities that Jacob possesses. The narrator stresses Jacob's physicality – he moves, he walks, his male chest is covered, his steps make noise as they pound the ground. At this moment in time he is alive, his body existing in the present. His masculine figure looms large over the intellectual domain of Cambridge, a place the narrator only has access to through as an outsider documenting the life of a man. Jacob's physical presence at such an institution only reaffirms his right to be there and the narrator's lack of access, the wide gulf between masculine and feminine social rights, as evident in the authoritative voice of the stone echoing "the young man." This is a benefit awarded to men and, specifically, men with rooms. Not only does the narrator not have access to the intellectual world of Cambridge, she lacks a physical room, her existence dependent on narrating Jacob's life and her thoughts only in relation to his.

Despite Jacob's access to worlds outside of the narrator's realm, he is not despised by the narrator nor does she set him up to be a figure to be despised. There is a level of shock and

sadness evident at the end of the novel when Jacob's death is revealed partly because there are qualities that he possessed that the narrator respects and covets. The intellectual history that Jacob inherits because of his gender and access to university education is admired and paid close attention to by the narrator. An almost hushed reverence is cast over descriptions of the discussions that occur in Cambridge rooms: "But intimacy—the room was full of it, still, deep, like a pool. Without need of movement or speech it rose softly and washed over everything, mollifying, kindling, and coating the mind with the luster of pearl, so that if you talk of a light, of Cambridge burning, it's not languages only. It's Julian the Apostate" (46). There is a beauty that ignites this room, a beauty that is born of the intellectual conversations that these young privileged men can enjoy at University and the narrator can only observe from not just outside its walls, but outside the time of these men, outside of documented history. In her book *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*, Sarah Cole writes that the intimacy found here is one based in an institution that has "powerful defining traditions and an imposing history of its own, a tradition and history whose exclusivity Woolf condemns in *A Room of One's Own*" (36). Cole suggests that Woolf's ability to both respect and criticize the intellectual collegiate life of young men "represents a characteristically Woolfian ability to grasp a contemporary phenomenon with both compassion and irony" (36). Though male institutions do come under criticism in *Jacob's Room*, there is not a universal distaste for everything connected to masculinity.

As well as the male intellectual life, the masculine body is also admired. Aesthetically, Jacob's masculine body is often appreciated by women: in his article "War and the Politics of Narration in *Jacob's Room*," William Handley notes that Fanny Elmer imagines Jacob as "statuesque, noble, and eyeless," while Florinda likens Jacob to a statue in the British Museum (116). The women here note Jacob's physical beauty while acknowledging a certain lack of

depth in the figure – while he is beautiful and noble, he also is static and lifeless, like a statue. This is both a foreshadowing of Jacob’s fate as well as commentary on the masculinity he represents: beautiful and stately on the outside, but lifeless on the inside. Jacob needs women to breathe life into his statuesque figure, a task the narrator attempts in blending this male life with a feminine view and narration. Jacob’s statuesque masculinity is also evidence in the complete investment in external self in contrast to the narrator’s subjective internal self. This pull between the advantages of masculinity with its downfalls is conveyed through the narrator’s mixture of respect and condemnation. Ultimately, it is women who construct Jacob and thus the representation of masculinity in *Jacob’s Room*. There is a respect and perhaps jealousy of both the mental and physical life of men, but the advantages of men are ruined when they are controlled by the ruling power’s interests. The control of their minds and bodies prohibits men from enjoying and understanding beyond a narrow representation of how they should think. Jacob’s mind often misses the beauty and poetry in the world; he does not see the beauty in his boat ride with Timmy Durrant, nor does he experience any emotional connections to the beautiful historical places he visits during his Continental tour. For example, when Jacob arrives at Versailles, his reaction is simply, “And then, here is Versailles” (128). The narrator sees the beauty in these instances, and it is through her enjoyment of Jacob’s experiences that the reader has access to both a male’s mind molded by masculine education and a female’s mind that is not. Jacob is beautiful to look at, and he possesses an education the narrator cannot have, but his supposed masculine solidity is hollow inside. It is, as is the masculine culture he represents, shallow, a ruse to keep control over both men and women.

The calling of Jacob’s name on the beaches of Cornwall and his inability to present himself in that moment foreshadows the emptiness that will continue to be connected to Jacob

throughout the novel, which restricts him from ever being truly present or existing in a present time. This characteristic further distinguishes him from the narrator as well as, to use Little's argument, feminizes him as a character. In her analysis of Henri Bergson's philosophy, *Thinking in Time*, Suzanne Guerlac argues that the difference between Bergsonian past and present is that action is only possible in the present. She writes, "'Bergson defines the present as that which acts [*l'agissant*] and the past as 'that which no longer acts [*ce qui n'agit plus*]' (MM 71 [68]). Our bodies, as centers of action, come into contact with matter (or images) in the present. They have an impact on the world in the present. Action in the past is impossible...The past is merely representation" (120). With the foreshadowing of Jacob's death in the first few pages of the novel, there is no present Jacob at the present of the narrator's writing. He is a past figure, a memory that the narrator recreates in her present. The narrator brings the reader to specific points of the novel in present tense, as if she and the reader are there, as if they are physical bodies with the capability to act, but this is a farce. Jacob's body is already absent from this story, and there is a sadness in the narrator telling a tale of death that she cannot change. The violence of his removal, the specific foreshadowing symbols of calling for an absent Jacob, as well as the animal skull that Jacob finds on the beach and the one that is eventually placed above his doorway, recalls the violence of war, erasing young men to leave their corpses or nothing at all.

However, his absence grants women the power to fill in what little details the narrator has of Jacob, as well as allows the narrator to present him as an absent character. Jacob's absence from the narrator's present time leads her to sketch his character to be almost ghost-like. His absence complicates the narrator's job, a complication that she acknowledges in her inability to present a crisp clean image of a knowable character. Jacob's character is like an image that always remains slightly out of view, always a little distorted. Here is Jacob a little clearer, but

still the edges are soft and grainy, for, as the narrator notes, “Nobody sees any one as he is, let alone an elderly lady sitting opposite a strange young man in a railway carriage. They see a whole—they see all sorts of things—they see themselves” (31). The narrator recognizes the inability to truly see another individual, a recognition that could prove troubling to one whose job it is to record another individual, but “One must do the best one can with her report” (31). Here, then, is evidence of a real, corporeal individual who is doing the tedious and material work of compiling notes, the work of a biographer that is so rarely hinted at in texts. Three chapters into the novel, when the narrator describes this work, Jacob at nineteen is still an absent protagonist despite the narrator’s close attention. She will not fill in the gaps of Jacob’s character, but will leave him absent despite her close presence to him throughout the narrative. The middle-aged, female narrator of *Jacob’s Room* is not a completely removed omnipresent bodiless voice – she is a real physical being with a gender, an age, life experiences, and opinions that she lets slip through her narration of Jacob. Compared to the objective omnipresent narrators of traditional Victorian literature, she may even be called an imperfect narrator, a narrator who is unable to grant complete access to the title protagonist, a narrator who exposes the work of telling a story, a narrator who is unable to always catch every word and thought of the characters whose experiences are making up the narrative of Jacob. Yet it is through her that Woolf has chosen to tell the story of a young middle-class British male. The female narrator then crafts an a-linear timeline in telling the linear tale of Jacob, a life that is neither unique nor special, but rather one that is shared with the community of British male youth. Occupying her own unique temporality, the female narrator of *Jacob’s Room* blurs feminine and masculine viewpoints to create the life of Jacob, while exposing the harms of keeping such lives separate from one another. By giving voice to this female outsider, who in turn gives voice to other women in the

novel, Woolf is able to lift the curtains on a society run unquestionably by patriarchal power, a society that turns out citizens to be machine pieces in its grand, elaborate clock. Murphy argues that modernist writers "feared that time was ominously becoming a way to commodify existence, with an individual's value being assessed in terms of production and consumption in an increasingly mechanized society" (228). To counteract this, Murphy argues, writers focused on the "subjective assessment, rather than the public measurement" of time (228). The commodification of man occurs in *Jacob's Room*, but the subjective assessment of time appears as a struggle between the sexes.

*Jacob's Room* does not open with Jacob, the title character, but instead the first words of the novel are Betty Flanders', Jacob's mother's, placing her at the center of the narrative. The narrator chooses to expose first Betty's *durée*, not Jacob's, as well as focus on Betty and her unique sense of time that provides the temporal landscape for Jacob's childhood. Betty's temporality will closely resemble both the traditional feminine time of nature and nostalgia that Rita Felski identifies in *The Gender of Modernity*, as well as the cyclical and monumental feminine time that resists being included in the linear and constructed masculine time that Julia Kristeva writes of in "Women's Time." The reader is introduced to Jacob through his mother, a woman who is usually featured in nature and whose mind is often represented as being scattered, suggesting an unfixated subjectivity. The novel opens with a seaside landscape described through Betty's tear-filled eyes, tears that obscure her vision so that the "entire bay quivered; the lighthouse wobbled; and she had the illusion that the mast of Mr. Connor's little yacht was bending like a wax candle in the sun" (7). At this moment in time when Betty Flanders is introduced, her vision of the bay recalls Impressionist-style paintings, her tears causing a landscape where colors and lines are not readily marked from one another. While this opening



that begins with Betty's sadness foreshadows the sadness at the conclusion, it also gives the reader a glimpse of her subjective viewpoint. The bending of the lines of the bay, the lighthouse, and the mast also work to highlight the chaotic, multiple, and a-linear temporality of Betty Flanders. This multiple "timeness" of Betty is again reminiscent of the monumental feminine time that Kristeva identifies in "Women's Time." Kristeva connects both cyclical time, a time of repetition and cycles, and monumental time, a time of eternity and myth, to feminine time while linearity and progress characterize a masculine experience of time. Kristeva writes that "female subjectivity as it gives itself up to intuition becomes a problem with respect to a certain conception of time: time as project, teleology, linear and prospective unfolding; time as departure, progression, and arrival—in other words, the time of history" (17). As will soon become evident in the novel, Betty's subjectivity and time do not align well with men who attempt to force her into their own experience of time as she is larger than a single pinpoint in a linear timeline. Women and men do not operate in homogenous terms, and, as such, Betty is able to operate on different temporal planes. She lives in an Impressionist middle ground between the domain of nature and the linear timeline of birth, aging, and death. Betty occupies this space of multiple temporalities throughout the text, including the opening scene on the beach as she is active in the present by talking to her son Archer, while simultaneously active in another time while writing a letter to Captain Barfoot. Later, the narrator gives the reader a glimpse of the family's living room where "Mrs. Flanders had left the lamp burning in the front room. There were her spectacles, her sewing; and a letter with the Scarborough postmark. She had not drawn the curtains either" (13). This scene, as well as her emptying the contents of her purse on the beach to look for a stamp, conveys the flexibility in Betty's life, the fact that nothing is ever completed and no loose ends are ever tied up.

Though Betty's identity is constantly evolving, it continues to have a strong connection to nature. As Jacob grows, he becomes an inheritor of a cultural and literary history, but what is his mother the inheritor of? The narrator suggests Betty's inheritance is natural history:

The entire gamut of the view's changes should have been known to her; its winter aspect, spring, summer and autumn; how storms came up from the sea; how the moors shuddered and brightened as the clouds went over; she should have noted the red spot where the villas were building; and the criss-cross of lines where the allotments were cut; and the diamond flash of little glass houses in the sun. (17)

The narrator locates Betty in this monumental time and, at the same time, as part of a landscape that will recycle year after year. When the narrator makes this observation, Betty is taking her sons to a Roman fortress, a representation of historical patriarchal time encroaching on Betty's feminine time, at the top of Dods Hill, a place that "dominated the village. No words can exaggerate the importance of Dods Hill. It was the earth; the world against the sky" (17). This piece of landscape dominates the village visually, and Betty sits herself directly on top in the center of the Roman camp. She becomes Dods Hill, engulfed in the landscape that surrounds her and has been there for generations, as evidenced by the Roman camp. The narrator goes through the landscape that surrounds Dods Hill before coming back to Betty, writing, "Mrs. Flanders sat on the raised circle of the Roman camp, patching Jacob's breeches; only looking up as she sucked the end of her cotton or when some insect dashed at her, boomed in her ear, and was gone....the church clock was ten or thirteen minutes fast" (19). Again, Betty is entrenched in her natural surroundings as the narrator notes the inaccuracy of the village's church clock. Unlike in later scenes of the novel, Betty's natural world is not as affected by the intrusion of constructed time. The church clock does not boom or ring; in fact, not a sound is described. Despite it being a representation of masculine time, in both being a piece of constructed order from masculine

society and male-dominated religion, it does not interfere or dominate Betty's thoughts as she sits and thinks of a variety of things that filter through her mind.

However, the inability of this time to completely reign over Betty is not for a lack of trying. The narrator will visit Betty on top of Dods Hill again after Jacob is grown and about to visit Paris funded with money inherited from his mother's female cousin. During her walk on Dods Hill, "the random church bells swung a hymn tune about her head, the clock striking four straight through the circling notes" (125). The loud strikes of the clock are exact and cutting, slicing through the "random" sounds of the bells but, while they might register in Betty's consciousness, they do not overwhelm it. The strikes mix in with the color of the grass under the clouds, the image of the houses in the village, and the letter to Jacob in her hand. The chimes of the clock do not create a feeling of anxiety, as they do for other female characters in the novel, such as Sandra Wentworth Williams or Mrs. Pascoe, but are noted and discarded.

Soon after this scene, Betty is back out on Dods Hill again, this time at night and with a female companion, Mrs. Jarvis. The narrator paints a rather gothic picture of a hazy night in the moors with portents of death cutting through the easy calm that accompanies Betty and Mrs. Jarvis on their stroll. Yet Dods Hill is a place of performed masculinity with remnants of past wars hidden under the dirt: "Did the bones stir, or the rusty swords? Was Mrs. Flander's twopenny-halfpenny brooch for ever part of the rich accumulation? and if all the ghosts flocked thick and rubbed shoulders with Mrs. Flanders in the circle, would she not have seemed perfectly in her place, a live English matron, growing stout?" (132). The swords indicate that this area was once a battleground, perhaps foreshadowing the war that will end Jacob's life, but also signifying the mixture of masculine weaponry with the feminine brooch, both buried together. As such, the image of an English woman with the ghosts of the past would not shock but would, instead, seem

“perfectly” in place. Nevertheless this is a mixture that is only possible long after the battlefield is gone and the warriors here become ghosts. This space that multiple generations and multiple genders occupy together is only accessible to women such as Betty and Mrs. Jarvis after a long period of separation between masculine dominance and feminine domesticity. However, untouched by civilization on the moors, nature and female presence dominate what was once a conquering masculine space. Time continues to strike and measure the women’s walk, but the exactness of London time is absent. Instead, the narrator writes, “The clock struck the quarter,” but does not specify the exact time. This intrusion stands alone as its own paragraph in the text, followed by weak insistences of time paired with haunting images of nature:

The frail waves of sound broke among the stiff gorse and the hawthorn twigs as the church clock divided time into quarters. Motionless and broad-backed the moors received the statement ‘It is fifteen minutes past the hour,’ but made no answer, unless a bramble stirred. (133)

Each break in the line is the stroke of the clock attempting to break into the two women’s consciousness, but each line also fails to make a grand impact. The measuring of time into fifteen-minute increments is insignificant when voices from the dead emerge from tombstones on the moor, carrying both feminine and masculine identities that reverberate despite being long gone. The narrator continues to describe the images on the moor, including the tombstones, the ancient church that has stood for hundreds of years, and a brooch dropping into the grass. These events have taken place over a large span of time but are being connected by a narrator bringing together events from different times into one grand timeline that expands beyond one’s gender and singular lifetime. Yet all these times, the skeletons, the church, the brooch, Betty’s lost needles, other bits of odds and ends exist and “The moor accepted everything” (134). The moor stays constant in landscape but continues to change as little treasures are dropped and added to

the layers for countless years. At peace from the intrusions of the city, this natural scene does not witness the same anxious questions that clocks in the city hear from Sandra or Mrs. Pascoe:

But at midnight when no one speaks or gallops, and the thorn tree is perfectly still, it would be foolish to vex the moor with questions—what? and why?  
The church clock, however, strikes twelve. (134)

The narrator indirectly predicts the anxious questions from women that time elicits; the moor, on the other hand, does no such thing. Rather, the women are comfortable to let their minds wander naturally. This, however, does not completely block the intrusions of the chimes of constructed time. Betty just simply is not affected by it.

The time where Betty Flanders operates is the antithesis to the timeline that Jacob will occupy as he ages. As evidenced by her surroundings, time is not entirely connected to societal constraints for Betty, but rather has a strong connection to the natural world as she is often depicted in scenes of nature that portray her life as that of a preindustrial Edenic past. When her oldest son Archer cannot fall asleep, Betty advises him to “think of the fairies, fast asleep, under the flowers” (12). Her soothing reassurance to her son is steeped in folklore that is absent throughout Jacob’s young adult life. Societal time-keeping devices also do not have the same power in Betty’s landscape as they do later in Jacob’s life in London. When time accelerates from the moment of Betty receiving a proposal from Mr. Floyd, a clergyman and her sons’ Latin teacher, to his having left the village, the number of years that have passed are not disclosed. Rather, time is marked by the aging of Topaz, an old cat who was a kitten before Mr. Floyd’s departure. After reading of Mr. Floyd’s new appointment, Betty pets the cat and muses, “‘Poor old Topaz,’ as he stretched himself out in the sun, and she smiled, thinking how she had had him gelded, and how she did not like red hair in men” (23). Time is told on an animal, not a man-made piece of technology. The cat has been amended by Betty, castrated, and this alteration is

thought of in the same sentence as her dislike of red-haired men, a thought that occurred to her when she first received Mr. Floyd's proposal (this connection does not speak well for Mr. Floyd). Betty's agency is demonstrated through this unusual time-keeping device as she emasculates Mr. Floyd through the now-sterile cat. Betty's *durée* protects her subjectivity while ultimately stripping Mr. Floyd of the power of patriarchal reproduction. Though the narrator informs the reader that Mr. Floyd did marry later, there is no evidence of children or of great knowledge or cultural production.

At first glance, this representation of the feminine and Betty's experience of time replicate what by the early twentieth century had become standard literary fare of situating women outside of culture and with nature, which thus essentializes and simplifies women.<sup>9</sup> Felski notes the social beliefs and literary representations that lead women to be thought of as symbolic of a preindustrial past and simplified figures of nature. She writes that during the *fin de siècle* cultural representations of women become a "point of origin, a mythic referent untouched by the strictures of social and symbolic mediation; . . . a recurring symbol of the atemporal and asocial at the very heart of the modern itself" (38). In addition, the Industrial Revolution influenced a change in the way of life and beliefs in many areas, including time. Work that was once done by people was now being performed more efficiently by machines. Factory work also changed the time of day and year for workers. Felski writes:

Changing experiences of and attitudes toward time resulting from the industrialization of much of nineteenth-century Europe engendered a growing nostalgia for a continuity and tradition perceived to be under threat by the accelerated nature of social change. Woman, in other words, came to stand for a more natural past and to be identified with the lost cyclical rhythms of a preindustrial organic society. (39)

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<sup>9</sup> For example, Thomas Hardy's pagan depiction of Tess Durbeyfield in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and the importance between nature, sex, and femininity in D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* show how this depiction of women continues into realism and modernist literature.

Certainly, Betty Flanders possesses certain characteristics of Felski's characterization. She is connected to the natural world in her surroundings and experiences walking the beaches and Dods Hill. She also figures as a form of nostalgia as she is Jacob's past for much of the novel. She is heavily involved in his childhood and arranging his education, but she is not as influential in his adult life. Until the novel's last pages, Betty remains physically outside of London and outside Jacob's daily life. In addition, Betty's life in seaside villages is in direct opposition to those women who do feature heavily in the London scenes, namely prostitutes. These are women of commerce, pieces of a money-making machine that work to ultimately benefit men. Betty is outside of all this, figured as a natural, nonlinear nostalgic figure who operates outside of patriarchal urban time.

Felski's reading of women representing a pre-modern, a-temporal world suggests that:

nostalgia and the feminine come together in the representation of a mythic plenitude, against which is etched an overarching narrative of masculine development as self-division and existential loss. Rather than epitomizing an anachronistic or marginal condition, in other words, nostalgia emerges as a recurring and guiding theme in the self-constitution of the modern; the redemptive maternal body constitutes the ahistorical other and the other of history against which modern identity is defined. (38)

Hence women are positioned in such a way as to become the much-needed backdrop for modern masculinity to be etched upon. As the eternal past, women become a benchmark for men to mark progression and development, as well as a constant by which to mark individuality and successes. Woolf argues something quite similar in *A Room of One's Own* when she writes, "Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size" (43). Women's constant reassurance, made possible by their continued subjection, has allowed men to believe in their superiority and advanced intelligence, as well as has convinced men of their right to a

domineering nature. In some capacity, women in *Jacob's Room* do operate in this traditional feminine role. While there is little interaction shown between a grown Jacob and his mother, the narrator tells readers that Betty exaggerated the success of her late husband by inscribing on his tombstone, "Merchant of this city" (16). In reality, he was nothing of the sort and had "run a little wild," but Betty wanted to provide an admirable figure to her sons (16). Betty continues to inflate her husband after his death, building him up to be something grander and more respectable than he ever was. While Betty builds up the image of her husband after his death, Jacob inflates his own ego by using prostitutes. As a grown man, Jacob uses prostitutes as his looking-glass to build himself up as a cultured intellectual, scoffing at their ideas and lack of literary taste. However, it is the narrator who acts as Jacob's ultimate mirror, though she does so without his knowledge, and what she presents shatters the myth of the man rather than builds him up to something powerful – a misogynistic man who sleeps with prostitutes, falls in love with a married woman, and does not appear especially gifted. While men may still be using women as their ideal looking-glasses, as a background for modern masculinity, they ultimately disrupt these expectations as the narrator exposes the faults of Jacob and the type of masculinity for which he has been groomed.

This masculinity ultimately leads Jacob to his death. The inability to represent a true and full person is a common Woolfian theme, and in *Jacob's Room* it is expounded by World War I. As the narrator is writing from a post-war temporal position, Jacob is absent from the world as are a large number of young British men. This is an absence that is notable from the beginning as his mother bemoans, "Where is that tiresome boy?" to the final scene of his mother holding up Jacob's shoes, his body absent. Handley writes that while Jacob's empty shoes symbolize his death to readers, "they also suggest what the narrator has had to combat throughout the novel:



the ways in which a militarized society robs human beings of bodies and voices for its own violent ends” (110). Handley argues that a main tension of the novel is the struggle to represent Jacob as an object made for military purposes while “Woolf is also suspicious in *Jacob’s Room* of the very possibility of representing the other’s status as a subject without treating him or her as an object” (110). Because of the struggle to know and erase Jacob, the narrator moves to the forefront of the novel and “heightens the consciousness of her own status as a subject” (111). Certainly, as the narrator follows Jacob from his childhood through his education at Cambridge, his travels throughout Europe, and his life in London, her opinion and presence are felt as much as Jacob’s are absent. The female narrator conveys how the upbringing of this young British male is of use to the monarchy, an anonymous body going through the ranks.

The narrator’s presence is felt in the text because of her presence in the time of its creation. Like the biographer in *Orlando*, the narrator of *Jacob’s Room* occasionally recounts events as if occurring in her real time. These intrusions of the narrator work to expose the construction of the novel, exposing her presence as a creator of the text, one who is choosing what to stress to her intended readers. At these instances when the narrator wants to call attention to anonymous bodies that fill the societal landscape, she will break her temporal plane and comment in present tense. At Cambridge, the narrator is sure to point out how Jacob’s life has changed considerably from his female-centric childhood. Observing a church service at Cambridge, the narrator asks readers to

Look, as they pass into service, how airily the gowns blow out, as through nothing dense and corporeal were within. What sculptured faces, what certainty, authority controlled by piety, although great boots march under the gowns. In what orderly procession they advance. Thick wax candles stand upright; young men rise in white gowns; while the subservient eagle bears up for inspection the great white book. (32)

This scene in the church signals a move to present tense, a switch that is given significant immediacy with the narrator's invitation to "look." The narrator positions herself in the scene as an immediate observer to the proceedings, and, though she is inviting her readers to see what she sees, she filters the images through her own subjectivity and chooses evocative language to describe the scene. She describes what cannot be seen by one who just "looks," like "authority controlled by piety" and the "great boots" that are under the gowns. In spite of the invitation to see the image as it is, she is actively filtering that image to one that is filled with militaristic overtones. Despite the airiness of the gowns, the figures are grounded by boots that march down in an "orderly procession." The language used by the narrator is decidedly militaristic and suggests the connection between this tradition of British education and a predisposition for violence. Its connection to airy gowns suggests the lack of solidity in masculine culture, a concept that is deconstructed here in both the gowns and the narrator's use of a-linearity in storytelling. Though this formal education and religious services in the chapel are gifts bestowed on men of a certain class, they are unable to be of any real use to the young men. Education and religion are most certainly unable to save these men from being used as uniform pieces of the war machine as it is their violent usage that keeps them grounded to reality.

The lack of corporeality and airiness of the gowns also foreshadows the absence of these young men in the narrator's present. These young men are already ghosts at the time of the narrator's writing, made absent by their country putting them to military use. Though denying these young men's corporeality might seem counterintuitive for a society that wishes to use numerous bodies and their physicality, the absence of body suggests that these men, like Jacob, are already thought of in the abstract rather than as individual and unique figures. They are abstract ghosts, devoid of any concrete uniqueness that would ground them to the real world

outside of their intended usage of patriarchal conquering for their country. The airiness of the gowns emphasizes the lack of definition that these young men possess and their likeness to Jacob, the ineffable protagonist that is unable to come to light in the novel. Like patriarchal culture, the men too are dangerous, creatures of both power and destruction.

The narrator follows this description with one of light filtering into the chapel before delving into this transgression:

If you stand a lantern under a tree every insect in the forest creeps up to it—a curious assembly, since though they scramble and swing and knock their heads against the glass, they seem to have no purpose—something senseless inspires them. One gets tired of watching them, as they amble round the lantern and blindly tap as if for admittance, one large toad being the most besotted of any and shouldering his way through the rest. Ah, but what’s that? A terrifying volley of pistol-shots rings out—cracks sharply; ripples spread—silence laps smooth over sound. A tree—a tree has fallen, a sort of death in the forest. After that, the wind in the trees sounds melancholy. (34)

The militaristic insinuations, once again, are extensive throughout this section: an “assembly” of insects, like a platoon of soldiers, “creeping” until the gunshots crack the silence and give way to death. The narrator also uses language that highlights her criticism of war. The insects are inspired by something “senseless” and their randomness suggests there is “no purpose” to their attack. Violence breaks up their blind marching and taints the scene with sadness. This seemingly random digression by the narrator, occurring during a church service where women are a source of scorn for Jacob, comes from her knowledge of Jacob’s fate, an advantage that she has from her current temporal location. This scene foreshadows the sadness and emptiness that will be fully realized at the end of the novel and thus allows the narrator to voice her critical view of war despite an inability to change the outcome.

This scene, like the mixture of war and nature on Dods Hill, combines men’s war and feminine nature in a shared space. The language the narrator uses suggests layered meanings.

The narrator uses a nature scene to describe war, combining her feminine language and *durée* to describe the masculine pursuit of war, an endeavor of which she is clearly critical. By using her feminine language to describe a masculine act, the narrator is blurring the lines between feminine and masculine experience and conveying how one can clearly affect the other. The mixing of language and the imagery of war suggests the inability for a solid boundary to keep feminine and masculine experiences separate from one another. However, the language of the scene also suggests the tension between culture and nature. While the feminine and nature were able to overtake patriarchal dominance on Dods Hill, here masculine culture impedes on nature and brings destruction rather than peace. The object of cultural integration is a lantern, a manmade device that manipulates time by bringing artificial daylight to darkness at nighttime. Once that piece of culture is placed in nature, its bright blaze attracts those around it who hope for admittance. However, do these insects gain admittance? Do any benefit from the lantern's sudden appearance, perhaps for use as shelter, protection, or heat? No, and instead they are subjected to the violence and domination that comes from a patriarchal culture without the added benefits of protection. Masculine culture, represented by the lantern's presence in the forest, is perhaps attractive to these young men at Cambridge and even young women who attend services in the chapel, but it will not offer protection to most and will, instead, leave them out of the light and vulnerable.

Some years pass in Jacob's life when the narrator once again, after noting that Jacob will begin reading at "nine-thirty precisely," calls the reader's attention to "look closer" at the variety of people on the street below Jacob's room (66). These are not the privileged people of Jacob's class, but street peddlers. However, the narrator insists that the "posters are theirs too; and the news on them. A town destroyed, a race won. A homeless people, circling beneath the sky whose

blue or white is held off by a ceiling cloth of steel filings and horse dung shredded to dust” (66). Despite their relegation to background figures in Jacob’s life, these people are not unaffected by events that happen both locally and abroad, events that will eventually take Jacob’s life. “A town destroyed” – this is their news too despite the sky being cut off by the realities of a hard urban existence. The narrator’s switch to present tense again asserts an urgency to witness these people as well as call attention to a piece of news – the destruction of a town. The town is not identified, but the narrator is again foreshadowing the war that is looming over the entire novel, the war that will result in the destruction of the title character.

In addition to the grooming of young soldiers, university life has also appeared to sour Jacob towards women. His attention far from the service, Jacob glances among the bodies and wonders “why allow women to take part in it?” (32). His wondering eye and mind continue to look over the women in the chapel and compares them to dogs before concluding, “they’re as ugly as sin” (33). Nancy Toppings Bazin and Jane Hamovit Lauter write that such thinking is evident of Jacob’s misogynistic outlook and his strong loyalty to “the patriarchy and its patriotism,” a loyalty that ultimately has Jacob heading off to war “quite naïvely” (28). As such, Jacob becomes “a victim of the patriarchal ideology he supported” (29). The imagery of this passage also suggests that the culture promised by the airy gowns in a cathedral at Cambridge gives way to the reality of the heavy marching uniform boots.

This militaristic language continues throughout the novel and is often attached to male figures. Jacob’s childhood, as well as the first two chapters of the novel, is dominated by the feminine, specifically his mother Betty Flanders and her a-linear temporality that is unmeasured and unrestricted. However, a few male figures filter in through this early landscape that challenge this feminine time, the most notable being Captain Barfoot. Betty’s time is not aligned

with that of Captain Barfoot's, a family friend who calls on her routinely at the same hour every Wednesday. His punctuality is repeatedly stressed by the narrator, who records the village women gossiping, "There's Captain Barfoot to be sure—calls every Wednesday as regular as clockwork" (15). Later, Betty scans the road for Captain Barfoot and sees him, "punctual as ever" (15). His punctuality suggests a man who is rigid and inflexible, living a tailored life by a set schedule. The narrator asserts that "he dressed himself very neatly in blue serge, took his rubber-shod stick—for he was lame and wanted two fingers on the left hand, having served his country—and set out from the house with the flagstaff precisely at four o'clock in the afternoon" (25). Here is a man marked by war, physically in his maimed hand, in his actions, and in his dress. However, his masculinity does not hold any particular power over Betty, nor does it control her own temporality. Despite his years of punctual visits, she leaves her house five minutes before his arrival. When she arrives back home, she is "not at all upset" at the sight of Captain Barfoot sitting silently in her living room (28). Betty's *durée* is unaffected by Captain Barfoot's presence as it is also unaffected by another man at the opening of the novel. While emptying the contents of her purse to find a stamp, unbeknownst to her, she is being painted by a Mr. Steele but disrupts his intended composition when she sits up: "Here was that woman moving—actually going to get up—confound her!" (8). Her a-linearity does not fit into Mr. Steele's desire to control her movement or his static representation of her. Betty disrupts her representation in Mr. Steele's painting as well as disturbs expectations of the militaristic Captain Barfoot as her time is not one that will align with surrounding men but is one that is singular to her own feminine experience and influenced by her position as a widow. She is the ruler of her family and of her own self, a freedom that is not granted to other female characters such as Mrs.

Barfoot--her solitude not allowed by her husband--or Clara Durrant, a young single woman whose youth still restricts her selfhood.

Meanwhile, as Mrs. Barfoot suffers the company of the time-holder and Betty is unaffected by Captain Barfoot's visits, Jacob feels the power of Barfoot's visits. While Betty does not ensure she is there when Captain Barfoot arrives, she instructs her son not to go far from the house because of Captain Barfoot's expected arrival. This control of Jacob, the restriction of his time and space, indicates his needed indoctrination to the patriarchal world that will place Jacob in a role of authority while also controlling his life. Indeed, it is Captain Barfoot who sets Jacob up at Cambridge where, as Handley notes, he will be "steeped in the canon, repeating socially determined inscriptions" (125). The exact date and year are given when Jacob leaves for school, indicating Jacob's departure from Betty's feminine space to the controlled and regulated life of masculinity and London. Once Jacob leaves his mother's home and enters his adult life, his life follows a rigidity similar to the rigidity of Barfoot's Wednesday visits. He may not have specific weekly visits, but his adulthood is ordered by expectations: his intellectual life is controlled by the University curriculum, his love life is split between the physicality of prostitutes and the respectability of upper-class ladies, and his travel is inspired by the traditional itinerary of generations of professional British men.

Betty's temporality is ordered and experienced much differently than Jacob's adult temporality. While Jacob's landscape will become one of London and dinner parties, Betty's is predominantly featured in rural and seaside villages and her a-linearity accounts for the temporal movements of the opening chapters. It is Betty's connections between memories, people, and places that facilitate the jump in years that age the protagonist. Her involvement in the movement of the narrative is instrumental in a scene where she receives the proposal from Mr. Floyd.

Reading the letter of intention from Mr. Floyd, the image of her husband reappears: "Seabrook came so vividly before her" (20). She does not remember back to her husband, but rather the memory of Seabrook projects itself violently forward to affect the present, in a Bergsonian conception of memory that actualizes itself in the present. In *Thinking in Time*, a study of Henri Bergson's philosophy, Suzanne Guerlac writes, "Memory does not proceed from the present back into the past. It proceeds from the past into the present, by actualizing itself" (140). Here time is active, propelling a memory from the past to the present. The image of her late husband influences Betty to refuse the proposal, because her late husband's image, perhaps, reminds her of the life she led when he was still alive. This is a lifestyle that she has no desire to return to.

Woolf is presenting a narrative time that is not entirely linear, but one that is in constant communication with the past, present, and future in Seabrook's continued influence, in his ability to project himself from the past to the present and to affect that present. Writing her response to Mr. Floyd, Betty's attention is not entirely in the moment of the letter, but rather floats from the letter to immediate issues in dealing with the household and running her family. When the narrator shows Mr. Floyd receiving the letter, narrative time jumps multiple years through his marriage and then departure from the village. The narrator speeds through these events of Mr. Floyd's life and lands on a particular time period, one where Jacob is still alive but grown, a time that is in the future of the one that is currently being narrated in this section but one that is in the past of the conclusion of the novel. This acceleration of time moves the plot along, allowing the narrator to go not entirely to the future of Mr. Floyd's eventual seeing Jacob in Piccadilly, but still fast forward to a time after Mr. Floyd's departure and before Jacob's leaving for Cambridge. While the plot of the novel does follow Jacob's life and, as such, moves in a relatively linear fashion, the pacing, flashbacks, and flash-forwards are evidence of a narrative timeline where



simple linearity is not adequate to tell this story from a postwar vantage. Instead this is a tale told by a woman from the recollections of many other women that are presented in flashbacks and flash-forwards that work to resist the controlling linearity that limits women's experiences.

The narrator is sure to convey the fact that the women of the novel living in London do not share the same flexibility as Betty Flanders and are victims of patriarchal society and time. Handley argues that women's voices are silenced in *Jacob's Room* and the narrator then is unable to rewrite a society that would allow their voices to be heard as well as to prolong Jacob's life. However, the narrator emphasizes these silences and absences of life in the novel so as to showcase the differences between the prewar female life with that of the male life. While Jacob is ultimately a figure of the young British men used and sent to their death by the monarchy, his life is one that appears to be under his own control, if even only as an illusion. The same does not hold true for many of the women of the novel. Clara Durrant is a young single woman whose youth restricts her selfhood and whose virginity is only attractive for a limited amount of time – and, of course, this attractiveness is one that is controlled by a patriarchal society. As Jacob becomes an object to be used by British power, Clara and other young women of the novel, mostly prostitutes, are objects to be used by men. Jacob thinks of Clara as a “virgin chained to a rock...eternally pouring out tea for old men in white waistcoats,” essentially freezing her in time and incapacitating her ability to act independently (123). Her shackles both immobilize her in time while also placing her outside of time, of history, and of linearity. She is not engaged in masculine progressive linear time, but neither is she operating on the same timeline as Betty, free to move as she wishes. Clara is chained to this outside world, unable to move until she grows old and becomes irrelevant in the sexual game played by men in which she is a pawn. Josephine O'Brien Schaefer writes that Clara's life is the “other side of the undervalued and unprotected

lives of Fanny, Florinda, and Laurette; the shy virginity and bold looseness form a necessary dependency on each other in the economy of marriage and sex that benefits such young men as Jacob” (142). This economy is not just one of money, but also one of time. Though Clara is a respectable young woman who is, at the moment, protected and cared for by her family, she is still in the same dangers shared by prostitutes – she is an object to be used for the benefit of men and only desirable for a limited amount of time. She is of only a singular use, unable to be seen as a full physical and mental being. Jacob cannot see her physicality just as he cannot appreciate a prostitute beyond the physical pleasure she provides.

While women suffer, the benefits granted to men also lead them to become certain of their right to inherit a culture of university education, Greek literature, and Shakespeare. Captain Barfoot and Mr. Dickens are just two men who are assured with themselves as seen by their uniform punctuality and desire to enforce their power on women and their offspring. Jacob, too, develops that self-assurance of his masculine hereditary power. At Cambridge, Jacob hears the loud strikes of the clock, “the sound of the clock conveying to him (it may be) a sense of old buildings and time; and himself the inheritor; and then to-morrow; and friends; at the thought of whom, in sheer confidence and pleasure, it seemed, he yawned and stretched himself” (45). The strikes of the clock signal Jacob’s place in masculine heredity, a place he has been groomed to occupy. By the masterful and steady hands of the clock, Jacob has acquired the assurance of his superiority and place in society. Handley argues that this “steady marking of time is, then, a sanctifying bond between young men like Jacob and the past’s patriarchal authorities...This male-defined temporal design reinforces what Bakhtin calls the hierarchy of times. The clock strikes not to mark the present but to remind the living of the patriarchal past and to insist on the present’s inevitable, indebted, and unchanging relation to it” (123). Here time is viewed through

male (Jacob's) eyes as progressive, linear, and beneficial to young men. He takes it as a gift, as an inheritor. Meanwhile, women, apart from Betty, hear the chimes of the clock with anxiety, the "tick, tick, tick" refrain running throughout the text when women are placed by clocks. Sandra Wentworth Williams, a young married woman whom Jacob falls in love while in Greece, grows restless hearing the clicks of the clock "accumulating" and asking "What for? What for?" (161). The narrator makes sure to note in the same section that Jacob never asked himself "such questions," for he was "a man" (161). The argument that Jacob is set up as an inheritor of a patriarchal past is especially convincing when the narrator views Jacob at Cambridge, but what is missing from this argument is the knowledge that this is the same patriarchal power that has groomed Jacob to be a nameless and featureless piece in a war machine that will eventually send him to his death. Though Jacob has an inheritance that women are not privy to, this inheritance does nothing to save his life. Similar to the soldier in Wilfred Owen's World War I poem "Dulce et Decorum Est," Jacob is a victim of an education system that sends him off to die in honor of "the old lie," a culture that is defended by modern warfare and young lives.

Some forms of the anxiety come from women being unable to align their own temporality with that of a controlled time and thus losing in the patriarchal game, as when the prostitute Fanny is late for a date and is no longer wanted by her client (121). After Fanny is dismissed, she has a free afternoon in London and spends her time in a different world of commerce than the one where she sells her body. Here, the narrator notes the exact time of four o'clock of Fanny's shopping. The clothing shop that Fanny spots dehumanizes women in much the same way as prostitution, by presenting women as objects for consumption. The narrator writes that "the parts of a woman were shown separate" and details the disconnected pieces of women's clothing, separated like a dismembered body (121). Rather than seeing woman as a whole being, the

decorative parts of societal accepted femininity is disassociated from the female figure and up for sale. Jacob treats women the same way in the novel: Clara is too pure and virginal to engage with, while he later laughs off Fanny's attempts to hold a conversation about literature. As Fanny is an aesthetic and physical object to be consumed by men, these clothes are displayed for purely visual pleasure: "Feasted upon by the eyes of women, the clothes by four o'clock were flyblown like sugar cakes in a baker's window. Fanny eyed them too" (121). This commercial time does harm to femininity, handling the clothes, as well as women, with little care. Abandoning the clothes, Fanny buys *Tom Jones*, hoping to impress Jacob. Her desire to conform to Jacob's wishes has her day separated and marked by time, similar to the clothes in the window and her profession. She reads it at ten o'clock in the morning, meets with Jacob at five-thirty that evening, and tells him that she likes the novel. "Alas, women lie!" Jacob thinks (123). Even when Fanny attempts to follow the rules of patriarchy, she still fails, not trusted by Jacob nor seen as a complete and complex subject. These assertions of a masculine time signify the inability for these individuals to be understood beyond the limited characterizations. Fanny is a prostitute and thus only good for her body. Jacob is a figure of young modern masculinity, and even the narrator cannot show the reader his depth, though perhaps her failure is because of the actual lack of depth in Jacob.

Yet, in the end, Jacob's masculinity, his right to inherit power, and his comfort within society, do nothing to spare his life. His identity is diminished by the ticks of the clock. Before we know of Jacob's fate, the narrator writes of battleships on the North Sea and guns that are controlled by the master gunner who "counts the seconds, watch in hand—at the sixth he looks up." Then, "with equal nonchalance a dozen young men in the prime of life descend with composed faces into the depths of the sea; and there impassively (though with perfect mastery of

machinery) suffocate uncomplainingly together” (155). These anonymous faceless men have become dehumanized by each stroke of the clock, objectified into mere collateral losses, trifles in warfare. Handley writes, “In war, the monotonously recurring product of patriarchal order, human beings become, like technology, war material. Marching into church, the young Cambridge men will soon march as unquestionably, composedly and passively to their deaths, fulfilling their functions in a larger plot they must accept” (121). Again, characters are reduced to machine-like apparatuses that are put to use for a larger picture. Evelyn Cobley writes in *Modernism and the Culture of Efficiency* of the role of the stopwatch in the time and motion studies of the late nineteenth century, a role that eventually solidifies the stopwatch as a symbol for the modern workplace (51). Such labor dehumanizes workers and standardizes not only their shared time but their uniqueness into machine-like qualities that work to serve the ruling class’s gain. However, this dehumanization is not a fate only handed down to men, as many of the women in the novel suffer as well. While Jacob becomes part of a war machine, the women who are forced to share the same societal-controlled temporality suffer as their humanity is stripped to either a purely physical existence or one that is void of physicality.

After this description of the young anonymous men dying at sea, the narrator claims, “These actions, together with the incessant commerce of banks, laboratories, chancelleries, and houses of business, are the strokes which oar the world forward, they say” (156). Each tick, from the commerce of patriarchal imperial society, to the violence of warfare, lead us a bit further down the linear timeline...or so they say. The narrator, from her viewpoint of post-destruction but possibly still reeling from grief, sees this destructive chain of control and violence and comments. Her feminine viewpoint of a masculine life shows the interactions between gender and its effect on the other as well as on the public and private spheres of life. Her presence as a

narrator does not completely blur the lines between genders but rather brings into focus the destructive forces of masculine culture on both men and women. As a narrator, she cannot get close enough to Jacob to truly know him despite her ability to transcend time to view him, but he is as unknowable as the other young British men who slipped soundlessly into sea. He is an absence that suggests the futility of masculine culture. He is simply a pair of shoes devoid of body.

## CHAPTER TWO:

### “NOTHING IS ANY LONGER ONE THING”: EXPANDING TIME AND SUBVERTING BIOGRAPHY IN WOOLF’S *ORLANDO: A BIOGRAPHY*

In October, 1928, six years after *Jacob’s Room*, Woolf published *Orlando: A Biography*, a work of fiction based loosely on the life of friend and former lover Vita Sackville-West. After the emotional toil of bringing her parents to life in print in *To The Lighthouse*, Woolf wrote in her diary that she would indulge herself in the “treat” of writing *Orlando* (161). However frivolous Woolf claimed *Orlando* to be, the themes of time, gender, and identity central to Woolf’s previous novels, including *Jacob’s Room*, are further explored in this combination of fantasy and biography. As a work of fiction with “biography” in its title, *Orlando* uses the genre of biography to meld the life events of Sackville-West with fiction, creating a narrative that becomes a conceptual tale in its trans-genre, transgender, and trans-time storyline. Indeed, *Orlando* is a story as affected by time as it is by gender, and it is the concept of time that Woolf uses as a device to undermine the conventions of the traditional Victorian biography, as well as Victorian notions of gender and identity. In addition, androgyny, a concept that Woolf was writing about concurrently in *A Room of One’s Own*, is given fictional life in *Orlando* in characters who defy traditional standards of gender norms. In her 1973 book *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny*, Carolyn G. Heilbrun defines androgyny as “a condition under which the characteristics of the sexes, and the human impulses expressed by men and women, are not rigidly assigned. Androgyny seeks to liberate the individual from the confines of the appropriate” (x). Though Orlando’s body goes through a physical change that determines how others define him/her, his/her characteristics do not change simply because of the bodily change. Any changes are the pressures of society bearing down on him/her. As such, Orlando is able to experience life through a multitude of selves as s/he lives through societal changes in time, enjoying the

privileges and disadvantages of both man and woman in one continuous lifetime. In addition, the notable presence of Orlando's biographer often highlights the novel's unconventional portrayal of time, a time that does not separate Orlando's male self from his/her female self, through the subversion of biographical narrative traditions.

The themes of gender and time are complicated by the form of biography and an unnamed biographer as narrator as the disruptions to measured, linear time highlight the disruptions to stable gender. This recreation of biography is accomplished through the development of an a-linear timeline that works to differentiate Woolf's transformation of biography from that of her literary and literal forefathers. In *Orlando*, time constraints are broken down when the biographer enters Orlando's temporal landscape, a feat would be impossible in a conventional work of nonfiction. The biographer's repeated entrances into Orlando's temporality, portraying him/herself as inhabiting Orlando's time as a silent observer, expose the reader to disruptions in the narrative time that parallel the disruptions that take the form of gender changes and historical shifts in Orlando's life. By commenting on episodes of the text in real time, even when the action is occurring hundreds of years prior to the publication of *Orlando*, the biographer blurs the lines between the subject and the writer, fact and fiction, and the past and present. When the experience of time is divorced from a finite measurement of years, hours, and minutes, Orlando's *durée* is then free to encompass past, present, and even future while allowing for the biographer to represent a multi-faceted subjectivity. Such blurring thus presents an androgynous timeline in that the temporality of the novel highlights external changes and performances of identity, while combining both sexes and experiences in singular bodies of various characters, including that of the biographer whose body is the written text, and,



of course, Orlando, whose personhood does not change despite his/her abnormally long life and sex changes.

Woolf's satirical treatment of the genre of biography highlights the connections between the internal and external in relation to time, sex and gender, and identity by expanding the life of the main subject. This allows the reader to witness how different epochs affect the importance of portrayal of gender in Orlando's life, as well as the vast difference between Orlando's concept of personal time and societal time. Specifically, Orlando's long life illustrates a temporal theory closely resembling Bergson's of inner personal *durée* and external representation of self, a theory that will be integrated and expanded on in *The Waves*. In *Time and Free Will*, Bergson concludes that each person possesses two selves consisting of a "fundamental" internal self of pure duration and an external representation of that self that exists as a "social representation" (231). Suzanne Guerlac writes that this external self is "the superficial self, which is programmed by language and social constraint. We could say it is ideologically produced" (82). Orlando's long life allows the reader to witness his/her evolving inner self in contrast with his/her external self that is constantly being refigured by societal constraints. Most noticeably, the norms of gender are an external factor that influences Orlando's sense of self and the way others treat her.<sup>10</sup> The constraints of gender affect Orlando's most obvious external factors, such as appearance and dress, but also affect his/her expectations of life, as evidenced by a sudden and almost illogical desire to marry. Yet Orlando's *durée* is not affected by these external influences. Despite the sex change and the hundred years of elapsed time, Orlando has access to the same memories, the same future, the same family history (though legal access to it will change because of sex), the

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<sup>10</sup> Orlando first takes note of this when the British Captain offers her a slice of meat fat. The Captain's offer floods Orlando with emotions she had not felt since his/her relationship with Princess Sasha: "Then she had pursued, now she fled" (155). In addition to her new role in heterosexual pursuits of romance, Orlando also learns of the effects of her female body when the sight of her calf distracts a sailor so deeply he nearly falls to his death.

same artistic ambitions. The long lifeline of Orlando detailed in this satirical and affectionate biography juxtaposes the inner and outer lives of Orlando while also detailing how different external factors, like gender and time, affect Orlando's portrayal of self.

The juxtaposition of the external with the internal is also at work in the fusion of Sackville-West with the novel. Woolf's closeness with Sackville-West, her subject of inspiration, works to blur the lines between subjectivities as Woolf incorporates subject/observer and poet/biographer, by the act of writing herself into Orlando and authoring his/her poetry. Orlando not only possesses masculine and feminine characteristics despite a gender change, but also both the known characteristics of Sackville-West and personal anecdotes that only close friends would recognize (such as her cross-dressing), as well as Woolf's own identity as a writer in Orlando; this furthers the theme of multiplicity of selves in one body.

Much of the criticism on Woolf and her concepts of time has failed to include an in-depth analysis of *Orlando*. Instead, much more space has been given to *To the Lighthouse*, and, in particular, the "Time Passes" section.<sup>11</sup> By failing to give *Orlando* the same attention, critics have overlooked an important work of literature that develops and explores Woolf's ideas of subjectivity and time in the most extended and intense way. While not as overtly philosophical as the dense *To the Lighthouse*, *Orlando* explores concepts of a-linear and boundary-less time that could enrich critical texts on Woolf's usage of time. What's more, critics such as Ann Banfield in "Time Passes: Virginia Woolf, Post-Impressionism, and Cambridge Time," and Teresa Prudente in *A Specially Tender Piece of Eternity: Virginia Woolf and the Experience of Time*, while providing excellent critiques of the importance of time in her novels, have looked at Woolf's use of time through the lens of the author's "moments of being," suggesting that

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<sup>11</sup> See Paul Brown's "Relativity, Quantum Physics, and Consciousness in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*," Ann Banfield's "Time Passes: Virginia Woolf, Post-Impressionism, and Cambridge Time," and Elizabeth Andrews McArthur's "Following 'Swann's Way: To The Lighthouse.'"

crystallized singular moments emerge in her texts as individual times of importance and life. However, this concept of time does not readily apply to *Orlando* and ignores the importance of the past in the present. Literary history and the progression of centuries occur in conventional order in *Orlando*, but it is oversimplifying Woolf's concept of time to characterize time's movement as a set of still moments placed in linear succession. Time in *Orlando* is neither linear nor easily measurable; it is fluid, slippery, elusive, and is definitely not made up of still images that come to life like a flip book.

Biography was not an unfamiliar genre to Woolf but rather a constant presence in her life since childhood. Her father Leslie Stephen was the editor of *The Dictionary of National Biography* for nine years, beginning in 1882, the year of Woolf's birth. In adulthood, Woolf cultivated a continued interest in the genre. She participated in the Bloomsbury Group's "Memoir Club," which met to read passages from members' working autobiographies. She wrote two essays specifically on the genre, "The New Biography" and "The Art of Biography." In 1933, she published *Flush: A Biography*, a fictional biography whose central figure was Elizabeth Barrett Browning's dog. In 1940, she published *Roger Fry*, a conventional biography of the art critic and painter who had been a close friend. However, though Woolf engaged biography in her writing, she also struggled with and worked to undermine its conventions, a project she undertakes both in *Flush* and *Orlando: A Biography*. As such, much of what has been written about *Orlando* focuses on the role of biography and the juxtaposition of fact and fiction that occur in the text.<sup>12</sup> In addition, critics interested in Woolf and biography have noted the influence of her father in Woolf's interest in the genre. Both Christopher Wiley and Katherine C.

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<sup>12</sup> See Alison Winch's "in plain English, stark naked': 'Orlando', Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Reclaiming Sapphic Connections;" Christy L. Burns' "Re-dressing Feminist Identities: Tensions between Essential and Constructed Selves in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*;" and Jane De Gay's "Virginia Woolf's Feminist Historiography in *Orlando*."

Hill each note the influence of Stephen's literary taste on Woolf's interest in biography and literature in general. Wiley claims that Stephen's employment as the editor of *The Dictionary of National Biography* created in Woolf a distaste for biography, while Hill contends that though Stephen could be a tyrant in the household, his relationship with his daughter held many more dimensions than just that of dictator and that he actively groomed Woolf to become his "literary and intellectual heir," a project that engendered in her an interest in biographies and histories (351). Hill claims that, similar to Woolf, Stephen possessed progressive ideas about literary history that argued for the creation of new genres that would work to represent effectively the vision of an age, and that these beliefs "certainly did not conflict with her [Woolf's] experimental bent, and they may have in some small way stimulated it. Stephen's entire conception of the progress of literary history is predicated on experimentation" (359). Thus, by satirizing the genre of biography her father and his contemporaries wrote, Woolf is able to find room to experiment. To realize Sackville-West as a character or for any real-life figure to be represented in a literary representation, a new language is needed that is neither pure fact nor pure fiction. Here was the optimal space for fact and fiction to touch and to create a figure, life, and experience that are more real in fantasies than traditional biography often aims to present in its actualities.

In addition to connecting her complicated relationship with her father to the genre, critics also argue that Woolf recognized the gender limitations found in those books in her father's library. Similar to the strict and oppressive Victorian household of her father that she depicted in "A Sketch of the Past," Victorian biographies served to uphold the image of the powerful and accomplished male through a timeline that would follow him from birth, education, accomplishments and accolades, and, if fitting, death. Such a life trajectory did not represent a

Victorian woman's life timeline. By leaving women out of a genre that works to celebrate lives, these books further subjugated women as their lives were deemed not worthy of print and, thus, immortality. Beth A. Boehm writes in "Fact, Fiction, and Metafiction: Blurred Gen(d)res in *Orlando* and *A Room of One's Own*," "If biography is only to tell the stories of exploits then it is reflecting gender conventions and limiting the subject matter to only men" (194-195). Woolf's treatment of biography in *Orlando* disrupts these expectations by creating a figure whose life does not adhere to this standard timeline: monumental life events are given very little space in the narrative; Orlando changes genders during the height of his career and then continues living for centuries more as a woman.

The question then becomes, why does Woolf choose the form of a biography, which in its conventional use is a timeline of a life, to subvert notions of the temporal experience? Woolf's satirical biography exposes the connection between the internal self and external influences on that self, and is also able to explore what a biography would look like if the main figure was lost more in thought than in exploits, denying the need for action while also exploring time's influence on both public time and the duration of an individual. The simple nature of any biography is an exercise in external and internal relationships as the biographer, usually an outsider, attempts to recreate the life of one s/he has no relation to. However, in this exercise Woolf is not an outsider, but an intimate friend to the novel's inspiration Sackville-West. It is not just Sackville-West's aristocratic lineage and failed inheritance that grant fodder for *Orlando*, but intimate details such as her cross-gender dressing and same-sex desires provide both plot points and possibilities to satirize literary conventions. Writing unapologetically of same-sex desires in 1928 could lead one to be prosecuted, as it did with Radclyffe Hall and her 1928 novel *The Well of Loneliness*, or suffer censorship. Leslie Kathleen Hankins writes, "In a brilliant

rhetorical coup, Woolf chose to spotlight the various strategies for avoiding censor, making these options and strategies the topic and focal point of her book” (183). Woolf is able to write of the “scandalous” desires of Sackville-West by instilling them in a fantastical narrative that thrives on instability.

Crafting *Orlando* as a satirical biography makes it the optimal outlet for Woolf’s theories and experiments with the fluidity of subjectivity that she continued to explore in her other works. As stifling as the genre of biography might be when viewed in its conventional Victorian form, it becomes a remarkably open and useful genre for Woolf to test the limitations and abilities of language in representing life. Critics have not adequately explored the role of the biographer in *Orlando*, who is instrumental in conveying the fluidity and abstractions of fact and fiction, subject and object, and time. Though Orlando goes through remarkable changes, including transforming from male to female and aging twenty years during the course of three centuries, it is the biographer’s presence that truly makes possible Woolf’s theories of time through the subversion of generic traditions. The biographer’s patient presence in witnessing Orlando through the hundreds of years exposes the a-linearity of time that does not differentiate between Orlando’s masculine and feminine lives in creating an androgynous temporality.

The first challenge of the biographer is to weave together these particular four hundred years of Orlando’s life, which s/he does in a temporality that is similar to Bergson’s theories of qualitative and quantitative multiplicities that allow Woolf to tell a linear story while allowing for a-linear time. While time does not unfold in a conventional way in *Orlando*, it is not completely unrecognizable. Time still unfolds in a linear fashion, centuries following one another in an orderly progression, and Orlando does, in fact, get older, aging from sixteen to thirty-eight. Yes, time still marches forward, but not uniformly. Orlando’s age does not match

the passing years, nor does the development of Orlando's character fall in line with the amount of time that has passed. The years go by and bring changes in fashion, literature, landscape, society, politics and leaders, and while Orlando feels the influence of the times, his/her character does not completely change. This juxtaposition of measured yearly time with Orlando's own aging showcases a Bergsonian temporality. Bergson argued that time is too often thought of as a quantitative multiplicity, characterized by being both spatial and homogeneous. In *Time and Free Will*, Bergson uses an example of a flock of sheep to illustrate the differences between quantitative and qualitative multiplicities. The sheep that make up the flock are homogeneous in that all the sheep look alike, but they are also individual sheep separated from one another, demonstrating a spatial distinction. These separate, but homogeneous, sheep can also be represented by a symbol, a sum amount of them totaling the number fifty, for example. In contrast, qualitative multiplicities are heterogeneous and temporal. Bergson argues that rather than changing in degree of intensity, qualitative multiplicity evolves through a succession of different intensities, stressing that no one intensity or emotion either negates or juxtaposes another. A qualitative multiplicity, thus, is heterogeneous and continuous. Furthermore, a qualitative multiplicity is inexpressible and therefore cannot be represented by a sum or symbol. Bergson writes, "Our final conclusion, therefore, is that there are two kinds of multiplicity: that of material objects, to which the conception of number is immediately applicable; and the multiplicity of states of consciousness, which cannot be regarded as numerical without the help of some symbolic representation, in which a necessary element is *space*" (88).

In *Orlando*, these two kinds of multiplicities play out in the competing timelines of years in the narrative temporality and Orlando's unique aging of her personal temporality, as quantitative temporality is shown to be a societal invention that creates power imbalances. The

narrative temporality of the novel, the passing of months, years, centuries, is the orderly time of history and biography, measured and controlled by established laws and measurements. It is a time that has entered into the social and economic commerce, a time that has been spatialized and numbered to be collected and counted. This is the time that individual lives reside in and the biographer has no choice but to record it. Interestingly, this system turns time into an object to count, and Orlando is rich in countable objects. Orlando is affluent not only because of his/her wealth (partially as evidenced by her family estate's calendar house), but because of time. Orlando attributes his/her family's affluence to his/her long and prosperous family tree, a factor that she is quite proud of as a woman living among gypsies. The biographer records, "One night when they were questioning her about England she could not help with some pride describing the house where she was born, how it had 365 bedrooms and had been in the possession of her family for four or five hundred years" (147). She feels herself affluent because of the countable qualities of her life: money, the size of her house, and her family lineage. However, the gypsies are not impressed; material possessions mean nothing to them, and their own families go back thousands of years. In the gypsy community there is nothing inherently noble in the ability to trace a family tree through the centuries or a vast amount of bedrooms in a house. Orlando is a product of a society that produces an economy of time that privileges a selected few in power over many. Despite Orlando's sex change, she is still a product of her boyhood, a young noble who was a favorite of a Queen and who has a large beloved estate in the countryside. Though Orlando appears as a woman for more than half the novel, she is not a woman of natural temporality, as is Betty Flanders in *Jacob's Room*. Orlando returns to England and fights to keep her house and possessions, and it is here that Sackville-West serves as an appealing inspiration in that her gender prevented her from living on her family's estate, Knole House. Because of her



gender, Sackville-West was unable to inherit the estate that had been in her family since the sixteenth century, which instead went to a male cousin. This sex-centered inheritance makes up the landscape of Woolf's *Orlando* in both Orlando's noble lineage and the lawsuit challenging her right to inherit after her sex change (which, unlike Vita, she wins). Thomas W. Lewis argues that Woolf's infatuation with Vita was arguably because of her long aristocratic history; her self-identified snobbery was not an obsession with status and titles, but rather an interest in the long history that such names carry, a "stamp of the past in his or her breeding" (193). However, Woolf re-imagines that lineage in Orlando's ability, like the physical home, to continue his/her life – to transcend centuries and scarcely age, to keep possession of the impressive family home, and to find immortality and fame in his/her writing. In his/her expanded life timeline, Orlando finds an immortality that is usually reserved for men of action and prestige.

Here, Orlando's duration may appear to be heteronormative in its endorsement of power and inheritance. Judith Halberstam notes multiple heteronormative temporalities, including inheritance time: "The time of inheritance refers to an overview of generation time within which values, wealth, goods, and morals are passed through family ties from one generation to the next. It also connects the family to the historical past of the nation, and glances ahead to connect the family to the future of both familial and national stability" (5). These heteronormative temporalities operate within patriarchal societies, solidifying any connection between family and history through the male side of the family. While women are producing the children that continue this chain, they are ultimately erased from history as they are swallowed up by their husband's families once married. As such, women have no history or, as Woolf writes in *Three Guineas*, "as a woman, I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world" (129). Women, who had been denied the basic rights of citizens such

as education, inheritance, and suffrage, hold no stake in their society, have no footnote in their nation's history, and no promise to benefits in the future. Thus, in a response to a masculine-centered hereditary-bound time and a time that would be completely divorced from the past and history, Orlando abounds in an androgynous time that grants her access to both gendered lives that allow him/her to live outside of a strict societal time while still connecting to the past and history. Orlando subverts the heteronormativity of inheritance by living later life as a woman while having the advantages of a man's history, highlighting the gender privilege of men in relation to society and law. Orlando's own duration is a qualitative multiplicity, a temporality that is heterogeneous, progressive, and continuous. She becomes her own ancestor, creating her own personal lineage that goes back hundreds of years. Pamela L. Caughie argues that, "When used in such words as transvestite, transsexual, and transgender, 'trans' connotes movement... 'Trans' signifies the dynamics of identity and identification" (508). Time, while not spatial in *Orlando*, is movement, as is Orlando's self. Like her estate, the years pass all in one body and though that body changes (as the house does), she is one figure. Her duration is progressive, always moving through her body and adding to her past and future, but not classifying her as different from that past. As the body changes, Orlando's relationship with others changes as they are now reacting to her as a woman and not a man, but she is still constantly merging her masculine past with her feminine present and future. In becoming her own ancestor, Orlando is able to operate outside of a patriarchal system that denied Sackville-West a property that would have easily been hers if she had been born a man. The androgynous time of Orlando is represented in the mixture of genders and lives within Orlando, as well as the mixture of inner duration and external time in the novel.

The strange timeline experienced by Orlando is reminiscent of various arguments about queer temporality and its relationship with biography, providing room for the instability of gender and time that occurs in the a-linear movement of time. Halberstam writes that queer time develops in “opposition to the institutions of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction” (1). Outside of the birth, reproduction, and death timeline, queer time “has the potential to open up new life narratives and alternative relations to time and space” (2). Interestingly, Woolf’s *Orlando*, while satirizing the genre of biography by not cataloging these “accomplishments” of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction in a linear fashion, does tackle some of these life highlights in Orlando’s tale. Melanie Micir writes that “the major problem with biography is its inviolable progression of the body through time: a biography details its subject’s birth, education, inheritance, marriage, children and death” (12). These standard chapters of the biography mark only certain individuals as worthy of being immortalized in text, and, though Orlando has claims to all of these markers except death, they are either briefly glossed over or left out of the narrative entirely. Instead, Orlando’s temporal progression is shown not through the growth and decay of the body, but through its *change*. Orlando’s years from sixteen to thirty are filled with romantic dalliances, heartbreak, literary attempts, and career advancement at court. During these years time does not work through his body to age it, but rather through the life experiences that mature him and make him ready to experience life as a woman. Orlando’s gender change challenges the linear progression of biography and narrates the development of a life. *Orlando* is not an exploration of a singular consciousness, but an attempt at following the life of a set of selves in one body. Therefore, time must expand and swell to provide the narrative space for these multiple subjectivities.

Two important biographical factors are missing from the novel that contribute to its focus on the present: birth and death. Orlando is introduced to readers *in medias res* at the age of sixteen, and the book ends in October, 1928, the same month and year it was published. With no true beginning or end to this life, the narrative focuses on the present. Halberstam argues that the AIDS epidemic of the late-twentieth century affected queer time by no longer promising a future, which places an emphasis on the here and now. There is no illness in *Orlando* that threatens its protagonist, and, in fact, his/her future appears to be wide open with possibility, but it is still the present moment that demands attention from both biographer and reader, a present where masculinity and femininity intermix. What's more, Orlando's time does not appear to be stifled by gendered life expectations. As a man, Orlando experiences love affairs and a position that takes him to Turkey, but his achievements for the court stop there as the transition to a woman occurs at the height of his career. While Orlando feels gendered expectations as a woman, external pressures that are only targeted towards women, she is able to work around them. As a woman, Orlando feels the pressure of marriage so much so that the quality of her writing suffers and she has to succumb to the demand before moving on with her life. The biographer in *Orlando* notes, "Though the seat of her trouble seemed to be the left finger, she could feel herself poisoned through and through, and was forced at length to consider the most desperate of remedies, which was to yield completely and submissively to the spirit of the age, and take a husband" (243). However, move on she does, subverting the notion that marriage and children marks the end of a woman's life. Rachel Blau DuPlessis argues that the heterosexual romance plot, which makes up the majority of female experience in novels, shortens the timeline of women to that of being courted and married. Yet Orlando lives beyond her marriage and undoubtedly because her marriage is so unconventional. Micir writes, "Queer temporality studies

critique understandings of time as a naturalized, internalized, bodily performance of the too easily accepted social scripts that govern our lives, asking us instead to recognize and resist—in our scholarly practices as in our lives—the standard, heteronormative, biologically-driven temporal organization of our world” (11). Orlando’s gender performativity conveys such an attempted challenge to a “heteronormative, biologically-driven” temporal world. Orlando’s gender, like Bergson’s external societal time, is a social construct with societal expectations and norms affecting the way s/he feels and presents herself/himself. In Bergson’s concept of dual temporalities, societal time is where one’s external representation of self lives. Likewise, Orlando’s gender is not representative of his/her internal self, but is rather a representational self that is created by external forces, projected outside of Orlando. Orlando’s gender is not a singular reflection of a static consistent identity but is instead performative in that it is a process; Orlando’s gender is not natural and is created through a combination of external forces and her actions within gendered norms. Judith Butler writes that “gender cannot be understood as a role which either expresses or disguises an interior ‘self,’ whether that ‘self’ is conceived as sexed or not. As performance which is performative, gender is an ‘act,’ broadly construed, which constructs the social fiction of its own psychological interiority” (279). Similar to Bergson’s external self, Butler’s concept of gender is not one that expresses any “true” inner self but one that is made up of social influences. Orlando becomes a woman in a theatrical scene, but her new sex is made certain by the external force of the narrator and his/her words. “We may take advantage of this pause in the narrative to make certain statements. Orlando had become a woman—there is no denying it” (138). Though the narrator’s words suggest s/he is simply stating what s/he sees, his/her words are one of the first external factors that create Orlando’s gender, conveying the power of language in its role in gendering.

Though Orlando is recognized as a woman after this theatrical gender change, the biographer suggests that Orlando's femininity is simply just an act. Interacting with another transgender and trans-time character, the Archduchess Harriet/Archduke Harry, the biographer writes that "In short, they acted the parts of man and woman for ten minutes with great vigour and then fell into natural discourse" (179). With her husband, Orlando is also able to fall into a natural discourse relatively easily. Her husband Shelmerdine, though gendered male as Orlando is gendered female at the time of their marriage, does not completely adhere to the strict tenants of his sex. After professing their love for each other, Orlando and Shel simultaneously suspect that the other is the sex they are each not representing at that moment, a suspicion that comes to Orlando perhaps because of her eventual naturalness and comfort with Harriet/Harry that comes from recognizing another figure that possesses a continuous and progressive multiplicity. Hankins argues that these instances of often mistaken genders are heterosexuality acting as a "cover letter" for homosexual desires, writing, "Once Orlando is a woman, heterosexuality loses ground; the odd courtship between the Archduke and Orlando, using dead flies on sugar cubes for foreplay and clammy toads to say 'no,' is singularly repulsive. With this version of female heterosexuality, Orlando has reason to be grateful for androgynous camaraderie rather than physical passion when she marries Shelmerdine" (188). Certainly Orlando's marriage works because in addition to a sex in flux, Shel is often physically absent, his work as a sailor taking him far from home and leaving Orlando to continue her life uninterrupted and undisturbed. After her lucky marriage, "she could write, and write she did. She wrote. She wrote. She wrote" (266). Orlando is thus able to live beyond her marriage and even avoid death, an outcome that has been the destiny of many subversive fictional female characters.

The life of Orlando is certainly presented differently from the traditional biography not just in her duration, but also in her life as a woman. The Orlando introduced by the biographer at the beginning of the novel is the stereotypical figure for a biography: he is a young male aristocrat of an important family, a member of Court, and soon-to-be ambassador to Turkey. His early life is in the foreground of Queen Elizabeth, a Great Frost and Thames winter fair, and the Great Flood. However, once Orlando's sex changes from male to female, which occurs approximately one-third through the novel, the exciting backgrounds fade away and time appears to slow down. After Orlando's change and during her alliance with the band of gypsies, the biographer assures readers that Orlando "met with a variety of adventures, some at the hands of men, some at the hands of nature, in all of which Orlando acquitted herself with courage" (140). However, these adventures are never told, leaving the reader unable to properly judge Orlando's supposed courage. Tales that would make a biography exciting are left out of the narrative, and, as Orlando spends more time as a woman, such exciting "adventures" appear to become absent from her life. The timing of a woman's life is vastly different from the man's life in biography: once Orlando becomes a woman, her aging also slows down. During the course of her time as a man, Orlando ages from sixteen to thirty years of age in the course of about two hundred years. As a woman, she ages only six years in roughly the same amount of time. Though Orlando herself is still the same person s/he ever was, her change of sex marks her as a woman with different obligations and expectations of a man. During Orlando's life as a man, he had lovers, a failed romance, heroes and disappointments in those heroes, aspirations and professional accomplishments; in short, he matured from a boy to a young man through his life pursuits. As a woman, Orlando's expected timeline has changed significantly as she is now expected to entertain, take part in society, take a husband, and have children. While she does do these things,

she does so reluctantly and slowly, not taking a husband out of desire but necessity. Her reasoning for taking a husband aligns her *durée* and the forces of external time, as it marries her desire to write and external pressures to marry. Orlando's duration as a woman becomes less aligned with societal time than when she was a man as her choices and intended lifestyle do not mesh as well with the role she is expected to play as a female.

Gender is not the only factor that calls attention to the use of time in the novel. The blurring of subject and writer, as well as fact and fiction, is closely related through the use of real time in *Orlando*. Though the title of the book presents *Orlando* as a biography, the biographer goes against conventions of the genre that both Stephen and the editors of *The Dictionary of National Biography* upheld. As Elizabeth Cooley contends, Stephen saw the biographer's duty as presenting "the greatest possible amount of information in a thoroughly business-like form" (72). This "business-like form" was to eliminate any rumination on the subject's thoughts so the facts and events could be presented in a concise manner. The biographer in *Orlando* claims to uphold these conventional ideals, as s/he reflects on her/his duty to relate Orlando's life faithfully, writing that the "first duty of a biographer" is to "plod, without looking to right or left, in the indelible footprints of truth... Our simple duty is to state the facts as far as they are known" (65). Indeed, after this announcement and in an attempt to fulfill the biographer's job, the biographer calls attention to his/her physical work of leafing through the actual documents used to supplement Orlando's history. Describing the state of papers which survived the night Orlando's gender change occurred, the biographer writes of "picking our way among burnt pages and little bits of tape as best we may" and then reproduces the text of a manuscript "full of burns and holes, some sentences being quite illegible" (126-127). By describing the process of research, the biographer brings attention to her/himself and the physical work s/he must do to make the



writing of this biography possible. Not only does s/he call attention to this work, s/he does so *in the moment* of his/her actual research, a move which complicates traditional temporal landscapes of writer and reader.

The focus on the biographer's work grants him/her a temporality that fuses with Orlando and creates a space of various subjectivities and times. The present tense use of the verb "to pick" equates a current action with the biographer, an action that conventional time would tell us must have been completed by the time of the book's publication. This use of the present tense not only signifies the time of the biographer's action, but connects a physicality to that time. Though a narrative can never be truly in the present as it is always a record of things that have happened, there is a constant stress on the present for the biographer. By emphasizing the real physical work in recreating Orlando's past, the biographer sketches out her/his own material (but not gendered) body and tangible presence. In turn, the biographer's digressions act to remind the reader that this is very much a story being created and told by someone who is *not* Orlando. The course of Orlando's life is being set down by an outsider, a person who did not live these events except through Orlando and the research of the physical evidence that makes up the book. As such, Orlando's tale is a conglomeration of various temporalities, as the biographer combines his/her own time, Orlando's time, and the time of "the spirit of the age," or societal time, which sometimes is exciting and quick in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, slow and pregnant with pause during the Victorian Period, or rapid and frantic in the early twentieth century. Thus, Orlando's personal history cannot be disentangled from the biographer's – their time has overlapped and touched, affecting their histories and portrayal of said histories. The biographer's various appearances in the text are not, then, self-important, but rather suggest both the difficulty in telling another person's story and the inability for a story to be solely of one person. *Orlando*,

though strictly focused on the figure of Orlando throughout, is filled with the temporalities of Orlando as a man, Orlando as a woman, the biographer, others who make up the background of societal time, and the readers. Orlando's faithful biographer dutifully recreates these temporalities as best he/she can to represent the singular yet complicated figure of Orlando and in the process blurs the gendered timelines of men and women to create an androgynous time that touches and combines a multiplicity of lives, genders, and times.

In addition to suggesting the impossibility of presenting a completely true and factual depiction of a person, the passage cited above depicting Orlando's biographer picking through scraps of paper also satirizes biographies that claim to do just that. After calling attention to his/her existence in Orlando's text, the biographer provides the reader with the representation of the documents that detail the night of the beginning of Orlando's second sleep, complete with the flaws and gaps. Even though the biographer here laments the loss of documents which could provide factual information deemed suitable enough for a biography, it is in this section that Woolf shows the reader what a literal dependence on such information would look like. To describe the most peculiar incident of the novel – Orlando's long sleep and subsequent gender change, the biographer relies solely on pieces of letters and journals from those who were at the party that Orlando attended that night, even though these documents were badly burned and beyond legible. The result is a few pages of scribble that do not illuminate the events of that night and would make for quite a boring read if the whole biography contained nothing but these first-hand accounts.

Yet despite the biographer's intention to stay true to the facts of the subject's life story, the majority of the novel is made up of deviations from facts into Orlando's mind, a narrative technique that brings the biographer to the forefront of the novel. For example, directly following

this passage of factual information, the biographer weaves philosophical questions into the retelling of Orlando's second great sleep. Here, Woolf satirizes the Victorian notion of the objective-factual biography present in her father's work. Once Woolf's biographer plunges into the mind of Orlando, begins to ask questions and theorizes Orlando's thoughts, s/he is violating the Victorian conventions of biography and the claim that true biography only presents objective facts. Cooley writes, "Again contradicting himself, the biographer breaks the traditional rules. Rather than recording 'life,' 'the only fit subject for the novelist or biographer,' he records 'thought' –and not simply rational thought but the subtle machinations of the psychological 'self'" (78). Not only does the biographer subvert traditional rules of biography, but s/he also entangles her/his own subjectivity with that of Orlando. The biographer's duty is to present to the reader a faithful reproduction of Orlando, yet s/he routinely presents the subjective workings of the mind. However, it is not surprising that such a cerebral writer as Woolf would want to penetrate the mind of a character to attempt to fully represent the essence of a person's subjectivity. Action alone could not present the reader with a clear view of Orlando (especially as a woman) or of any figure. The biographer is thus able to pierce through not only the temporal landscape to gain access to Orlando, but is also able to flow into Orlando's being to bring to life the inner workings of her/his mind. As the temporal boundary between Orlando and the biographer vanishes, so too does the boundary that separates Orlando from his/her biographer occasionally falter, creating a temporality that connects, despite gender, class, and even physical distance, rather than divides. In this connection, androgynous time facilitates the gender instabilities that continue throughout the novel. Androgynous time here connects the biographer and Orlando through the text, the body of writing that the biographer is creating as a meeting place of his/her time and Orlando's time.

In addition to the obvious disregard for the “first duty of biographer,” this philosophical wandering ends with a call of attention to real time: “Having waited well over half an hour for an answer to these questions, and none coming, let us get on with the story” (68). The biographer has once again inserted his/her presence into the text, intertwining him/herself with Orlando while mingling facts with speculation, thus continuing to blur the lines between Orlando’s story and the biographer’s story by revealing the dates of writing. While observing Orlando working on “The Oak Tree,” the current date for the biographer is noted: November 1927 (78). After this date is established, the biographer continues to call attention to his/her presence and his/her observing of Orlando as if the two are taking place concurrently. Describing a scene between Orlando and her newfound prostitute friends, the biographer inserts her/himself directly into the storyline: “All they desire is—but hist again—is that not a man’s step on the stair? All they desire, we were about to say when the gentleman took the very words out of our mouths” (219). The approach of a man signifies the destructive effects of male-dominated societal time, effectively silencing the women and the biographer. His presence places the women back on a linear model of time, a model where time is interrelated with commerce, as he buys a woman’s time, effectively owning her societal representational self for a certain time span. In addition, the effect on the biographer raises the question of how is the biographer, who is writing in the late 1920s, able to comment on this scene from the eighteenth century as if the two events, the writing and the action, are occurring simultaneously? It appears that the traditional rules of linear time again do not apply in not only Orlando’s life but, as a result, a faithful reproduction of Orlando’s life. For example, when the biographer makes note of his/her real, physical, and concrete presence (“One moment, where is *Gulliver’s Travels*? Here it is!”), he/she is not removing himself from the tale which s/he is recounting, as stated above, but suggesting the

interconnectivity of various temporalities (210). In addition, this active language is mirroring the fluidity of time that Orlando experiences by subverting linear time and instead highlighting the connections and relationships between past and present. Cooley argues that the narrator in *Jacob's Room* presents the frustrations of language's inability to faithfully represent personality, writing that the narrator's frustrations are a representation of Woolf's "general doubt that language can ever capture the reality of characters" (75). Cooley asserts that Orlando's biographer also sees this limitation but argues that the biographer illustrates the restrictions of biography by stating his/her refusal to dive into the unknown (75). However, Cooley does not explore how the language used in *Orlando* works to represent a denial of time restraints that Orlando's prolonged life has embodied. By sharing actions and occupying the same temporal landscape with Orlando, the biographer is not attempting to completely remove him/herself from his/her subject as other biographers claim to do and is therefore able to present a much more complicated representation of character than a typical biographer would be able to accomplish. Allowing the reader to see the temporal and narrative disruptions in the text mirrors the disruptions that take the form of gender changes and temporal shifts in Orlando's life. In addition, the narrator's body of work, the novel, is an embodiment of androgynous time in the fusing together of Orlando's time with the narrator's own time.

The passage of years occurs seamlessly in *Orlando*, so smoothly that one hundred years can go by with Orlando and, for that matter, the reader barely seeming to notice. The time between Orlando's abandonment by Princess Sasha and the gender change is not accounted for by the biographer, but it is later revealed that "hundreds of years" have elapsed (155). This quiet passing of time occurs so readily in *Orlando* because, as the reader is told, the biographer's duty is to document actions, not thoughts. In one episode, the biographer lists out the months,

acknowledging the boredom of such writing but arguing that the duty of the biographer is to record life, not thought, and “since sitting in a chair and thinking is precisely what Orlando is doing now—there is nothing for it but to recite the calendar...until she has done” (267). Time is thus neither a dictator of action nor a tool to be used to measure life experiences against. Non-action is satirically represented through the meticulous recitation of the calendar as days pass slowly as opposed to what would normally be monumental events in a biography. Once Orlando changes from a man to a woman, the opportunity for the events that usually take the center of biography disappears, though the biographer subverts expectations by not including exciting or traditionally monumental events during Orlando’s male life. The traditionally important “womanly” events of her life are brief: Orlando becomes engaged in “a few minutes” (250), and the birth of her child merits but a few lines after a lengthy poetic passage on the scene outside of a window (295). These events are perhaps insignificant in the larger scope of Orlando’s being, and here the biographer subverts traditional notions of biography, while also mocking Victorian modesty and restraint in regards to childbirth, of only detailing lives filled with action rather than speculation and thought. These strange temporal experiences also work to show how time is experienced differently through the individual. Time expands and condenses for Orlando; she is unable to differentiate between hours and years when meditating under a tree and an engagement that seems to have happened in an extremely short amount of time.

The passing of time does not work to separate Orlando from any of his/her lived experiences as one would imagine that conventional time, let alone centuries, would do. Even as Orlando turns from man to woman, even as centuries separate his/her birth from his/her suspended adulthood, Orlando holds on to the same vivid memories of his early life, including the rose bowl, the poet, and his/her family home. Most importantly, Orlando’s poem, “The Oak

Tree,” continues to be worked upon, the manuscript containing all the abuses and evidence of the accumulating years. The blood and stains together represent the communal nature of time not kept separated by a linear timeline. The blood stains act as physical embodiments of Orlando’s past life now existing in the present and which will continue to exist in the future. What’s more, this is a physicality that does not differentiate between Orlando’s male body and female body, representing the sameness of Orlando despite the body’s changes. Time does not act as a fence, separating one event from another, and thus the passing of years in *Orlando* becomes a true life that forever is marked with past experiences and memories, like the badly stained manuscript. The smell of a candle in a department store brings back vivid memories of Sasha, which, in turn, leads to reminiscing about other figures from the past and their connection to items in the present; as Orlando muses, “Nothing is any longer one thing” (305). The biographer notes this connection between past and present in the figure of Orlando, remarking that people who are “the most successful practitioners of the art of life” can “somehow contrive to synchronise the sixty or seventy different times which beat simultaneously in every normal human system so that when eleven strikes, all the rest chime in unison, and the present is neither a violent disruption nor completely forgotten in the past” (305). While this passage describes those who present one solid identity through a stable life and die at an age of “sixty-eight or seventy-two,” it simultaneously details the a-linearity of time. Thus, lived events should not be viewed as one-time occurrences that do not continue to haunt one as time progresses, nor is the present completely separated from the past. These events are not placed in orderly succession, but rather they weave in and out of lived experience, like the scent of a candle floating on the air in a store.<sup>13</sup> Time does not hold events hostage, as Princess Sasha continues to haunt Orlando

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<sup>13</sup> Woolf writes of the continued presence of the past in the present in “A Sketch of the Past,” writing, “In certain favorable moods, memories—what one has forgotten—come to the top. Now if this is so, is it not possible—I often

centuries after their last meeting. Likewise, all of the past and the unknown present live in a single person, and the linear timeline of a conventional biography could not fully unveil the truth of an individual by only emphasizing certain actions in such a limited fashion of one's life.

Thus, while conventional time has progressed and has changed the landscape of fashion and London, Orlando, who has gone through a seemingly incredible change of genders and basic aging, is practically the same person s/he ever was. The biographer argues, "Yet through all these changes she had remained, she reflected, fundamentally the same" (237). This denial of change contradicts one of the draws of biography, for do biographies not present the development of a figure, from childhood to adulthood, and thus show the reader the changes in such figures? Time passes in *Orlando*, but, like gender, time does not work to change Orlando's deep inner self. While his/her external representation of self that exists in the social world may change and, as such, even his/her understanding of his/her self may change, these varying subjectivities all constitute the same Orlando at the beginning of the novel as it does at the end. Again, Orlando has always been Orlando. As a woman, she has her boyhood memories, and as a young man he has his future as a woman.

This multitude of selves in one person conveys Woolf's notion of subjectivity, one which is not fixed, rooted, and one-dimensional but is one that is progressive, like Bergson's qualitative multiplicity. In the introduction to the third volume of *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, Nigel Nicolson writes that in creating *Orlando*, "Virginia had begun her game of 'making Vita up', attributing to her at different times every quality except that of genius, sometimes to her credit, more often with simulate reproach, until she flung them all together in Orlando to produce a man-woman who strode masterfully through life but remained vulnerable and aloof" (xxi).

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wonder—that things we have felt with great intensity have an existence independent of our minds; are in fact still in existence?" (67).



Orlando is not just a “man-woman,” which suggests a mannish woman or a feminine man, but a figure of immense complications and traits, both feminine and masculine in one body. Orlando’s subjectivity is composed of a multitude of ever-evolving selves that interchange depending on circumstances. The biographer writes that Orlando “had a great variety of selves to call upon, far more than we have been able to find room for, since a biography is considered complete if it merely accounts for six or seven selves, whereas a person may well have as many thousand” (309). Here the biographer articulates Woolf’s own frustration with the genre’s inability to fully realize an individual’s being faithfully. The biographer again transgresses in Orlando’s internal world by observing Orlando calling various selves and those selves that entered. As Orlando reflects on who she is, the biographer observes and records, chastising the reader for “listening to a lady talking to herself” (310). Yet, despite the biographer’s apparent moral decency, he/she is again adamant about the recording of fact to present a true biographer, writing, “we only copy her words as she spoke them, adding in brackets which self in our opinion is speaking, but in this we may well be wrong” (310). This admittance that the biographer may err in the retelling of this internal episode of Orlando’s life conveys the biographer’s unconventional aims as well as methods in the recording of this life. The biographer is giving way to mere speculation but, in doing so, grants readers access to the very real, intriguing, and philosophical process of Orlando’s myriad selves that other biographies would have left out, creating a biography of the inner life. The biographer records the entrance of selves in the temporal present of Orlando, noting that after Orlando laughs off her fame and prizes won for her writing “we must here snatch time to remark how discomposing it is for her biographer that this culmination and peroration should be dashed from us on a laugh casually like this” (312). Again, the biographer represents the experience of Orlando’s self-shifting through the use of language documenting

time. The calling and switching of selves are occurring as quickly as the parenthetical insertions, and the biographer must “snatch time” to make his/her remark so as not to interrupt Orlando’s actions. In his discussion of *To the Lighthouse*, Paul Brown argues,

For Woolf, reality is not contained within a single perceptual consciousness, nor does it exist as a collection of multiple but rigidly divided perceptual consciousnesses. It is not an entirely boundless collective, nor does it exist as some form of transcendent actuality. The reality depicted in *To the Lighthouse* seems to be composed of multiple interpenetrating consciousnesses interconnected with one another and loosely housed within fluid subjectivities and objectivities that interactively create, as well as observe, their environment. (54)

While the biographer is able to flow in and out of Orlando, Woolf moves beyond her experiment of multiple interconnecting consciousnesses and instead explores the connection of various interlocking selves to create a whole complicated being. In her essay “Heidegger in Woolf’s Clothes,” Heidi Storl argues that “For Woolf, it is not a matter of moving consistently and coherently from one abstract thought to the next; it is a matter of openly observing the myriad of possibilities that emerge in the acts of consciousness that envelope an experience, yet all the while continuing the work of being human” (303). This myriad of possibilities is presented in *Orlando* through both the subject and style of the novel. Through the opening up of time and subjectivity, Woolf is able to create a text that is open to the possibilities of lived experience and through a reworking of fact and fiction, presents a genre that is capable of illustrating the richness and complications of life.

Though the biographer writes as if s/he is with Orlando, there is no interaction between the two, which is certainly for the best as Orlando is a figure who is presented as being most comfortable in solitude. Orlando’s own duration is best felt alone, and, though s/he does not live a life of isolation, there is no doubt that there are moments of seclusion in Orlando’s presented lifetime. The biographer first introduces the reader to the young sixteen-year-old Orlando when

he is enjoying his solitude at his parents' English estate. This isolation is not one of sadness, but, rather, the biographer writes, "Orlando naturally loved solitary places, vast views, and to feel himself for ever and ever and ever alone" (18). Orlando's isolation is self-imposed in this early stage of his life, and it is this isolation that acts as an assertion of ego. Woolf writes, "So, after a long silence, 'I am alone,' he breathed at last, opening his lips for the first time in this record" (18). This proclamation from Orlando is, as the biographer observes, the first utterance of any kind, his first active declaration of his subjectivity in this text. This statement not only asserts preference, it establishes *presentness*. Time is implicit in this statement, and it is the temporal relationship to the subject that creates that subject's subjectivity. Orlando breathes "I am alone," and becomes a true character, a true figure for a biography as he marks his identity in the pages of the text. Orlando is not literally alone, but is noticeably removed from the characters s/he comes into contact with very few exceptions. Again, even Orlando's husband Shelmerdine is absent from the text after their marriage. The world of Orlando intermingles with other worlds, but ultimately it is a lone Orlando at both the opening and the close of the narrative. Time ebbs and flows when Orlando is alone and not entangled with others, but it is when Orlando's subjectivity becomes ensnared with others that time booms loudly through the atmosphere, rooting the character to an objective temporal position. Intermingling with others forces Orlando to live within his/her Bergsonian external representation of self and, as such, interact with others in a common yet forced societal time.

Interacting with others forces Orlando to live under societal time, and his/her duration does not bend so willingly. While the conventional passage of years does not play a disrupting role in *Orlando* despite the unconventional amount of time that passes, readable time as represented by a clock can be a harsh, even violent antagonist. The clock brings Orlando his first

heartbreak when it seals the fate of Princess Sasha's abandonment: "Suddenly, with an awful and ominous voice, a voice full of horror and alarm which raised every hair of anguish in Orlando's soul, St. Paul's struck the first stroke of midnight. Four times more it struck remorselessly" (60). Each of the chimes is another strike to Orlando, "proclaiming death and disaster. When the twelfth struck he knew that his doom was sealed" (60). These minutes, unlike the vast amount of years that pass in the novel, are distinctly felt by Orlando, the biographer, and the reader. These are minutes that are directly connected to another, to Princess Sasha, and are measured by her absence. The scene is filled with a heightened sense of anxiety as the reader waits with Orlando for the arrival that both know will never come. Perhaps it is crucial here to note that the minutes that waste away are not subjective, but are actually being measured by a seemingly objective piece of technology: a clock. A clock as a device used to control and reduce moments into something measurable, as well as visual, is a form of technology attempting to transform the natural fluidity of life into something strangely one-dimensional and quantitative. Large amounts of time are able to escape this objective measuring, for Orlando's thirty-six years do not match up with the 400 years of narrative time. Yet here, at Princess Sasha's abandonment, the clock succeeds in restricting time and violating Orlando at the same time. These loud and jarring clocks are representations of the external time outside of one's self, a time that disrupts the subjective experience of time in one's own *durée*. The sudden pull into this external time can be violent and disrupting; as Rhoda will experience in *The Waves*, and as Orlando feels the forceful strikes of the clock, such external time does not allow for the room of one's own experiences in time.

After Orlando's change from man to woman, time as measured by clocks continues to be a violent aggressor. Measured conventional time has the ability to root one's subjectivity to a

certain moment, denying a fluid connection to past or future. The violence of the clock assaults Orlando both physically and internally: “Now as she stood with her hand on the door of her motor car, the present again struck her on the head. Eleven times she was violently assaulted...it is a great shock to the nervous system, hearing a clock strike” (306). In this last section of the book, time works as a controlling agent, rooting Orlando to the present day and her physical surroundings. While the clock continues to strike aggressively, “like thunder,” narrative time slows down to provide a very detailed recounting of this last hour on the last day the biography covers (320). Rosen writes,

Although it might seem odd to conclude the narrative of a life such as Orlando’s with such a pace that is so much slower and detailed than elsewhere in the novel...the present moment is one in which Orlando reflects on her life, on her fame from the publication of her prized collection of poems, “The Oak Tree,” on her experiences, and on her many, many selves. The biographer, in keeping up with Orlando in the present moment, must give over the narrative’s pacing to Orlando, and thus regulate his [*sic*] narrative acceleration—or, rather, decelerate—to so as not to deviate from Orlando’s schedule. (30)

While the language of the biographer is routinely used to represent Orlando’s lived experience, it is time measured by clocks that is controlling this last section of the narrative. There have been other occurrences of deep reflection on Orlando’s behalf, but nowhere does the narrative slow down to record such an exact description. Instead, this regulated time, controlled and stifled by man-made measurements, forces Orlando to live in its measured time, and the biographer dutifully reflects this experience in writing.

Throughout *Orlando*, there is an emphasis on time’s subjective manner. The biographer writes, “An hour, once it lodges in the queer element of the human spirit, may be stretched to fifty or a hundred times its clock length; on the other hand, an hour may be accurately represented on the timepiece of the mind by one second.” (98). Time passes; there is no arguing that. However, it is the experience of time that cannot be condensed into simple, quantifiable

measurement through a manmade conception of time via a clock. The a-linear time of Orlando can be personally experienced through something as simple as the drifting smells of department stores. To be measured is to be isolated, stopped, set aside, and stored. To measure time is to remove a segment of time from the larger scope of experience. When time is unmeasured, when it is allowed to ebb and flow, then it is internalized by individuals and links past, present, and future. The unconventional use of unmeasured time works to break up the linear narrative and frees Orlando to fully experience human life and to experience a change in gender. The freeing of time from conventional clutches also allows for the development of the genre of biography to expand past its factual obligations and present a complicated, multi-dimensional character and lived experience. Because of the denial of temporal boundaries, there is a constant over-layering of past and present, entangling day-to-day experiences. These permeable boundaries of time transcend into the individual to present Orlando, a figure who is able to live through many ages, who possesses many selves in one body. Woolf has created a character that through his/her impossibilities represents the complications of daily life. The biographer, through her/his use of real time, is also able to transcend temporal restrictions to comment on Orlando. The biographer, Orlando, and other transgender, trans-time characters of the text present a subjectivity that is wrought with contradictions and complications rather than the failed one-dimensional illustrations of figures that literal representations often present.

In "The Art of Biography," Woolf writes,

And again, since so much is known that used to be unknown, the question now inevitably asks itself, whether the lives of great men only should be recorded. Is not anyone who has lived a life, and left a record of life, worthy of biography—the failures as well as the successes, the humble as well as the illustrious? And what is greatness? And what smallness? We must revise our standards of merit and set up new heroes for our admiration.

Not only are standards revised in *Orlando* to present the story of a woman whose later life is not filled with exploits and action, but the style as to how to present a subject is also revised and subverted in the text. Woolf's *Orlando* separates itself from the idea of objective, action-based biography through this subversion of time. Orlando's biographer is not reflecting on a life that once was, but on a life that *is*, and this sense of being is instilled in the active and reflective language. Woolf argues in "The Art of Biography" that biographies will not live as long as fiction, and that fictional characters will achieve an immortality that figures in biographies could never grasp. However, she ends the essay on a much more optimistic note for the genre: "For how often, when a biography is read and tossed aside, some scene remains bright, some figure lives on in the depths of the mind, and causes us, when we read a poem or a novel, to feel a start of recognition, as if we remembered something that we had known before." The connections between time, events, and memories are explored in *Orlando*, and perhaps it is here that Woolf's Orlando achieves immortality. By combining Woolf's original inspiration with fantasy, past and present, subject, writer, and even reader, through the subversion of time, Orlando becomes a living fictional biography. Describing the project to Sackville-West, Woolf writes, "it sprung upon me how I could revolutionise biography in a night: and so if agreeable to you I would like to toss this up in the air and see what happens" (429). Despite what Woolf later wrote to friends about the novel being a "joke," her initial letter to Sackville-West crackles with excitement for this new project and high hopes for the form of biography that Woolf was able to create through a manipulation of time and a denial of the boundaries that keep past, present, and future separate from one another.

**CHAPTER THREE:**

**“INDISTINGUISHABLE, EXCEPT...” – DIFFERENCE OUT OF SAMENESS:  
ANDROGYNOUS TEMPORALITY OF *THE WAVES***

In October 1931, Virginia Woolf published what is often considered her most experimental novel, *The Waves*. Despite the novel’s unconventional narrative style, *The Waves* sold surprisingly well: five thousand copies in its first week.<sup>14</sup> The initial sales of *The Waves* surprised Woolf, who admitted the difficult nature of the novel in her diary: “Really, this unintelligible book is being better ‘received’ than any of them...And it sells—how unexpected, how odd that people can read that difficult grinding stuff!” (47). Indeed, the novel is marked by its difficulty; Eric Warner calls it “Virginia Woolf’s most formidable and challenging work of art” (xiv). Freely experimenting with the norms of fiction, Woolf created a text that is void of the usual novel conventions, including a narrator, dialogue, and a plot-driven narrative. The absence of such standards was, of course, intentional, as Woolf desired for *The Waves* to move away from recognizable novel prose and towards poetic language. Throughout her diaries, she calls *The Waves* a “playpoem” and a “mystical eyeless book” (139 and 203). The 1931 *The New York Times*’ review agreed with Woolf’s classifications and called *The Waves*, “not a poetic novel but a poem, a kind of symphonic poem with themes and thematic development, in prose.” The poetic language of the novel moves the focus of androgynous time off the plot and onto the language and metaphysical interactions amongst the characters. The androgynous temporality that was hinted at in the relationship of the narrator to Jacob in *Jacob’s Room* and resided in the gender-bending time-expanding narrative of *Orlando* flourishes in *The Waves*, becoming a time that dissolves boundaries between individuals and breaks down gender binaries by denying linearity

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<sup>14</sup> Before its publication, Woolf wrote in her diary that *The Waves* “wont sell more than 2000 copies” (285).



and restrictive measurements of time and identity. It equally flourishes in the six characters' interior monologues that occupy the time between external societal time and interior Bergsonian *durée*.

Using Bergson's concepts of internal and external time<sup>15</sup> as a starting point to conceptualize the time of *The Waves*, an androgynous temporality of the novel, a time that blurs the distinctions between the *durée* and societal time, can be located between the internal and external times of individuals, and becomes a site of connection for the six characters. More poetic than novelistic, the characters of *The Waves* can be viewed as symbolic parts of a multifaceted identity, thus stressing their connections to one another regardless of gender. *The New York Times* review somewhat negatively notes this quality of the six characters: "Their thoughts, their words, their preliminary differences from one another become stylized and they themselves fit, at length, into a verbal pattern, half ornamentally. They are not six people but six imagist poets, six facets of the imagist poet that Mrs. Woolf is herself." Shiv K. Kumar, while not sharing this negative view, notes what will become a common reading of *The Waves*, writing, "All the six characters often seem to fade into one another (as they 'flow and change') forming, as it were, a larger self into which its components are always merging in a process of qualitative transformation" (84).

Whether or not the figures in *The Waves* represent different facets of Woolf, various readings have noted the close connection among the characters and have asserted that they are not six individuals but six parts of the same figure. In a letter to G.L. Dickinson, Woolf applauds his analysis of *The Waves*:

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<sup>15</sup> As has been noted earlier in this dissertation, in Bergsonian theory *durée* is the subjective time of an individual, a time that feels the intensity of the moment rather than the length. External time is, in contrast, objective measured time of society where one's representation of self resides in the world.

But I did mean that in some vague way we are the same person, and not separate people. The six characters were supposed to be one. I'm getting old myself—I shall be fifty next year; and I come to feel more and more how difficult it is to collect oneself into one Virginia; even though the special Virginia in whose body I live for the moment is violently susceptible to all sorts of separate feelings. (397)

How remarkably similar this statement is to the narrator's comment in *Orlando* about the struggle to synthesize multiples selves in one body.<sup>16</sup> However, whereas in *Orlando* Woolf places all those selves in one, albeit incredible, body, in *The Waves* each variation of a self has its own unique body. Though Woolf writes that "the six characters were supposed to be one," Bernard, Neville, Louis, Rhoda, Jinny, and Susan are six individual voices with very different lives whose individualities are marked and created by their differences to one another. Just as Orlando, despite being the same person from man to woman, changes behavior in relation to the reaction of society to his/her gender, these characters are also marked by external influences that differentiate their lives greatly from one another. Thus, the relationships among the individuals are crucial in developing both identity and each *durée* regardless of the emphasis on solitude and individuality that is accomplished by the use of soliloquy, a narrative device that stresses the singularity of the voice and thoughts, and absence of dialogue. The shared and individual use of language by the characters, the nature vignettes, the collective memories and individual pasts, the almost concurrent internal presents, and the lack of a traditional narrator showcase the relationship between individual and community while conveying nonlinear temporality. While the plot content of the novel exists within the external societal world and, as such, gender, class, and nationality dictate many of the life events of the characters, narrative and textual practices create a sometimes illogical language filled with contradictions and subversions in characters

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<sup>16</sup> The biographer notes that Orlando "had a great variety of selves to call upon, far more than we have been able to find room for, since a biography is considered complete if it merely accounts for six or seven selves, whereas a person may well have as many thousand" (309).

that grow, love and hate, crave connection and seek solitude. The language is also fluid, flowing from subjectivity to subjectivity, and becomes a site where such binaries of gender are destroyed. This chapter argues that using Bergson's ideas of internal and external time highlights the metaphysical connection among these six physically separate characters and shows the androgynous temporality that exists as a combination of the external societal time the characters cannot escape and the inner duration, which is completely unique to each individual.

The interplay of the six characters in *The Waves* and their bond through language have inspired critics to look at the development of community in the novel. Michael Tratner argues that the later novels of Woolf, including *The Waves*, are focused on moments when individual voices fade away and are replaced with the experience of the masses. Likewise, Patricia Smith writes that as fascism spread throughout Europe, Woolf "grew less concerned with development of individual character as a focus for her novels and more concerned with the concept of community in which individual functions as part of the greater whole" (70). Gabrielle McIntire also looks at the connection between fascism and community, contending that the heteroglossic nature of the novel is ultimately undermined by Bernard's attempt to conclude and summarize what the reader has just read as well as the lives of his friends.

In particular, gender strongly affects their lives and the way each character experiences the inevitable march of the years. The movement of external societal time affects the women in noticeably more prohibiting ways than it does the men: Jinny and Susan are limited in their life options and fall into socially acceptable feminine roles of sex object and mother. Rhoda, unable to find her place in time, chooses to remove herself completely by committing suicide. However, as Woolf herself notes, the roles of the characters are "vague" and, as such, the simple dualities of female subordination at the hands of male power and entitlement would be fulfilling the

standard binary system that Woolf's *The Waves* attempts to disrupt. Rather, Woolf assays an androgyny in the novel through the ebb and flow between characters she creates throughout the text and instills in the narrative practices and the location of the crossover time between times that resemble Bergson's descriptions of *durée* and external societal time.

With plot being sparse in *The Waves*, various critics have focused on the relationship of language to gender and identity in the novel. Allison Hild contends that in *The Waves* language is instrumental in developing unique and individual identities for the six characters while also working as a link that connects experiences and pushes their shared narrative forward. Replications of phrases and scenes throughout the novel emerge in each character's monologue, bridging the gap between individual experiences. The lines between characters are blurred even linguistically as characters borrow language from one another, repeating phrases and sometimes changing the context of the repeated words. While Hild's reading describes language's replication as a mode of permeability between subjectivities in *The Waves*, she does not account for the fluidity of language through time. Not only does the replication of phrases and words move the novel forward, it also gestures back to the characters' collective past, fully replicating the movement of the waves, rushing to the shore and retreating back into the ocean, as a give and take between past and present. Thus, language binds the characters through time as it provides words from both their childhood and adulthood despite each character's present age. When Louis hears the stomping of the chained beast, or Susan loves and hates, or Jinny quivers, they are not simply referencing themselves in the past or future, but rather convey both a developing subjectivity and one that is able to access the inner layers of their *durée*.

Martin Hägglund writes in *Dying for Time: Proust, Woolf, Nabokov* that language replication is used to preserve a moment for later use, but his argument denies time's movement

in Woolf's novels as well as the difference of past from present in Bergson, who Hägglund acknowledges is useful in reading Woolf. About *Mrs. Dalloway*, Hägglund writes, "The present moment can only be apprehended through the repetition of memory, which is marked by the haunting phrase through which Clarissa expresses what she loves: 'life; London; this moment of June'" (63). This repetition of language in Clarissa's phrase, however, is intended not to connect but to savor and preserve a moment for later use. Hägglund goes on to argue, "In repeating to herself what she loves...Clarissa imprints it as a memory for the future" (63). Hägglund's argument denies the ability of the past to exist concurrently with the present and overlooks the importance of time's constant movement in Woolf's novels. Not only does Hägglund deny movement in Woolf, he argues that the Bergsonian past repudiates the passage of time. He takes Bergson's argument of the past's continual involvement with the present to be evidence of a past that "has not ceased to be" and is therefore "not past but present, and by the same token there is no passage of time" (36). As such, he argues that there is nothing in Bergsonian time to distinguish the past from the present. Here, Hägglund argues for the spatialization of time but, by doing so, can only think of time in a linear model that Bergson rejects. He also overlooks an essential part of Bergson's argument: the past is that in which we can no longer act. In *The Waves*, the past plays an important role in the present by connecting the individuals through shared collective memories which, though able to affect the present mood, are not changeable because characters cannot reenact the past.

While Hägglund locates trauma in Woolf in the inability to suspend time, Chloë Taylor traces the sadness of *The Waves* through the characters' relationship to language but, in doing so, overlooks the similar restrictiveness of societal time that deepens Rhoda's depression. Taylor argues that Rhoda's death is a result of her inability to assimilate in language. Identifying

Kristevan themes throughout the novel in relation to the different uses of language between the men and women, Taylor contends that the three women represent different roles taken by women in Kristeva's reading of the semiotic, symbolic, and gendered. Taylor writes that men are free to play within language while women must either fully reject the paternal symbolic, like Susan, or assimilate fully within the symbolic social order, like Jinny. Rhoda teeters between these two and, unable to assimilate into language and culture, she teeters over to the Mother figure and into madness. However, Taylor does not detail Rhoda's final move towards the Mother figure and descent into madness. While Taylor argues that language ultimately fails Rhoda, this chapter argues that time, too, plays a major part in Rhoda's downfall, specifically the inability to find a stable external representation of her inner duration. Bergson's discussion of the contrast between the time of inner duration and the societal time that accompanies one's external representation highlights Rhoda's difficulty in finding a representative self in societal time. She literally cannot find her footing in external time, and, when the expectation of living in societal time becomes too much to bear, Rhoda chooses to take herself out of time and dies.

What is strikingly missing from these critical positions, however, is the role of the individual and, as a result, the importance of what lies between the individual and community. These main issues of language, community, and time are then highlighted within a community of individuals. The interactions between characters create a language that can identify and discern, as well as juxtapose the community's shared time with each individual's duration. This juxtaposition that straddles the line between shared and individual time is Woolf's attempt to create an androgynous time that connects different identities, regardless of differences, while still honoring each unique variation of the parts of the whole. In addition, this androgynous temporality straddles the two Bergsonian selves of internal being and external representation.

According to Bergson in *Time and Free Will*, the fundamental internal self is a self in duration, a self of movement and creation, a site where “our inner states as living things, constantly *becoming*, as states not amenable to measure, which permeate one another and of which the succession in duration has nothing in common with juxtaposition in homogenous space” (231). This is a self that this dissertation argues is analogous to the Woolfian subjectivity that is constantly creating and evolving, especially in the motion-centric *The Waves*. It is also a self of the present, a self that is aware, becoming, and active. The spatial and external representation of duration is what Bergson calls a “ghost, a colourless shadow which pure duration projects into homogenous space” (231). If one can assume that this “ghost” is removed from the fundamental self, then it follows that the external self cannot be free to act and live in the present. In *The Waves* this external representation, unable to act freely in the present and living in an external spatial concept of time, is forever operating in the past tense. If this spatial external self is a representation of a fundamental inner self, then it is at least one step removed from the true acting self and, as such, is a step away from the present. Bergson stresses in *Time and Free Will* that the internal self is difficult to achieve and is only reached “by deep introspection” (231). However, the six characters in *The Waves* present their internal selves throughout the narrative with relative ease. Rather than show the journey to the internal self, *The Waves* showcases both Bergsonian *durée* within a community as well as the life and temporality that straddles *durée* and the spatial temporality that resides in society. Here, in this intermix of people and times, *The Waves* attempts an androgynous time that can be understood by way of Bergson’s concept of internal and external temporalities. This androgynous time dissolves differences between masculine and feminine in the intermixing of *durée* and societal time, which leads to blurring of dualities.

The first of the nature vignettes, which occur throughout the novel to mirror the development of the characters to their present age, suggests the importance of individuality to community through the imagery of a beach just before dawn. All the vignettes feature some representations of community, though later vignettes showcase a violent struggle between individuality and community. However, the first vignette, mirroring the characters as children, is especially strong in its portrayal of community. The scene is brief, less than a page and a half, and is filled with imagery that denotes the sleepy, slow-burning early dawn. Under the light of the first promise of sunrise, differences slowly emerge, but they are light and gradual. The narrator remarks, “The sea was indistinguishable from the sky, except that the sea was slightly creased as if a cloth had wrinkles in it” (7). In other words, the two were indistinguishable except they were not. From the start of the novel there is contradiction that suggests the ever-evolving duration and the complexity of time, subjectivity, and life. Even in the darkness of early dawn, the muddled images show light distinctions. The difference becomes noticeable because of “thick strokes moving, one after another, beneath the surface, following each other, pursuing each other, perpetually” (7). These “bars” are the waves, incessantly rolling in on the shore. What is striking in this difference is that it is a difference created by movement and, thus, time. Movement, of course, occurs over a span of time. Bergson especially emphasizes the importance of movement in time, noting in *The Creative Mind* that “movement is reality itself” and “If movement is not everything, it is nothing,” but also stresses that time is not the measurement of that movement (169,171). While not an actual tool of measurement, the waves embody their movement, becoming both movement and the moving object, while also acting as a metaphor for duration.



This subjective nonspatial Bergsonian temporality emerges again in *The Waves* in the flux and fluidity that bind its characters and their monologues together in a text with no outside narrator or action to separate their voices. This opening nature scene illustrates the importance of time in developing distinctions and community out of individuality. The actual movement of time, the progression of past through present, creates difference in the world. While the movement of the waves denotes the flux of duration, the communication between the individual waves and the larger body of water indicates the need for duration in a larger span of life. Though waves in a body of water operate under a sense of anonymity, they strike out on their own once they hit the shores and become individual waves, separate from the others rolling in after their assault on land. As such, though the voices of the six characters ebb and flow, give and take throughout the narrative, as they break upon one another, individuality slowly separates each voice. It is in this separation, the small space between individuality and community, where difference occurs. The movement of the waves, the visual representation of duration, ripples across the static background of sameness to produce difference. The placement of movement against stillness produces a layering, and it is in between that nearly insignificant space where difference occurs where one operates between inner and external representation.

In *Orlando*, Woolf played with textual layers, filling the novel with various forms of text from different viewpoints. In *The Waves*, however, such textual layering is minimized to provide the optimal illustration of internal, external, and the hazy area in between. The novel illustrates the result of that hazy area between complete internal introspection and external representation of self. Though these nature vignettes are devoid of people, the attempt to place them completely outside of society does not work, as a house is featured on the beach. The promise of people, of society, creeps in on the nature scenes, which appear to be entirely removed from the characters

of the novel. The gray hazy areas between internal and external are caused not just by the disturbance of internal and external, but by difference of *other's* temporality. Hence *The Waves* features a large cast of characters that function in relation to one another.

The corresponding part to this pre-dawn vignette is Bernard, Louis, Neville, Jinny, Susan, and Rhoda's early childhood and the emerging individuals that make up their one large community. As children, each establishes her/his own ego immediately, each first word an introduction to his/her own being and senses: "I see" and "I hear."<sup>17</sup> Their childhood language is short, simple, almost monosyllabic, and completely in the present tense. The language of their simple observations suggests the fluidity of their burgeoning identities: Bernard's ring "quivers," and Rhoda hears sounds "going up and down" (9).<sup>18</sup> These quick sentences blur into one another without completely eradicating the individual behind each observation. Together, like the waves and sky in the opening vignette, these six children join voices to present a chorus of their sensory morning. However, this entire living in the present only lasts a few pages. With the introduction of societal time, a stronger sense of Otherness is introduced. Louis launches into the first long soliloquy and begins, "Now they have all gone...I am alone. They have gone into the house for breakfast, and I am left standing by the wall among the flowers. It is very early, before lessons" (11). For the first time, the relation of one amongst the others is verbalized, put into language, and made real. The strokes of the clock bring with them the expectations of the day and of the self – namely, of being a student at school. Here, Louis is ripped from his *durée* to the common ground where others stand or, in other words, his Bergsonian social and spatial representation of

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<sup>17</sup> Orlando, another character of fluid subjectivity, also has first words of an ego assertion, declaring "I am alone."

<sup>18</sup> Shiv K.Kumar notes the use of language that denotes movement in *The Waves*, writing, "By immersing herself in her characters' streams of consciousness, Virginia Woolf experiences under the frozen surface of their conventional ego, a state of perpetual flux of which her novels are the most faithful representations. Like Bergson, she conceives thinking as a 'continual and continuous change of inward direction'" (98).

self. Before entering the building with the others and forming his external representation of his inner self, Louis is left alone and echoes the refrain that will become his anthem (“My roots go down to the depths of the world”), occupying the middle ground of the fundamental self and social self. He occupies two temporalities, one centered in Egypt: “Down there my eyes are the lidless eyes of a stone figure in a desert by the Nile. I see women passing with red pitchers to the river; I see camels swaying and men in turbans. I hear tramlings, tremblings, stirrings around me” (12). He is both “down there” amongst the women of the Nile and “up here” with “Bernard, Neville, Jinny and Susan (but not Rhoda)” (12). This middle ground is a result of his interactions with the others and his external role as a student. He is unable to fully immerse himself in his Egyptian otherness because of the grounding presence of his classmates and his concurrent position with the Nile of the British schoolyard.

However, Louis cannot remain alone forever, and soon the presence of the others that creates difference will completely disregard his wish to remain unseen and will bring him forth into his external self while also creating a collective past for this community. The others call out “Louis! Louis! Louis!”, echoing the call of Jacob’s name by his brother in *Jacob’s Room*, and the same desire to call someone forth, to make him/her exist before one’s self. Bergson writes that the life of the social, spatial self, “unfolds in space rather than in time; we live for the external world rather than for ourselves; we speak rather than think; we ‘are acted’ rather than act ourselves” (231). Louis is thus acted on by another, and his attempt to live at this moment in his *durée* is lost. It is a kiss, a literal meeting with another body, that turns the current use of present tense to a reflective past tense. After Jinny kisses Louis, her speech is the first to change to past tense. Though each child separated her/himself at the beginning with the use of “I,” the use of present tense keeps them all operating in the same temporal plane. Yet the violence of the kiss,

the sudden shock of two present bodies touching, produces a moment that can now become a past. The reader first learns of the kiss from Louis, who uses language of violence to describe the encounter: “I am struck on the nape of the neck. She has kissed me. All is shattered” (13). The kiss from a little girl is depicted as a tragedy for Louis, in language that mimics the fatal fall of the guillotine. He is acted on, a sudden shock to his being as Jinny kisses him to bring him into the social spatial world as a figure in front of her, to wake him up from his attempt to remain hidden.

It cannot be ignored that this moment of time differentiation is a gendered event. It is a kiss that is central to the changes in character, as is the kiss between Clarissa Dalloway and Sally Seton in *Mrs. Dalloway*. However, unlike the same-sex kiss in *Mrs. Dalloway* that functions as a moment of pure ecstasy, this is a moment that Louis views as violent and distressing. It therefore recalls another kiss from the Dalloways in Woolf’s first novel, *The Voyage Out*. When Mr. Dalloway kisses young Rachel, she has a nightmare of a “little deformed man” that terrifies her (81). She vacillates between excitement and utter disgust, telling her aunt Helen “I was a good deal excited...But I didn’t mind till afterwards; when—I became terrified” (85). The mix of emotions of an emerging sexuality that is out of her control and agency leads Rachel to later announce, “I hate men!” (87). Similarly, Louis’s first kiss is sprung upon him unexpectedly and without his consent. Though his loss of innocence is first detailed in negative terms, a later remembrance conveys the complexity of emotion at the time when he details the event as “a hot kiss, Jinny’s” (96). The difference in description is noted in the term “hot,” which denotes a pleasingly sexual experience. The difference in reaction illustrates the contradictions that fill androgyny, the presence of inconsistencies that do not cancel one another out but exist concurrently. Whether the kiss was terrifying or pleasurable, Louis, like Rachel, was an

unsuspecting victim whose sexual self was called forth and forced into representation. It is, however, interesting that the perpetrator of the stolen kiss in *The Waves* is a young girl rather than a man. Such a gender reversal recalls the scene of Orlando's abandonment at the hands of Princess Sasha. Gendered male at the time, Orlando is jilted by a female lover, placing him in a position of victimage and vulnerability. However, the sexes of both Orlando and Sasha were already presented as questionable and fluid, a move that later prevents Orlando's marriage from being presented as a conventional heterosexual coupling. The sexes of both Jinny and Louis, on the other hand, appear to be much more identifiable and, perhaps, this kiss is similar to Rachel's in suggesting the danger of heteronormativity. While such a view is possible, it overlooks the metaphysical connection between the six characters as well as the contradictions that Woolf does not shy away from. These characters' subjectivities are open to one another, as they flow in and out of each other's temporality. At times, their actions are not entirely their own; hence the reason why years after this kiss Bernard will describe it as if it happened to his own neck (289). Louis and Jinny's kiss also illustrates the differences of characters despite such connections. Jinny is not a passive participant in this scene as she is one who actively pursues others while Louis wishes to remain alone. In the androgynous space between the duality of these two traits is where the kiss operates and fuses together two differences to create the community of others.

The temporal closeness of the characters is emphasized when immediately after Louis's telling of the kiss in the narrative is Jinny's reflection on the event, which has now already transpired in the past. It is important to note that Louis's monologue ends immediately after the kiss with Jinny's voice coming in to quickly retell her version of the event. The lack of narrator here emphasizes the simultaneity of Louis and Jinny's experience, even though Jinny's retelling

is in the past tense. This sudden switch from present to past tense suggests the simultaneity of past and present in Bergson's temporality. Elizabeth Grosz writes that, in Bergson, time,

The past is contemporaneous with the present it has been...The past and present are created simultaneously. Every present splits into a dual-sided actual and virtual, one of which has effects, the other of which joins and adds to the past. The present thus directs itself to two series, two orientations at once: to action, in space; and to memory, in duration. The past could never exist if it did not coexist with the present of which it is the past. (103)

The lack of narration allows for both the *presentness* of the kiss as well as its instantaneous past to coexist as much as possible in the written form of the novel. In addition, the co-presence of past and present creates a temporality of space and duration. It is here, in this area where the present directs itself in space and memory, in inner and externality, that androgynous temporality resides as a mixing of permeable selves.

Jinny's switch to past tense marks this kiss as the first monumental moment in the six characters' joined lives by giving them a collective memory while also creating autonomous selves. Before the stroke of the clock and the kiss, the children were not entirely unique individuals, but rather were simple representations of the present moment. The flux of their durations was conveyed through language that denoted movement and a sharing of phrases, such as the repeated refrain of "up and down" from Rhoda to Susan, or the presence of the word "burn" from Louis to Jinny. After the kiss, there is difference among the characters that is first represented in the use of past tense. After Jinny's recounting of the kiss, Susan's monologue begins, "Through the chink in the hedge...I saw her kiss him" (13). Though two adults had been mentioned before in the children's simple present sentences, Susan's statement, like Louis's after the clock's chimes, marks spatial difference in relation to herself. After the kiss, Susan only accentuates the differences of bodies: "*I saw her kiss him. I raised my head from my flower-pot and looked through a chink in the hedge. I saw her kiss him. I saw them, Jinny and Louis, kissing*

[emphasis added]” (13). Susan’s speech is teeming with personal pronouns, the possessive *my*, and an insistence on sight. The language accentuates the different bodies at work here, bodies different from and outside of Susan’s own. This kiss is not something that happened to her; its physicality is completely unknown to her. After witnessing the kiss, Susan speaks of the differences in their physical attributes: “My eyes are hard. Jinny’s eyes break into a thousand lights. Rhoda’s are like those pale flowers to which moths come in the evening. Yours [Bernard’s] grow full and brim and never break” (15-16). Despite her body not being involved directly, the kiss affects her deeply, makes her aware of her singularity and sexual difference, and prompts her to foresee a future just for herself: “I shall eat grass and die in a ditch in the brown water where dead leaves have rotted” (15). In her devastation she has an ally in Bernard, whose first sentence after the kiss also stresses spatial and physical Otherness: “Susan has passed us...She has passed the tool-house door with her handkerchief screwed into a ball” (14). Later in life, Bernard will remember this moment as the time of the creation of his unique individuality, noting, “It was Susan who cried, that day when I was in the tool-house with Neville; and I felt my indifference melt. Neville did not melt. ‘Therefore,’ I said, ‘I am myself, not Neville,’ a wonderful discovery” (240). His “not Neville” identity is also beneficial to Susan. He follows and plays with Susan, becoming a figure who reinforces difference by simply being an Other she can address (“And I am squat, Bernard, I am short”) and who addresses her (“As you passed the door of the tool-house I heard you cry ‘I am unhappy’”) (15).

The kiss changes the temporality of the characters and the way the characters now relate to time and their present as each character now articulates his/her own bodily difference from another. The interaction of two physical bodies creates autonomous temporalities, or durations, for each individual character. Their moments now diverge, and their unique subjectivities emerge

from this kiss, revealing individual traits that will continue to mark them throughout the novel. Louis has been kissed by Jinny; Susan runs away with Bernard in pursuit; Neville waits for Bernard's return so he can retrieve his knife. Rhoda, indicative of her character throughout the novel, is outside of this scene and unaware of what has transpired. Yet her autonomy is evident in this time alone where she can enjoy "a short space of freedom" commanding her "white petal ships in her basin" (18). Despite Rhoda's tendency to exclude herself, the six characters' monologues, though still intensely reflective, begin to incorporate one another. Indeed, their identities become autonomous as the boundaries that separate become permeable. It becomes an important incident in their collective past, the moment when their individualities brake away from one another and mark their difference. Years after the kiss, the memory will continue to actualize itself to stress differences. At Percival's farewell dinner, the tension resurfaces between Jinny and Susan: "'It is love,' said Jinny, 'it is hate, such as Susan feels for me because I kissed Louis once in the garden; because equipped as I am, I make her think when I come in, 'My hands are red,' and hide them. But our hatred is almost indistinguishable from our love'" (137-138). Again, the presence of Jinny inspires a look at physical differences between the two. This difference in their hands is a difference only noticed when an Other is around, a difference because of community. The language Jinny uses to communicate this is the language of Susan's anthem, the phrase "it is love, it is hate" melting into Jinny's linguistic identity. She is using the language of another to stress difference, linguistically occupying the middle ground of otherness and sameness.

In contrast to the differences that Jinny and Susan feel, Bernard seeks out feelings of community and plurality of identity. After the kiss, Bernard is by Susan's side to distract her from her distress, but their reactions to one another are quite different. While her monologues



immediately following the kiss are punctuated with *I*'s, Bernard's are filled with *we*'s, in effect ignoring Susan's resistance to his attempt to connect. In opposition to Louis's and Rhoda's ever-present desire to be alone, Bernard is one who constantly is seeking the company of others to assert both a connection and his own autonomous self. Above all, it is Bernard who echoes Woolf's idea of the interconnectivity of characters in her letter to Dickinson. Throughout his monologues, he routinely claims that he feels all six are one collective consciousness, their subjectivities blurring into one another. His monologues articulate the androgynous temporality through his language of communal consciousness. Bernard's language is one of community, even as a child: "we melt into each other with phrases. We are edged with mist. We make an unsubstantial territory" (16). Like the early edge of the sky meeting the sea, the solid lines between individuals is blurry to Bernard, each subjectivity permeable. "I do not believe in separation," says Bernard, "We are not single" (67).

However, Bernard's desire for community and feelings of being united with his friends are strikingly naïve. While critics have argued convincingly that language is essential in *The Waves*, Bernard's language is a social hindrance to his desire to connect. Language comes easily to Bernard, lifting him high up from the drudgery of daily life.<sup>19</sup> Taylor argues that in his desire to connect to Susan after the kiss he overlooks his masculine privileged position to language, as Susan remarks: "I am tied down with single words. But you wander off, you slip away; you rise up higher, with words and words in phrases" and again, "Now you trail away... making phrases. Now you mount like an air-ball's string, higher and higher and higher through the layers of the leaves, out of reach... You have escaped me" (16, 18). In addition to Susan's feelings of being left behind by Bernard's phrases, Neville asserts that Bernard "sees every one with blurred

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<sup>19</sup> Taylor notes that language in *The Waves* is described as "belonging to the realm of the air" (62).

edges” (51). While Bernard uses the image of blurred edges to suggest the permeable nature of individuals, Neville’s usage suggests an inability to truly see a person, as he claims that anything he would tell Bernard “would make a ‘story’” (51). Neville, also a writer, is distrustful of Bernard’s connections with others, suspecting that any feigned connection is simply to add fodder to Bernard’s notebook of phrases: “We are all phrases in Bernard’s story, things he writes down in his notebook under A or under B. He tells our story with extraordinary understanding, except of what we most feel. For he does not need us” (70). In addition to the falsity of Bernard’s phrases, Neville also criticizes him for being unable to finish any story, a problem that is never solved.

Bernard himself ultimately realizes his failings in trying to connect through language, a failure that conveys the difficulty of residing in androgynous temporality. While language conveys Bernard’s privileged social standing, it simultaneously adds another layer of difference between him and others. Bernard’s phrases take him out of the “here and now” of the present, out of the bodily action of the present. He uses it ultimately as a barrier, saying on his first day of school, “I must make phrases and phrases and so interpose something hard between myself and the stare of housemaids, the stare of clocks, staring faces, indifferent faces or I shall cry” (30). The “hardness” of language here contradicts the air imagery throughout the novel. However, both images of language indicate the difficulty of the spoken and written word to connect others on a metaphysical level. Bernard himself realizes the difficulty for language to represent life later in life, reflecting:

What is the phrase for the moon? And the phrase for love? By what name are we to call death? I do not know. I need a little language such as lovers use, words of one syllable such as children speak when they come into the room and find their mother sewing and pick up some scrap of bright wool, a feather, or a shred of chintz. I need a howl; a cry. When the storm crosses the marsh and sweeps over me where I lie in the ditch unregarded I need no words. Nothing neat. Nothing

that comes down with all its feet on the floor. None of those resonances and lovely echoes that break and chime from nerve to nerve in our breasts making wild music, false phrases. I have done with phrases. (295).

Despite a lifetime of documenting phrases and trying to find the exact language for particular moments, Bernard comes to realize his notes are too neat, too orderly, and are unable to convincingly represent ideas, feelings, and concepts. He ultimately echoes the Woolfian theme of being unable to truly express people. McIntire writes that “The past cannot be told *as it was*; the past shows us, as Bernard admits to himself, that language and narration are ultimately ruses for truth” (34). Bernard’s desire to tell stories through perfect phrases ultimately is an injustice to the truth he seeks to convey. In seeking perfection, he removes words and experiences from their own temporality, creating another spatial existence for them. In so doing, his work is outside of duration, which cannot be expressed, and even outside of androgynous temporality because of his desire to categorize and classify language.

*The Waves*, then, becomes a story that showcases androgynous time outside of *Orlando*’s fantastical confines but, like *Jacob’s Room* and *Orlando*, the novel’s characters cannot fully succeed in living entirely androgynous time because of the obligations of living within society’s parameters. *The Waves* is a novel that crackles with promise in its ability to convey the absence of the space between individuals through its narrative devices and in its ability to go beyond Bergsonian temporality in exploring the temporality that exists between inner and outer, individual and community. This new androgynous time is a time of connection without subjection, a time that exists without the restrictions that come with language that attempts to label and classify. Bernard ultimately comes to this conclusion at the end of the novel, somewhat rejecting the aestheticism he has represented throughout. Though he believes in the connection among others more than any of the other characters, he also essentially kills the promise of that

connection through his need to make sense of their interconnecting lives. Ultimately, Bernard's classification system of writing removes his art from androgynous temporality, the time of creation. The language of his writing is unable to account for the multitudes of his friends and becomes a form of external representation of single traits of self. Garrett Stewart writes, "Toward the end of the novel, however, Bernard has actually come to despair over the power of words to convey experience. Despite its plasticity, the opacity of language always sabotages its referential intent. 'There are no words' sufficient to his task, no words transparent enough" (263). Bernard's notes do not allow for the openness that exists in androgynous time. Androgynous temporality that exists between duration and external societal temporality is a site of creation, but Bernard's insistence on tying people down to these words and ignoring the larger halo of temporality and context for which Neville criticizes him for, transforms his notebook not into a site of creation but a site of gendering and classifying. Bernard's notebook is a place for the external representations that societal temporality encourages. It is a site of projection, as Bernard saves these visions of life, images of perfect phrases, in a notebook for later use in some larger piece of text. These are also phrases that Bernard himself creates. Though his language in his monologues is sometimes borrowed from other characters, there is no indication that he allows for such permeability in his writing. This is language of his own, asserted language of an ego assertion. If these six characters are parts of a larger subjectivity, then Bernard's writing ultimately is not androgynous in that it only focuses on one part of being. Bernard notes, "We suffered terribly as we became separate bodies" (241). Bernard's ultimate attempts to be an artist are doomed because of his separation from the other parts of his subjectivity, i.e., the other characters of *The Waves*.

The struggle between language and truth is paralleled by the struggle to find an external spatial representation of self, a fight that is socially gendered. Despite Bernard's struggle with his art, his professional and private life appears stable and even prosperous. In fact, Bernard, Louis, and Neville are all authors in their own right, indicating the ability for men to assimilate art with their external lives (though with varying degrees of success). Women, on the other hand, have a much harder time finding their external representations in the social world. Susan and Jinny ultimately find socially created roles for women on which to base their identity. Susan and Jinny's roles of mother and lover are socially acceptable feminine roles, but each finds something in that role that creates a discomfort and subverts the traditional passiveness of femininity. Susan is marked by her ferocity throughout, evident in her refrain "I love, I hate," and this does not soften in motherhood. Her hushing her baby to sleep is not portrayed as a tender moment, as Susan says, "Sleep, I say, and feel within me uprush some wilder, darker violence, so that I would fell down with one blow any intruder, any snatcher, who should break into this room and wake the sleeper" (171-172). Her fierceness reflects the violent imagery that occurs in the nature vignettes as birds scrounge the earth for food and the waves and movement of the sun take on violent, war-like imagery.

Likewise, Jinny's role as a sensual, female body upsets feminine norms and reflects the turbulent language of the accompanying nature vignettes. She is an active, not passive, pursuer in her conquests, lifting an arm to call bodies forth, her body constantly moving, "quivering," conveying pleasure in its corporality. Despite her love of socializing, she lives an independent life, reflecting, "I do not settle long anywhere; I do not attach myself to one person in particular" (174). Jinny has her own home, directs her own life, and manages her own schedule. She is a pursuer of pleasure without shame, and has no motives for her pursuits, upsetting the literary

feminine roles of a social climber or husband hunter. She is also not punished for her sensuality, unlike the ostracized Lady Chatterley or Hardy's tragic Tess. However, her monologues are also often punctuated with violent language. As Susan's motherhood is smothering and animalistic, Jinny becomes an animal throughout the text, which dehumanizes herself in her bodily representation. She describes herself as a "mountain goat" and a "little animal," aligning her desires with something inhuman (174, 193). Violent language is used to describe a sexual encounter as she is hunted by the man she pursues: "Now I hear crash and rending of boughs and the crack of antlers as if the beasts of the forest were all hunting, all rearing high and plunging down among the thorns. One has pierced me. One is driven deep within me" (177). The language used to describe this encounter echoes the violence of its accompanying nature vignette: "Then another cloud was caught in the light and another and another, so that the waves beneath were arrow-struck with fiery feathered darts that shot erratically across the quivering blue" (165). Like Susan's assault on the hypothetical intruder and Jinny's role as both huntress and the hunted, the interlude uses language of weapons and violence to illustrate the struggle of the individual against life and community. The last paragraph of the vignette depicts the violence of societal norms on individuals: "The waves massed themselves, curved their backs and crashed. Up spurted stones and shingle. They swept round the rocks, and the spray, leaping high, spattered the walls of a cave that had been dry before, and left pools inland, where some fish, stranded, lashed its tail as the wave drew back" (166). No longer are the waves washing up on the shore unimpeded. Now there are obstructions that break up the continuity of the waves, that violently push the water apart and into separate pools. Likewise, social expectations and norms have separated the characters into separate and defining roles, pushing Susan into the pool of motherhood, Jinny into the pool of lover. This separation is not peaceful or supportive, as is

evident in the dying fish stuck in a pool that is not deep enough to support its life. As such, Susan and Jinny's lives in these shallow feminine roles are violent, as each struggles to survive and thrive.

While Susan and Jinny persist in their social roles, the struggle to assimilate into community is painful and ultimately impossible for Rhoda, whose suicide surely inspired the "sadness" that Woolf notes many of her readers felt. Taylor writes that Rhoda is lost between the paternal symbolic and maternal figure, finally incorporating both but finding a space in neither and thus killing herself. However, it appears that Rhoda is also lost in time, unable to find herself a representation in the external societal temporality. Rhoda's external life is relatively absent from the text in comparison to those of her friends. Though information regarding their lives is not given in great detail, the reader is privy to some particulars. The existence (and absence) of spouses, children, jobs, and social affairs of Bernard, Neville, Louis, Susan, and Jinny is known. Of Rhoda, however, nothing is known. Her lack of external life is reinforced throughout the novel.

Away at school, Rhoda's identity is blotted out by uniformity: "But here I am nobody. I have no face. This great company, all dressed in brown serge, has robbed me of my identity" (33). Like *Jacob's Room*, formal schooling in *The Waves* is harmful to unique identities, blotting them out with anonymity.<sup>20</sup> This is an anonymity that is different from the community the six characters represent. The community of parts needs individuality and difference to be a thriving, evolving, moving community. The androgyny of the community does not blot out difference, but

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<sup>20</sup> This militaristic ideology is repeated in the boys' school experience, but not immediately with the same distaste. Louis states, "Now we march, two by two...orderly, processional, into chapel...I like the orderly progress...We put off our distinctions as we enter" (34).

rather highlights the disparity without privileging one aspect of community over another. The androgynous temporality of *The Waves* illustrates this concept by allowing each character to have a voice and allowing that voice and events to flow from character to character. However, here in school there is no celebration of difference while forming a community. Instead, school robs identity, stripping difference and instilling uniformity.

Rhoda's discomfort continues throughout the novel in her inability to live in spatial temporality. While Susan and Jinny find acceptable social external selves, Rhoda has a very difficult time creating an external self and finds it incredibly jarring and even terrifying to live in that self. While the presence of others gives Bernard assurance of his reality, as well as fodder for his notebook, others only terrify Rhoda by their stability that makes Rhoda aware of her instability. Describing a party, Rhoda's anxiety is palpable:

The door opens; the tiger leaps. The door opens; terror rushes in; terror upon terror, pursuing me. Let me visit furtively the treasures I have laid apart. Pools lie on the other side of the world reflecting marble columns. The swallow dips her wing in the dark pools. But here the door opens and people come; they come towards me. Throwing faint smiles to mask their cruelty, their indifference, they seize me. The swallow dips her wings; the moon rides through blue seas alone. I must take his hand; I must answer. But what answer shall I give? I am thrust back to stand burning in this clumsy, this ill-fitting body, to receive the shafts of his indifference, and his scorn, I who long for marble columns and pools on the other side of the world where the swallow dips her wings (105).

The terror of socialization is evident throughout the passage, Jinny's excitement at such an event replaced by Rhoda's fear of ridicule and, more importantly, of being present in a body and time that she feels are not hers. The rapid switches from her refrains of the swallow, blue seas, and marble columns, which occur throughout the novel, to her feelings at this party are violently jarring. She does not have a space where these two worlds meet and coexist, but is instead hurtled from one to another. Unable to find peace in between her internal and external life, Rhoda moans, "How you snatched from me the white spaces that lie between hour and hour and



rolled them into dirty pellets and tossed them into the wastepaper basket with your greasy paws. Yet those were my life” (204). In contrast, Louis, Rhoda’s closest conspirator in feeling an outsider, conveys an ability to move much more smoothly between inner and external selves. In the previously quoted section before Jinny’s kiss, Louis moves between inner and external selves, noting the Nile desert “down there” and the others playing in the flower-beds “up here” (12). The two temporalities, while mixing, do not violently oppose each other, causing fear and anxiety in the inability to flow from self to self. Moreover, there is a paragraph break between the “down there” of the Nile and the “up here” of the children, further indicating Louis’s ability to safely transcend competing temporalities.

Unfortunately, Rhoda cannot synthesize her competing and contemporaneous temporalities into an androgynous temporality that allows her access to both internal and external selves. While Louis feels himself “rooted to the middle of the earth,” Rhoda is without physicality (12). After seeing her face in a mirror, Rhoda refuses to believe its presence, remarking, “I have no face. Other people have faces; Susan and Jinny have faces; they are here. Their world is the real world. The things they lift are heavy” (43). Rhoda’s existence in the external world is precarious in that she feels that she cannot adequately interact with material things. She is without existence in this linear temporality and does not find any societal performance comfortable in the temporary Bergsonian ghost of external representation. In *Time and Free Will*, Bergson writes that life is a constant negotiation between matter and mind, external and internal, and “if we give much to matter we probably receive something from it, and that thus when we try to grasp ourselves after an excursion into the external world, we no longer have our hands free” (223). The pull from differing temporal selves is finally too painful for Rhoda. Ultimately, she feels herself “broken into separate pieces; I am no longer one” (106). The

external world is one of categorization and separation, and is not friendly to the unity of competing and sometimes contradictory forces. Unable to find a selfhood that is reasonably stable and material in society, Rhoda suffers and removes her body from external societal time by committing suicide.

As the orderly time of school strips Rhoda of identity, Susan also feels school time as an assault on her natural duration. Susan's distaste for this time is manifested by anger, as each night "I tear off the old day from the calendar, and screw it tight into a ball. I do this vindictively" (40). This school time she is living in echoes Bergson's external temporality, a time of society and linearity. The measured time is an assault on Susan's *durée*, directly conflicting with her characterization as a figure of nature. The measured linear time of school restricts Susan's subjectivity, denies its growth and, as a result, diminishes her permeability. Looking forward to the end of school and her return home, Susan predicts, "Then my freedom will unfurl, and all these restrictions that wrinkle and shrivel—hours and order and discipline, and being here and there exactly at the right moment—will crack asunder" (53). At school, Susan's freedom is denied in her uniform of brown serge and life packed in her cramped dormitory. Each day is marked on the calendar, torn off and crumpled up, gone forever. Bergson writes, "In place of a heterogeneous duration whose moments permeate one another, we thus get a homogeneous time whose moments are strung on a spatial line. In place of an inner life whose successive phases, each unique of its kind, cannot be expressed in the fixed terms of language, we get a self which can be artificially reconstructed" (238). Though Bergson does not develop a temporality between *durée* and societal temporality, it is clear that societal temporality is a site of artificiality and linearity. The events of the past are not ones that are revisited, but are torn up, screwed up in a ball, and discarded. Susan is also without freedom at school, as Bergson argues that freedom is

directly tied to movement in duration. After the construction of the artificial self in the external spatial plane, Bergson posits that life in external reality becomes automatic in our bodily and conscious responses, writing, “little by little, as our consciousness thus imitates the process by which nervous matter procures reflex actions, automatism will cover over freedom” (238). The schedules that control the girls’ days, shuffling them from tennis to galleries to class, cut in to the freedom of Susan’s day and subjectivity. She connects this assault on her freedom to the time of London, and her escape to the countryside is the home of her *durée*.

Such connections to nature as Susan’s, throughout the novel connected to the farmland and then eventually motherhood, recall Betty Flanders, the mother of *Jacob’s Room* even though Susan’s mothering is fiercely animalistic as noted above. In contrast to cosmopolitan Jinny, Susan is of the Earth and countryside. Back at home, she muses, “I am the seasons, I think sometimes, January, May, November; the mud, the mist, the dawn” (98). Again, this is reminiscent of the monumental feminine Kristevan time of Betty Flanders. This is a feminine temporality that is not unusual in modern literature and is seen in some memorable female heroines such as Hardy’s Tess and Lawrence’s Lady Chatterley. Susan’s distaste for the city and the linear, scheduled temporality it represents, removes her to a nonverbal farm life as a mother caring for her children outside of the public sphere, connected to the feminine cyclical movement of time. Her desire for this life is not at all revolutionary or rebellious, but rather a feminine choice that is available to her, a temporality that is gendered feminine. Furthermore, the characters operate as parts of a larger whole, petals of a six-sided flower that accompanies their dinner get-togethers. Again, this is not to overlook differences; the petals of such a flower are unique, separate, jetting out into their own particular space. However, they are connected and rely on one another to create what is seen as a larger whole, a flower. If one is missing, the whole

image of the flower changes. As such, Susan's external societal life is directly affected by her life experiences and gender, but her subjectivity is still open and flowing to the other characters. Her life is intrinsic to the lives of the others.

Like the switch from Louis to Jinny after the kiss, the lack of narrator contributes to the lack of textual separation among the characters, which is seen again when the children leave for school. Susan Dick writes, "Many of the sorts of details one would find in a conventional novel that link characters and events to the material world are present in *The Waves*...There is, however, no elaboration of such passages...The transitions a narrator would make as the narrative moves from speaker to speaker and from scene to scene, like the momentum created by a plot, are absent" (66). *The Waves* does provide momentum, but is in the absence of a narrator. The lack of narration places an emphasis on the monologues of the characters, relying on their language to move the narration forward. In addition, the connections between life events are reinforced by the lack of detailed descriptions from the narrator and instead rely on the language used by individual characters to emphasize both difference and sameness. For example, the first night of school away from the opposite sex for both the boys and girls is detailed. After the nature vignette, the chapter begins with the voices of Bernard, Louis, and Neville detailing their first reactions to arriving at school. Bernard closes this first section, saying "This is our first night at school, apart from our sisters" (32). Following this is Susan's beginning for the girls' experience at school, stating, "This is my first night at school...away from my father, away from my home" (32). The similarity of the life experience for both the boys and girls is reinforced by the replication of language. Both note that "this," the current time they are experiencing, is the "first night," further conveying the similarity of their current temporality. Regardless of distance, both the boys and girls are connecting on the same temporal plane, placing feminine and

masculine experience together. Aside from these commonalities, however, the similarity in language emphasizes differences. Bernard notably uses the collective “our,” including his fellow schoolmates in the temporal plane of experiencing the first night of school. In contrast, Susan uses the singular “my,” equating this experience with herself and herself alone. She misses her father and her home, again things that only relate to her. She does not connect her experience to the others, only reiterating the things she left behind and her sensory observations at the moment. This change of language is even more noticeable because of the similar sentence structure and phrasing of Susan’s statement with Bernard’s that emphasizes the small but important differences. The absence of narration makes it possible for these two sentences to be read one after another, with no description separating the two. Of necessity, the form of the novel, like any artistic medium, has stylistic drawbacks, one of these being that two phrases or scenes cannot be read simultaneously. Nevertheless, here Woolf reproduces this basic sentence immediately after another so the reader has no other words coming between the experience of reading one and then the other. They are, as closely as possible to what can be accomplished in the written form, happening simultaneously by being read as closely as possible at the same time. Bergson writes in *Time and Free Will* that “the moments of inner duration are not external to one another” (226). Both Susan and Bernard’s experiences are occurring on the same temporal plane even if not on the same specific day. However, there is a line break that separates the two sentences visually on the page. Bergson warns against the tendency to associate temporality with space, and, in the sharing of language and sentence structures, Bernard and Susan are open to one another in sharing experiences despite both the difference and space between them, evident in the visual space of the line break on the page.

The replication of language is used to introduce the last monologue of the novel, connecting the natural world with the social world and again blurring the divisions between the two. The nature vignette introduces the beach scene at night, mirroring the old age of the characters. Darkness covers everything, suggesting the great equalizer of death. The phrase “Now the sun had sunk” introduces darkness into the vignette (236). Bernard’s voice begins the following section with, “Now to sum up,” mirroring the time and tone of the nature vignette (238). Bernard’s desire to “sum up” his own life and the life of his friends results from his age and his knowledge of approaching death, the end of his time. Darkness covers everything in the vignette, relentless in its pursuit to erase distinction. Yet Bernard is alive to greet the coming dawn, describing a scene that sounds similar to the first nature vignette of the novel: “The bars deepen themselves between the waves. The film of mist thickens on the fields” (296). The beach, mountains, and trees are not forever covered in indistinguishable darkness as the morning light has come again. It is tempting to summarize these nature vignettes as illustrating the circle of life, a cyclical time that repeats despite the separate lives within. Indeed, Bernard does say, “Yes, this is the eternal renewal, the incessant rise and fall and fall and rise again” (297). However, Bernard does not equate this time to a circle, but rather uses the phrase “rise and fall” to complicate the notion of time simply recycling itself, for though this is the return of the dawn in the “eternal renewal,” it is not a replication of the exact same time. Rather, it is a *continuation* of a time that encompasses a multitude of temporalities that include cycles, linearities, concurrent times, pasts, presents, and futures. Despite the stillness of coming death, the waves will continue to crash upon the shore—different waves, perhaps, but waves compiled of other waves that have been intermixed for an indefinite amount of time.

In this sense, Bernard does represent the possibility of androgynous temporality even if he cannot quite express it, as he shows himself to be compiled of various aspects of his friends, incorporating them throughout his final monologue. Yes, each individual voice is not heard in this final call of old age, but here we see Bernard's inability to exist without these competing, contemporaneous, yet separate subjectivities. Like the temptation to classify cyclical time at the end of *The Waves*, it would be just as easy to either call Bernard the ultimate figure of androgyny or a failure of androgyny in his monologue that denies a final voice to his friends.<sup>21</sup> Bernard's concluding words showcase the complex and conflicting character that he is: his overbearing tendency with language is exaggerated here, completely overtaking the final chapter of the book as he takes center stage and leaves no room for other competing voices. Yet here he is also able to accomplish what his neat phrases had never achieved, and that is to convey the interconnectivity the group shares. He does so by first acknowledging the impossibility of completely describing the life of each life individually: "How impossible to order them rightly; to detach one separately, or to give the effect of the whole—again like music. What a symphony, with its concord and its discord and its tunes on top and its complicated bass beneath, then grew up! Each played his own tune, fiddle, flute, trumpet, drum or whatever the instrument might be" (256). Again, like the temporality that Bernard describes at the beginning of this section, there is a layering of parts that overlap and make separation nearly impossible. If a piece is taken away, the whole symphony changes. Here, then, the reader is presented with the longest monologue of any character in the novel and, as a result, is confronted with the multiple subjectivities at work in one life. Bernard does not absorb them, as it is made obvious that they are all different people,

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<sup>21</sup> Jane Goldman claims that is Bernard "posited as an exemplary figure of androgyny" like Lily Briscoe of *To The Lighthouse* (87). McIntire, on the other hand, aligns Bernard's final summing up of his friends to fascist doctrine.

but his final monologue conveys the intermix of shared language and memories that were not originally his, as well as the combination of experiences. “For this is not one life,” Bernard ruminates, “nor do I always know if I am man or woman, Bernard or Neville, Louis, Susan, Jinny or Rhoda—so strange is the contact of one with another” (281). His incorporation of the others’ experiences in his are felt physically: “Here on my brow is the blow I got when Percival fell. Here on the nape of my neck is the kiss Jinny gave Louis. My eyes fill with Susan’s tears. I see far away, quivering like a gold thread, the pillar Rhoda saw, and feel the rush of wind of her flight when she leapt” (289). However, Bernard is Bernard – he is married, he has children, and he is not dead like Percival or Rhoda. He attempts to characterize the others knowing they are not he. Like the first nature vignette, “The sea was indistinguishable from the sky, except...” (7). Bernard is indistinguishable from the others except that he is. Rather, he needs them to contribute to his own multifaceted and evolving subjectivity just as they need him to do the same. There are different lives, different bodies, but outside of social restrictions on gender and class, they are permeable, able to dissolve into one another’s lives.

While gender differences are not erased and androgyny does not dramatically change gendered life expectations in societal temporality in *The Waves*, the narrative style illustrates the fluidity, the openness, and even the messiness that is the movement of subjectivity creation and various competing temporalities. What creates the ebb and flow of similarity and differences in *The Waves* is the multiple temporalities the characters engage in, moving from *durée* to external societal time through an androgynous temporality that is porous and permeable. By using Bergson’s theories of internal and spatial external time as the groundwork for time, we can see a third temporality to emerge from Woolf’s *The Waves* that is unique in its inclusion of community and melding of the two worlds of internality and externality that one navigates on a daily basis.



This androgynous temporality is a time that allows for connection among the characters through the sharing of language, phrases, and experiences in their monologues throughout. In addition, the continued present tense of the soliloquies emphasizes the connection among the characters because, like the shared language and sentence structure that Bernard and Susan both use to describe their first night away at school, it keeps the characters together on the same temporal plane even if they do not share the same spatial temporality. Their spatial distance from one another only reinforces their connection through androgynous time. Despite their physical distance, the flow of both the narrative of their monologues and time keeps their stories together. There is also no outside narrator to place large separations between the different monologues, again indicating the permeability of selves in the text. However, the easy movement of voice that reinforces similarity also highlights differences. The seamless flow between characters allows the reader to easily compare lives that are being lived at the exact same time and notice the challenges that each faces. In addition, *The Waves* shows these voices in various temporalities and foregrounds an androgynous temporality that blurs distinctions among one another. Toril Moi writes that in *A Room of One's Own*, “Woolf’s use of many different personae to voice the narrative ‘I’ results in frequently recurring shifts and changes of subject position, leaving the critic no single unified position but a multiplicity of perspectives to grapple with” (2-3). This use of multiple perspectives continues in *The Waves*, producing a chorus of voices that “rise and fall, fall and rise” with one another regardless and because of their differences.

## CONCLUSION

After *The Waves*, Woolf continued to grapple with time in her writings, which concluded with 1941's *Between the Acts*, published posthumously. Set before the outbreak of World War II, *Between the Acts* centers on a performance of a small English village play and the events that surround it. The play, written and directed by Miss La Trobe, presents the history of England, ending with a scene entitled "Ourselves," in which mirrors are directed out at the audience to convey the present in both time and space. Time is thus, again, integral in the novel. Time vibrates with the coming violence of war, it connects past and present in Miss La Trobe's play, it weaves itself in and out of the fantasy of performance and the reality of present. Yet despite the long history the play projects and the thick tension of the forthcoming war there is the present. There is the uneasiness of the passing moment as the mirror reflects the present audience members unexpectedly.

The stress of the present that is illustrated so keenly in this scene is a culmination of the stress of the present that reverberates throughout the novels examined in this dissertation. There is the female narrator of *Jacob's Room* relentlessly following the history of a now dead young man, unable to connect in life or death. There is Orlando, frazzled by the sudden assault of smells, sounds, and memories that attack her senses in one singular present moment. Finally, there is the continued present of *The Waves*, the constant rhythm of the characters' own present soliloquies that encompass their shared histories illustrated in the perpetual motion of the waves throughout the nature interludes in the novel. Though Woolf's representation of time evolves throughout her novels, the present moment continues to be a structuring and thematic element of central importance. In Bergson, the present moment is the only position of action. In a summary of the Bergsonian present, Suzanne Guerlac writes, "Our bodies, as centers of action, come into

contact with matter (or images) in the present. They have an impact on the world in the present” (120). It is living that occurs in the present, bodily reaction to external stimuli, but the present is also the point of joining past and present, of the meeting of inner and outer, of the point of contact of one’s ego with others. While the importance of the past and memories is clearly stressed in these three novels as well as other writings by Woolf, from the same-sex kiss in *Mrs. Dalloway* to the childhood memories in “A Sketch of the Past,” the experience of the past is only possible in the present, as the past can only be experienced as memories in the present. Woolf writes in “A Sketch of the Past” that the past “can still be more real than the present moment,” and, while such a statement seems to be emphasizing the importance of past over the present, these moments of past-in-present are worth reflecting on because of the uniqueness of the situation of the past actualizing itself in the present, coming to life in the present despite the span of time that has passed (67). This meeting of past and present and inner and outer is where this dissertation argues androgynous time ultimately comes to settle: between the inner duration where the soul experiences moments in time and the external representation of self that is projected into the world. The permeability of the inner and outer selves stresses the instability of other socially constructed boundaries, such as those between male and female and separate beings. As these three novels attempt to show the permeability of selves that live within one and the combination of masculine and feminine life experiences, an androgynous time fosters the connection. Androgynous time bridges the gap between pure individuality and pure representation of self, a site of flux in the crossover of times, selves, and an opening of connection despite differences.

Woolf’s representations of time are reminiscent of the ideas of French philosopher Henri Bergson’s, whose theories enjoyed an intellectual vogue during the early twentieth century. His

theories allow for the flexibility and flux that one finds in her temporal representations and narrative experiments. In particular, Bergson's concepts of *durée* and the outer representation of self, as well as the fluid incalculability of time, provide a philosophical basis for the creation of androgynous time. In order for the easy flow from past into present to make sense, one must dissociate time from a linear and measurable representation. In *Time and Free Will*, Bergson writes of this fallacy to think of time as a series of concrete episodes that can be arranged in a line: "Now, let us notice that when we speak of time, we generally think of a homogeneous medium in which our conscious states are ranged alongside one another as in space, so as to form a discrete multiplicity" (90). He continues, "We project time into space, we express duration in terms of extensity, and succession thus takes the form of a continuous line or a chain, the parts of which touch without penetrating one another" (101). Time is thought of in spatial images and language to make it easily understandable, countable, measured, and, perhaps most importantly, expressible. However, to construct time in space is to make time an object of matter with impenetrable walls. It does not allow for the living that Woolf attempts to represent, lives that are connected to past events that continue to reassert themselves in the present, lives that flow from one identity to another. *Jacob's Room*, *Orlando*, and *The Waves* are novels representing the complexity of identities and the breakdown of individual boundaries that separate different forms of self, of other's egos, of the past from the present. In order for a writer to reproduce the flow of selves in a body, the give and take of identities, regardless of sex, the backdrop where their representation takes place must change too.

*Jacob's Room*, *Orlando*, and *The Waves* are novels where time is a crucial narrative device in the plot. The inclusion of these novels in current criticism that focuses mostly on *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* underlies the continual work, development, and change in

Woolf's writing and thinking on time. *Jacob's Room* provides a glimpse into the competing temporalities of femininity and masculinity that Woolf will continue to develop in her work as well as the more experimental narrative style that will allow her to do so. The almost magical realism of *Orlando* allows Woolf's theories on time and gender freedom to stretch without the pressure of a "serious novel." *The Waves*, on the other hand, is the novel that Woolf wrote deliberately to alter the conventional form of the novel. While Woolf claimed *Orlando* should not be taken too seriously, *The Waves* was intentionally experimental, a space for Woolf not just to continue her exploration of her theories of time and subjectivity, but also her representation of the un-representable. These novels, written in different phases of Woolf's career and with differing intentions, illustrate the development of Woolf's representations of time and its relationship to subjectivity and gender.

*Jacob's Room* tells the story of Jacob Flanders through the voice of an unnamed female narrator who contrasts the life of men and women, as well as the expected life of men, and the actual, somewhat disappointing, life of Jacob. The androgynous time that is most successful in *The Waves* is much less noticeable in *Jacob's Room*, but the underpinnings are evident. *Jacob's Room* is a tale that strongly contrasts Bergsonian *durée* with external time between men and women. This is most noticeable in the contrast between Jacob and his mother, Betty. Betty bookends the novel, suggesting the importance of women in a novel about a young man. Her introduction shows a woman moving rapidly from one self to another, from the internal focus of writing a letter to responding to the external stimuli around her and to her role as a mother. Throughout the novel, Betty's consciousness is portrayed as disorganized and forgetful. Her sentences often break to introduce outside thoughts or asides to her sons, she forgets groceries, her purse is untidy, and she is consistently late for Captain Barfoot's regular meetings. Her *durée*

is unpredictable, fluid, and a-linear. Jacob, on the other hand, is completely cut off from his *durée*, operating as a symbol and representation of British masculinity for the entirety of the novel. In contrast to Betty's seemingly disorganized schedule, Jacob becomes more scheduled the longer he is in London away from his mother and childhood home, consulting his schedule book before even contemplating a walk with friends (72).

Though Jacob is well liked, admired even, his relationships to others around him are weak, often missed opportunities for true connection, a result of his being cut off from his *durée* and thus androgynous time. The reader's introduction to Jacob as a young man is through the eyes of a woman who shares a train carriage with him, but the two do not speak. The sailing trip with Timmy Durrant is filled with broken sentences, unfinished jokes, conversation the narrator cannot or does not record. Clara Durrant is introduced as Jacob's probable love interest, but the relationship is never pursued. The narrator fails to capture the quality of Jacob's relationships with others, and here Jacob is nothing but that Bergsonian ghost, an external representation of self that floats throughout the space of measured time and strict masculine societal expectations of church, school, and work. The ghost-like quality is reinforced in the school chapel, as the narrator notes of the young men, "Look, as they pass into service, how airily the gowns blow out, as through nothing dense and corporeal were within" (32). Cut off from their inner durations and with no access to or ways to connect that self to their societal self, the external selves of these young men away at school are carefully controlled and manipulated to fill roles beneficial to those in control; ghost-like in body, the young men possess "great boots" under their gowns (32). These identical heavy boots foreshadow the march to war these students will soon find themselves in, a situation externally imposed on them.

While men both inherit culture and society and are sent to die for them, women struggle with connecting their *durée* and external selves within the restrictions of societal time. The various temporalities of these women, including the a-linearity of Betty and the narrator, contrast with the linear, measured, and predictable temporality of Jacob. However, urban women in the city do not succeed as well as Betty in her seaside village. In London, Fanny eyes a mannequin in a storefront where “the parts of a woman were shown separate” (121). Though Woolf stresses throughout her writings of the multitude of selves that make an identity, this dismembered mannequin is not representative of a variety of selves, but rather of the violence done to individuals, especially women, in the common sphere and time where these external representations must live. This acknowledgement of the hard and violent work of living in external time foreshadows the difficulty that Rhoda will have in *The Waves* of finding a representational self in societal time.

However, powerful female figures frustrate masculine power, and no female holds as much power as the narrator of *Jacob's Room*. She is ultimately in control of Jacob's story and upsets the expectations of a conventional novel by not forging a connection between the reader and Jacob, and by not adequately developing the character of Jacob. Because of her characterization of Jacob, readers ultimately feel dissatisfied with him at the end. His life has been cut short, and he leaves behind no legacy, no children, nor brilliant career. His death, or rather the deliverance of the news of his death, ends the novel rather unexpectedly. Because of the sudden ending, we do not see the reactions of others to the death of Jacob, other than Mr. Bonamy and Betty Flanders, whose reactions are brief in the one-page final chapter. The narrator also omits Jacob's enlistment and experience in the war, masculinized events that would be important plot points in a conventional novel. No, the narrator does not accompany Jacob to war,

but writes him into nothingness nonetheless. Unable to forge a connection with him and insert herself, or other women, meaningfully into each other's lives, the narrator disposes of him. Androgynous time in *Jacob's Room* fails to move much beyond the coming together of female voices with a male story; both voices and temporalities exist in between the covers, but there is not the melding and give and take that Woolf will eventually succeed in representing in *The Waves*. This absence of an androgynous time among the characters is reinforced in the spatial areas that these characters inhabit. Perhaps more than in *Orlando* and *The Waves*, the characters of *Jacob's Room* are distinctly separate from one another, each living their own life crystallized from one another. Jacob's life is so far removed from that of his mother's that the two of them are not seen occupying the same space once he leaves for school. The narrator glances at a letter from Betty on Jacob's mantel and weaves a rhetorical reaction from Betty on Jacob's paid lovers, but otherwise Betty and Jacob's adult lives are completely separate. The promise of androgynous time does not come from the characters, but instead from the narrator's interaction with Jacob. Her reflections on Jacob's life that highlight her own subjectivity work to emphasize the feminine in Jacob's life, the importance of women in the story of a man. The novel of *Jacob's Room* is an exercise in androgynous time, the creation of a space where differing lives and identities come together in an attempt to forge connection and display the permeability of social constructions.

Similar to *Jacob's Room*, the narrator in *Orlando* writes his/herself into the narrative, showing his/herself to be a subjective personality tasked with telling the story of an other. Orlando's narrator, his/her biographer, breaks through various temporal divisions to record Orlando's story as if s/he is occupying the same space and time as Orlando and upsetting expectations of linear time and laws of space. Orlando's time becomes entangled with the



biographer's time, an entanglement that the biographer brings to light by his/her occasional use of the present tense when observing Orlando and when detailing the actual work of writing Orlando's biography. As such, the novel is filled with a variety of temporalities, including that of Orlando as a man, Orlando as a woman, the biographer's, and, of course, the reader's, blurring various gendered time lines to create the novel's heterogeneous temporality that combines a multiplicity of genders and lives.

The use of the narrator and the satirical portrayal of the novel as a biography emphasize the importance of the relationship of internal and external in relation to time, sex and gender, and identity. The probing biographer has access to the externals and internals of Orlando in the form of the relationship between Orlando's *durée* and external time. The impossibly long life, stunted aging, and the sex change externalize Orlando's own *durée*. Orlando's time speeds up and slows down, expands with important moments and stalls aging and the passing of the years. These plot choices externalize time not in space, as Bergson warns against, but in the narrative to highlight the slippery and illusive characteristics of time. Time passes with brief mentions of epochs, but it is, for the most part, unmeasured, allowing the freedom of mobility in time to access past and present, *durée* and external representation of self. The fluid time of *Orlando* highlights the multi-faceted subjectivity of the main character, as boundaries in time are eliminated as are boundaries that separated various subjectivities in one identity.

However, despite the relative ease with which Orlando moves through his/her different selves, he/she is not entirely outside of the effects of external societal time. Orlando's time as a woman is marked by societal expectations that her time as a man did not carry, such as the all-encompassing pressure to marry that prohibits her from writing, an interest she possesses as both a man and a woman. Orlando's struggle to learn her new female identity is an illustration of the

creation of her external representation of self. Orlando's gender performativity is as socially constructed as Bergson's external societal time, the temporality in which Orlando's gender is created and lived. Orlando's gender is not purely representative of his/her internal self and not immediately informed by his/her desires. Her need to marry is not a deep burning desire that follows her throughout life from boy to woman, but rather singular to the gender that is exposed to the external world and the social expectations of the age. After her marriage, she is curious to see if her adherence to the institution is approved by the "spirit of the age" so she can move on and continue writing (265). Orlando's long life allows the reader to see the different external pressures on men and women as well as view the effects of societal constraints on his/her inner and external self. While Orlando does react to the external stimuli of societal expectations and comes to represent the shifting of selves in one identity, she does not lose her life as a man because of her change to a woman. She has her past life as a man and her current life as a woman, her same loves and disappointments, her same desire to write and create. Orlando illustrates the different selves that can take residence in one body, the masculine and feminine that can cohabit peacefully in one self.

The mystical qualities that surround the narrative of Orlando are the attempted representation of androgynous time that stretches out Orlando's variety of selves into one long narrative of linearity. Bergson notes that we spatialize time to make sense of it, and in *Orlando* the androgynous time between internal and external time, a time that crosses over and operates in both the masculine and feminine, is spread out in one long singular line that allows for Orlando to live life as both a man and a woman, but at different times; hence the unusual long lifeline that threads together masculine and feminine life. Similar to Bergson's statement that spatializing time, however wrong it might be, is for our own understanding, in *The Sense of an Ending*, Frank

Kermode writes, “We can perceive a duration only when it is organized,” arguing that narrative plot makes sense of time by giving it a form (45). However, *The Waves* will attempt to show the same permeability of selves and time by condensing the narrative timeline and expanding the number of singular bodies.

Though the narrators of *Jacob’s Room* and *Orlando* are integral to the relationship between gender and time in those novels, *The Waves* benefits from doing without a conventional narrator. *The Waves* showcases Woolf’s most successful representation of androgynous time because of Woolf’s narrative experimentation in the novel. The narrative function of the aesthetic practices of *The Waves* is to illustrate the connections between physically separate individuals who share a metaphysical connection despite constraints of space, time, gender, and class. While the narrators in *Jacob’s Room* and *Orlando* are essential to the themes of time and gender, the absence of the narrator in *The Waves* is one of the key elements in the most successful depictions of androgynous time. There are no narrative boundaries between the characters’ voices, no narrative space that separates their voices and experiences from one another. The absence of the narrator puts *The Waves* in the characters’ control as their voices dictate the flow of the novel and the connections that are made between one another.

Like *Jacob’s Room* and *Orlando*, Bergson’s concepts of internal and external are important factors in the portrayal of time in *The Waves*, and it is this novel that makes clear that the site of androgynous time in between the internal and external time of the six characters is the site of connection. Though separate people with different lives, gender, and backgrounds, the characters of *The Waves* operate as parts of a multifaceted identity, separate entities of one whole that pass in and out of one another. In contrast to *Orlando* where Woolf synthesizes multiple selves in one body, *The Waves* displays a variation of self in individual bodies. More so than

*Jacob's Room* and *Orlando*, the characters of *The Waves* are friends that interact with one another and whose individualities are then noticeably marked from one another and created by their differences. The use of soliloquy and the absence of dialogue create an emphasis on individuality in the novel that is reaffirmed with the different lives the characters live because of their gender, class, and sexuality. The narrative presents these characters in the running interior monologue that is their thoughts, and, while these thoughts may be occurring in social functions, the voices are singular, not breaking to include dialogue or an outsider's eye, like that of a traditional narrator. However, these monologues showcase the intense relationship among Bernard, Neville, Louis, Rhoda, Susan, and Jinny. Their monologues not only reference one another, but also contain shared experiences and language that incorporate one another into each own identity.

Despite the permeable subjectivities of *The Waves*, gender marks difference in each character, especially in each individual character's relationship with time. The relentless steady movement of external societal time affects Jinny, Susan, and Rhoda differently than it affects the men, and even differently than it affects each other. Jinny and Susan fall into the life roles in the feminine duality of vixen and mother, while Rhoda, unable to find an external role that fits, kills herself. However, a simple binary system of feminine roles is exactly what *The Waves* attempts to disrupt and, as such, Jinny and Susan find ways to challenge their societal assigned roles. Reflecting the violent language of the nature vignettes that introduce each section of the novel, Jinny and Susan's monologues are punctured with aggressive language that subverts their traditional feminine roles. Susan is ferocious in her life as a rural mother, possessive rather than protective, dangerous rather than strict. Jinny revels in her sensuality, and portrays herself as an animalistic moving body. Yet she is a quivering body in control of her life, and not punished for

her outward sensuality. Rhoda cannot find herself in any of the social roles offered to women, and without a solid external self life for her becomes too painful. The only choice for Rhoda, then, is to take herself out of time.

Though gender differences affect the lives of these characters, the narrative style of *The Waves* illustrates the flux and fluidity of the movement of subjectivity and time. By placing Bergson's theories of internal and external time into the novel, we can see androgynous time emerge, a time that acknowledges the community of egos in which we live, as well as meld the two times of internality and externality. In addition to the shared language and memories that run throughout each character's monologue, the present tense of the nature vignettes stresses the connection among the characters in keeping all six of them on the same temporal plane even if they are not occupying the same spatial temporality. Despite their physical distance or differences in life, the flow of their seamless narrative that is possible because of the lack of narrator stresses the interwoven quality of their stories.

This dissertation has discussed time in various modes. There is the nature of time, how it is measured, how it is felt, how it is gendered, and finally how we externalize our experiences to live in the outside world. Paul Ricoeur writes in *Time and Narrative, Volume One*, that "time becomes human time to the extent that it is organized after the manner of the narrative; narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal experience" (3). *Jacob's Room*, *Orlando: A Biography*, and *The Waves* attempt to convey different life stories by experimenting with time representation. These three novels show the development of time in Woolf's novels and detail the struggle to find a feminine time that contrasts the violent power of masculine societal time. In the progress of developing a feminine time that would move away from the traditional cyclical time that is often associated with women, Woolf creates an

androgynous time that acknowledges individuality and difference while also the permeability of self and identity. Time, like these identities, is constantly in flux. As such, androgynous time makes room for this movement between the subjective internal time of self and the representative self that lives in societal time. This is not a time that denies others or self, internal and external. Rather, it is a time that is a combination of all, a mixture of opposing forces that operate briefly in a space between self and other. It is a space that is, in these novels, needed to forge connections and keep identity.

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**ABSTRACT****“LIFE IS A LUMINOUS HALO”: GENDER AND ANDROGYNOUS TIME IN VIRGINIA WOOLF**

by

**ASHLEY WHITMORE****August 2015****Advisor:** Dr. Anca Vlasopolos**Major:** English**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy

This dissertation examines the role of representations of time in Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room*, *Orlando: A Biography*, and *The Waves* to illustrate the development of an androgynous time that is located between the inner subjective time of each individual, inspired by Henri Bergson's *durée*, and the stunted measured time of society.

The Introduction provides an overview of my argument and critical approach, as well as illustrates the background in which Woolf was writing. The Introduction also introduces the ideas of French philosopher Bergson, whose theories on time will be instrumental in forming Woolf's androgynous time.

The remainder of the dissertation will examine three pivotal works in Woolf's development of androgynous time. Chapter One looks at Woolf's first experimental novel, *Jacob's Room*, and closely reads the relationships between the men and women of the novel. In doing so, it highlights the dangerous effects of external time on women and men, creating Bergsonian “ghosts” that are mere impression representations of selves. Women's time is directly tied to their sexual desirability, while the men of the novel are given access to culture and education only to be killed off in war.

In Chapter Two I turn to *Orlando: A Biography*, a fantastical novel with an expansive amount of time covered between its chapters. Orlando changes genders in the novel, experiencing life, and therefore the effects of time, as both a man and a woman. Orlando embraces both sameness and difference, a characteristic that failed in *Jacob's Room* but will resurface again in *The Waves*. Through close reading, I highlight the tension that exists between the internal and external in Orlando, using Bergson's theories of duration and external societal time. Orlando, through the gender change and hundreds of years, keeps his/her *durée*, a sense of self that continues to develop but still holds on to the same markings of a life history, including memories.

In Chapter Three I argue that *The Waves* illustrates the most successful depiction of an androgynous temporality. Woolf again highlights the internal *durée* by creating a novel in which there is no traditional narrator or dialogue as internal monologues provide all the information of the novel. Yet, these six characters share memories, phrases, and language, borrowing moments from one another through a collective shared consciousness. This sharing of life events occurs in androgynous time, as characters are able to move from their *durées* and acknowledge the presence of others without completely losing their subjective times in the external world. I also address the role of gender in each character's life and relationship to time, as Woolf again shows the different lives that men and women live because of societal expectations that are directly related to time.



**AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT**

Ashley Whitmore received a bachelor's degree in English from Michigan State in 2005, a master's degree in English from Wayne State University in 2007, and a Ph.D. in English from Wayne State University in 2015. Her essay "Reconfigurations of History and Embodying Books in *Gould's Book of Fish*" has been published in *Postcolonial Text* and she has presented papers at the Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf, the Louisville Conference on Culture and Literature since 1900, the Midwestern Conference on Literature, Language, and Media, and the National Popular Culture and American Culture Conference. She has taught at Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn, Michigan and Wayne State University. Her research interests include twentieth-century British literature, writings of the fin-de-siècle, women writers, modernism and social modernity, feminist studies, theories of sexuality and gender, post-colonialism, representations of time in narrative.