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"The Unseen Part of Us Spreads Wide": Virginia Woolf's Momentary Histories in Microgenesis in *The Voyage Out*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *The Waves*.

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“The Unseen Part of Us ... Spreads Wide”: Virginia Woolf’s Momentary Histories in Microgenesis in *The Voyage Out*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *The Waves*

by

JAMES ANTHONY KEARNS

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Author's Declaration.

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee. Work submitted for this research degree at the University of Plymouth has not formed part of any other degree either at the University of Plymouth or at another establishment. This study was part-financed with the aid of the Higher Education Research and Scholarship Activity Fund Studentship (2014) (Cornwall College Group), amounting to 50% of fees.

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Signed: **James Anthony Kearns.**

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Abbreviations

Works by Virginia Woolf

CRI *The Common Reader Vol. I*

CR2 *The Common Reader Vol. II*

CSF *The Complete Shorter Fiction*

DI-5 *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*

EI-6 *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*

LI-6 *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*

All other Woolf works are indicated by a descriptor, for example, *To the Lighthouse* is cited as (*Lighthouse* [plus page number]). All other references follow *MLA Handbook* (9th ed.).

Works by Jason W. Brown

LE *Love and Other Emotions: On the Process of Feeling*

LM *The Life of the Mind*

MBC *Mind, Brain, and Consciousness: The Neuropsychology of Cognition*

MCP *Metapsychology of the Creative Process: Continuous Novelty as the Ground for Creative Advance*

MN *Mind and Nature: Essays on Time and Subjectivity*

MSCW *Mental States and Conceptual Worlds*

MTPT *Microgenetic Theory and Process Thought*

PAL *Process and the Authentic Life: Toward a Psychology of Value*

RM *Reflections on Mind and the Image of Reality*

SP *Self and Process: Brain States and the Conscious Present*

TWMP *Time, Will, and Mental Process*

Please refer to Works Cited for further details.

“The Unseen Part of Us ... Spreads Wide”: Virginia Woolf’s Momentary Histories in Microgenesis in *The Voyage Out*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *The Waves*.

James Anthony Kearns

Abstract

This thesis demonstrates for the first time that a mode of consciousness which Jason Brown formulates as microgenetic – an emergent and dynamic process of cognition from depth to surface – is highly compatible with Woolf’s own critical dictum, expressed most fully in “Modern Fiction,” that the point of interest of a modern novelist lies “in the dark places of psychology” (E4 162). Woolf’s textual representations of the transition between selves in relation to the unfolding external world have determined the trajectory of the analysis and the areas of exploration in this study; the significant points of confluence between the flow of cognitive microgenesis and Woolf’s own descriptive powers are a source of continuous and determinative preoccupation throughout the following work. By focussing on wide-ranging but interrelated aspects of microgenetic theory across four thematic chapters, I will offer a new perspective on Woolf’s fictions by demonstrating how Woolf’s textual representations elucidate “consciousness as an emergent property of a process of differentiating unified experience into individuated object/events” in the external world (Schweiger et al. 328). I will argue that Woolf’s writings are aimed at the exploration of the “hidden depths” of perceptual process (E3 11, “The Tunnel”) and it is via these “invisible presences,” as she refers to them in “Sketch of the Past” (“Sketch” 92), that Woolf attempts to describe and so reveal “the momentary histories” of her characters as “a continuous wave-like transition” in microgeny to surface detail (PAL 223). The cognitive formation of mind as the shaper of the external world is, I will argue, central to Woolf’s process of composition. Woolf’s works are examinations of myriad selves wandering “down, deep into what passes, as this omnipresent, general life,” but they are at all times conscious of the human process which aims at wholeness (*Waves* 84). The following readings in microgenesis are broken down as follows: on phylo-ontogeny in *The Voyage Out*, on “conceptual-feeling” in *Mrs. Dalloway* (MTPT 68), on time and “transmuting process” in *To the Lighthouse* (D3 102), and on perceptual trans-formation in *The Waves*.

Introduction

One of the main contributions I will make in this thesis is to attempt to rethink the representationalist foundations of cognitive theory alongside the fictions of Virginia Woolf, focussing, in particular, on *The Voyage Out*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*. This is the first such work of its kind in Woolf Studies or, indeed, in Modernist Studies as a whole. This thesis therefore understands the brain process as one through which mind/brain states transition across phases towards their final destination: that is, outward to surface objectivity. That crucial trajectory is, I will suggest, of paramount concern to Woolf personally, and as a professional writer of fiction, and to Modernist writings more broadly – referred to by Woolf as the problematic of, *inter alia*, “[t]he mind receiving myriad impressions” (“Modern Novels” E3 33). The question of the direction of travel – as cognitive process – is (as noted) a deterministic factor in this project. From the cognitive literary “extensionist” viewpoint of Marco Bernini, for example, “pen, paper, and symbols are material tools” and, from this “obvious” baseline, we may go on to suggest that in “cognitive extension it is the role of the imagination that can be ‘materialized’” [...] in like fashion to the said “pen, paper, and symbols” (“Supersizing” 357); from the cognitive literary “enactivist” viewpoint of Marco Caracciolo, “experience is, centrally, an active engagement with the world (or [...] with one’s body) not a mental object” (*Experientiality* 108); from the cognitive literary “embodied”-centred viewpoint of Karin Kukkonen, “the immediate input from the environment in response to our actions and perceptions feeds back into the probabilistic causal structure [of the environment]” (Kukkonen 374); from the microgenetic viewpoint of Jason Brown, however, and in contradistinction to the three aforementioned scholars, there is, indeed, a cognitive transition from mental imagery – a “mental object” – to surface actuality – the objects we perceive in the environment. Moreover, an object in the material world is understood to be an “externalized concept,” in other words, “object-concepts” are realisations of “deeper categories” in mind/brain process (Bradford and Brown 192): that is to say, and crucially so, “the process of perception is a movement outward from the brain to the things themselves” (Pachalska, “Microgenetic Revolution” 113).

As we shall see, I will suggest that Woolf exploits – indeed, describes – the permeable boundaries between the perceiving self in confrontation with objects in the external world. I will attempt to draw out Woolf’s descriptions of perception as a journey from “depth [to] surface” actuality (Bradford and Brown 184); a transformation in cognition at once “inherently emotional” and potentially overwhelming (194). A related contribution I will make in this thesis will be to suggest that both Woolf and Brown situate the “the nature of the symptom” (of, say, cognitive disruption and “derailment”) as key to locating what lies beneath – at subsurface levels of – human

consciousness and which may act as “the expression of the brain state as a whole” (Brown and Pachalska, “Symptom” 2) – a departure from “cognitivism” which views symptoms as (for example) “the static or noise produced by a damaged computer-brain” (2). Woolf, as I will suggest, is keen to assert that one must have “a whole in one’s mind” from the outset of her own process of fiction writing (“Byron and Mr Briggs” E3 483). It might be, as Reiner Schürmann said of Martin Heidegger’s “problematic of ‘being’,” that we can read Brown’s formulation of cognitive microgenesis “‘with [Woolf],’ but in all strictness we must say ‘in [Woolf]’” (Schürmann 3; modified), for it is via the centrality of cognitive inner process (her “invisible presences” (“Sketch” 92)) that Woolf begins to describe her – and, indeed, our – “moments of being” and “non-being” as arising and perishing microgeny (“Sketch” 83).

I will suggest for the first time, therefore – as we shall see below in sections on microgenetic theory and “4E” cognition (embodied, enacted, embedded, extended) and across the forthcoming chapters – that the process of cognitive microgenesis (to surface objectification) may be understood as a mode of perceiving, and therefore of analysing, the external world; that is, moreover, the process of microgenesis may take the form of a therapeutic exercise – as we shall see, for example, in the categorial examination of Clarissa Dalloway in *Mrs. Dalloway*; an exercise which fails in dramatic fashion for Septimus Warren Smith and, in *The Waves*, for Rhoda where she is “broken into separate pieces; [...] no longer one” (*Waves* 79); in *To the Lighthouse*, with, for example, Lily Briscoe’s temporal process of representation which culminates in her “vision [...] be[ing] perpetually remade” (*Lighthouse* 197); and, my starting point (in chapter one), with the time-scales of phylo-onto-micro-geny, as a passage through limbic states of the human mind in *The Voyage Out*. The following readings in microgenesis are broken down as follows: on phylo-onto-microgeny in *The Voyage Out*, on “conceptual-feeling” in *Mrs. Dalloway* (MTPT 68), on stability and “transmuting process” in *To the Lighthouse* (D3 102), and on perceptual trans-formation in *The Waves*. In this study, I refer to all materials germane to Woolf’s writing process, including not only the completed published texts but also typescripts and her planning notes.

Writing in 2003, Maria Pachalska states that “[i]t has become rather commonplace to speak of an ‘explosion’ of knowledge about the human brain over the last 20-30 years, and in particular over the last decade” (“Microgenetic Revolution” 110). Since the 1990s, the “Decade of the Brain,” there have been major advances in visual cognition and consciousness which have focussed on, and emphasised, “the steady-state properties of visual processing” (Ögmen and Breitmeyer, *First Half*, Preface np.). According to the editors of *The First Half Second*, “[t]he common theme [of steady-state methodologies] has been to identify types, levels, or sites of neural activity that correlate with conscious and unconscious aspects of visual processing” (Preface np.). Locating the

neurological locus (or substrate) of conscious experience is, according to Robert Menary, the sought after “holy grail of the cognitivist enterprise” (“Holy Grail” 607).¹ But, as Michel Bitbol explains, “[e]ven the modest results about the Neural Correlate of Consciousness (NCC) turn out to be partly questionable due to a methodological restraint” which he pinpoints to “the presence or absence of conscious awareness in a subject [...]” (“Consciousness Primary” 64).² For example, “[Stanislas] Dehaene and [Jean-Pierre] Changeux’s theory [of consciousness] stipulates that for conscious experience to arise, a ‘Global workspace’ connected with many specified areas of the brain must be activated” (“Consciousness Primary” 64; Dehaene and Changeux qtd.). However, as Bitbol asserts, this view relies “heavily on the subject’s ability to discriminate, to memorize, and to *report*, which is used as the ultimate experimental criterion” (65; emphasis in original).³ Microgenetic theory “prob[es] the *dynamic* aspects of conscious and unconscious visual processing” and is offered as an alternative to the “steady-state” approach identified by Haluk Ögmen and Bruno Breitmeyer (*First Half*, Preface, np.; emphasis in original). According to Talis Bachmann, Brown’s formulation of microgenetic theory argues from the perspective that “the processes of perception and action are a nested dynamic structure, where different levels are active at the same time,” and where Brown’s term “unfolding” well describes the cognitive activity (Bachmann, “How Does Microgenetic” 41).

In what follows across this thesis, I will draw attention to the particular descriptive and narrative developments taking place in Woolf’s writings which are highly compatible with the science of perceptual microgenesis and, in particular, to Brown’s formulation of it. The important question, according to Bitbol, is whether it might be possible “[to] find[] a place for conscious experience within nature as it is supposedly described by our best scientific theories” (“Science As if” 182). In “Microgenesis of Perception,” Bachmann suggests that,

¹ Robert Menary, responding to an article by A. Adams and K. Aizawa, asks a very straightforward question: “[w]hat is a mental or cognitive representation?” His reply to his own question is that “[t]here is no philosophically or empirically agreed upon account of what makes something a cognitive representation” (“Holy Grail” 607). He asks his reader to “[i]magine genetics without a model of genes, this is the position in which cognitivism finds itself” (607). The “hard problem” of consciousness (Chalmers, “Facing Up” 4) consists in asking, among other things, how it is that some organisms are subjects of experience. As Chalmers asserts, “[t]he really hard problem of consciousness is the problem of *experience*” (“Facing Up” 5; emphasis in original).

² Bruno Breitmeyer and Petra Stoerig state that, “[w]ith regard to vision, the NCC’s, when defined broadly enough, can be found along the entire retino-geniculate-cortical tract and [...] could even include retinal receptor activity correlated with perception of color. Despite this, very few would seriously argue that consciously represented neural processes reside at the level of the retina, lateral geniculate nucleus, or other subcortical retino-recipient nuclei; even the role of primary visual cortex is discussed controversially” (“Neural Correlates and Levels” 36).

³ As I will discuss below, the subject’s first-person account is something that can hardly be discounted. The neuropsychologist will rely on language and discrimination as well reflectivity and memorisation. I will return to Bitbol’s “integrated behavior” below (“Consciousness Primary” 64).

[t]he first and foremost problem is the difficulty in crossing the explanatory gap between the subjective phenomenal realm and the third-person domain of object responses and descriptions that are inevitable if we want to speak about the science of microgenesis (14).

Bachmann explains further that “[t]o take apart the actual, however largely hidden process of microgenesis,” is key to experimental microgenesis but, as we shall see, it is an operating factor, and of central concern, in Woolf’s own method of revealing what “lies very likely in the dark places of psychology” (E4 162, “Modern Fiction”). But first I should like to provide a working definition of microgenetic theory.

Defining Microgenesis

In the following section, I should like to offer a brief guide to the “complex and insufficiently known history” of microgenesis (Catán 252), and to Jason Brown’s own formulation of microgenetic theory. I will then distinguish phenomenal microgenesis (as a science of cognition) from a number of other theoretical models, for example, the most recent developments in “4E cognitive science” (Kiverstein 19): “embodied,” “enacted,” “embedded” and “extended” (Menary “Dimensions” 562). In addition to this, I shall also demonstrate in brief, and by way of preliminary, a variety of ways in which Brown’s theory of microgenesis might successfully be read alongside the writings of Virginia Woolf, letting the forthcoming chapters themselves respond to important and relevant scholarly debates in Woolf studies. There are a variety of Woolfs, of course, and I will refer to these (for example, cognitive Woolf, evolutionary Woolf, idealist and realist Woolf, subjective and objective Woolf, public and private Woolf) in a section at the end of this introduction titled “Critical Context.” In addition to the said final section, reference to current Woolf literary scholarship on the novels I address is introduced wherever it is relevant during the chapters.

The theory of microgenesis has been described variously as a theory of “conflict” (PAL 234-237), a theory centred on “deep feeling” (Cegalis, “From Prototheory” 125), a theory with a “twisted history” (MacLean 17), and as a theory with “revolutionary” breadth which provides “a new paradigm” for our understanding of cognitive and perceptive processes (Pachalska, “Microgenetic Revolution” 114). Maria Pachalska suggests that “[t]he microgenetic paradigm makes it not only possible, but necessary to look at the world in a new way” (112). The origin of the theory of “[microgenesis] derives indirectly from the term *Aktualgenese*, which [Friedrich] Sander [...] used descriptively [in the late 1920s] with respect to his own studies on the temporal evolution of percepts” (MacLean 17-18). According to Robert Hanlon, “Sander proposed a theory of perception in which the process of object formation [i.e., the *Aktualgenese*], evolved through several phases of perceptual micro-development” (Hanlon xiv). By the 1950s, Paul Schilder had

expanded microgenesis to a “theory of thought formation” (xiv). It was Schilder who posited a fundamental re-thinking of “the process of thought development [as a] recapitulat[ion] of the phylo-ontogeny of cognition” (xiv).⁴ Heinz Werner is credited with introducing Sander’s methodological techniques of perceptual microgenesis to the Anglophone countries. Werner is also credited with “coining the term *microgenesis* in translation of the German word *Aktualgenese* in a paper on the microgenetic analysis of aphasia” in 1956 (xv; emphasis in original).⁵ Writing in 1984, Juris Draguns “testif[ies] to the vitality of research on microgenesis and to the variety of approaches to its investigation” (“Four Views” 267). Ulf Kragh, in the same paper, suggests, however, that “it [is] necessary for a fruitful continuation of microgenetic research that we proceed toward an inclusive theory or model that could subsume manifold phenomena now under consideration” (“Four Views” 263). Brown’s formulation of microgenetic theory has been hailed as that unifying model which, according to Pachalska, “has the potential to revolutionize [...] our thinking about the brain and the functions it performs, as well as that which we call the human body, and that which we call the human mind [...]” (“Microgenetic Revolution” 112).

Pachalska, writing in 2003, states that “[m]icrogenetic theory has not gained a firm footing in contemporary neuroscience” and goes on to suggest that “[d]espite – or perhaps because of – the difficulties inherent in understanding and applying microgenetic theory, the [...] neuropsychology Brown is proposing has [as earlier noted] the potential to revolutionize [...] our thinking about the brain [...]” (“Microgenetic Revolution” 112) and to offer a “new paradigm” with which to study the dynamically changing nature of perception (114). Pachalska posits Brown’s formulation of microgenesis as “an overarching theory, indeed a kind of meta-theory, whose range and implications extend far beyond neuropsychology and the neurosciences generally” (112). A working definition of Brown’s theory of microgenesis might now be proposed not by the formulator himself but by two of his colleagues in microgenetic neuropsychology and neurolinguistics, Maria Pachalska and Bruce MacQueen:

⁴ Phylo-ontogeny hypothesises the development of an organism as “the necessary result of *progressive* evolution” which, as Stephen Jay Gould suggests, is the “more interesting and important, if only because it led to us” (*Ontogeny* 90; emphasis in original). For “*progressive* evolution,” that is, “of accelerat[ion] through geologic time,” think “phylo”; for “led to us,” that is, a human lifetime, think “onto” (90). J. G. Draguns illustrates the development of cognition from phylogenesis (across aeons) to ontogenesis (across a lifetime) to microgenesis (across milliseconds) with a dramatic example from Marius von Senden’s famous monograph, *Space and Sight: The Perception of Space in the Congenitally Blind before and after Operation*. The “adaptive challenge is associated with the postoperative recovery of sight and the gradual process of learning to make sense of and realistically apprehend a variety of stimuli”: “[w]hat in normal adults results in an experience of instantaneous identification of stimuli engenders a laborious, protracted search in the newly sighted. [...] [I]t is evident that a newly sighted person emerges from blindness [phylo-] to a phenomenal world of confusion, conflict, misperception and illusion [onto-], a world in which identification and recognition are achieved, but only by dint of effort and time [micro-genesis]” (Draguns, “Microgenesis” 7; von Senden paraphrased; my square brackets).

⁵ Werner, Heinz. “Microgenesis and Aphasia.” *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, vol. 52, 1956, pp. 347-353.

The essence of microgenetic theory in neuropsychology is an account of the phases in brain process through which successive mind/brain states arise and perish over the duration of the psychological present, measured in milliseconds (300).

In 1972, Jason Brown published his first book, entitled *Aphasia, Apraxia, and Agnosia*. According to Pachalska, Brown offered an alternative to the theory of “disconnection” which attempted “to compartmentalize aphasia syndromes and assign each of them to the destruction or disconnection of specific brain centers, generally identified with the discrete processors of cybernetic theory” (Pachalska, “Portrait” 135).⁶ Brown noted that there are “no sharp lines of demarcation over the spectrum of clinical pathology,” emphasising instead the process of symptomatic continuity (between, for example, aphasia (speech), apraxia (action), and agnosia (perception)) rather than demarcated boundaries (135). Brown advocated for “a deliberate transgression of boundaries,” evidenced by the title of his first book. Brown suggested that the three conditions named, the 3A syndromes of aphasia, apraxia and agnosia, “reflect[] a parallelism – or rather, an identity – of mental process in the areas of speech and language, action and perception” (135). According to Pachalska, “disconnection theory” suggested that co-occurrence in the 3A syndromes may be attributed to “the purported physical proximity of processors and pathways affected by the same lesion [in the brain]” (135). Alternatively, Brown’s formulation of microgenesis, suggested that “a lesion produces a disruption in the unfolding of mental process at a particular moment, and it is the moment that defines the symptom”:

[d]isruption of analogous moments in the creation of an object in perception, of a behaviour in action, or of a speech act in the language system, will produce specific, and yet fully analogous syndromes of agnosia, apraxia, and aphasia, respectively (135).

The “foundation block” for Brown’s theory centred on “the progression from semantics to phonology in language, from object concept to object form in perception, and from action plan to implementation in motor behavior” (135). The progression across the three modalities (the 3A syndromes: aphasia, apraxia, agnosia) was two-fold: the process was continuous across all three domains and “in the relation to stages in the evolution of the forebrain” (135).

According to Paul MacLean, “phylo-ontogeny was thought [by Werner] ‘to leave a track that was retraced each moment in the process of object formation’” (MacLean 18; Brown qtd. [LM 6]). This retracing would, according to Brown, “[...] unravel[] cognition in the reverse of the sequence

⁶ Varela et al. suggests that “[t]he avowed intention of th[e] cybernetics movement was to create a science of mind” (38). For example, “[t]he use of mathematical logic to understand the operation of the nervous system” (38). Cybernetics expressed “the processes underlying mental phenomena in explicit mechanisms and mathematical formalisms” (38). Without doubt, their ideas – among them Warren McCulloch and Walter Pitts – were responsible for the invention of digital computers. As Varela et al. state, in the 1940s, “vacuum tubes were used to implement the McCulloch-Pitts neurons whereas today we find silicon chips [...]” (39). As I shall discuss below, microgeny is far removed from the computational model which advocates for the underlying “idea of mind as logical calculation” (40).

of evolutionary and maturational development” (LM 6). Brown was unconvinced by the retrace aspect and, in response to “this regressive view” (MacLean 18), referred to the process of “microgenesis as a unidirectional forward flow from ‘archaic’ to ‘recent’ structures in a matter of milliseconds” (18). Brown’s formulation was an attempt to provide, and proceed toward, an inclusive microgenetic theory. Brown, according to Avraham Schweiger, “‘neurologized’ [microgenesis][.] [arguing] that action (understood as a scheme for potential movement) and perception emerge from a unified underlying background, unfolding through neuronal substrates toward end products (the ‘figure’ [that is, the external object perceived])” (“Perception and Action” 92). Brown’s cerebral evolution – phylo-ontogeny – is recapitulated in microgenesis which he describes as “a type of instantaneous evolution” (LM 5).⁷

Returning to the definition of microgenesis presented above, I ask whether the complexities of microgenetic theory can in fact be encapsulated in a single sentence. Pachalska’s “Portrait of a Scholar: Jason Walter Brown,” offers the following:

[t]he mental state is a recurring process of flow from the archaic to the recent in forebrain evolution that retraces, in a fraction of a second (microgenesis), formations in the evolution of the brain (phylogenesis) and patterns in the growth of the individual (ontogenesis [...]) (141-142).

External objects as they are perceived in human cognition are referred to by Brown as “grow[ing] into the world,” that is to say, they are “pieces of personal memory building up and populating an external image of reality; like the groping tips of tentacles, the mental organism reaches out to form and replenish an ever-changing surface” (SP 70). In microgeny, the self “only anticipates” (70; TWMP 189). As discussed above, that is, with reference to “growing out” (Bradford and Brown 193), the initial phases of the mental process are “rhythmically generated out of a ‘core’ [self]” which is located in “the anatomically deepest and phylogenetically oldest parts [i.e., the brain stem and midbrain] of the central nervous system [...].” (300). I should like to say a little more about the anatomy of the human brain and the question of specific functions of the system.

I noted the “cybernetics movement” earlier with reference to digital computers (Varela et al. 38) – that is, to repeat, “[t]he use of mathematical logic to understand the operation of the nervous system” (38). The problem with the analogy of brain to organic computer – meat instead of silicone – is identified by Pachalska in an article on “the microgenetic revolution” (“Microgenetic

⁷ Cognitive microgenesis, according to Stephen Levick, “retraces formations in the evolution of the human brain as well as patterns in the growth of the individual” (“Review” 101). It is the “[e]volutionary growth trends [the morphogenesis]” that “link to mental process” (“Microgenetic Theory” 65). As Brown states, “[i]n addition to a common underlying phyletic, ontogenetic, and microgenetic process – all a type of *growth* – the theory entails that perception is directed *toward* the featural detail of the world not [...] beginning with features as the building blocks of objects” (65; emphasis in original).

Revolution” 110). Pachalska suggests that we can “*do* cognitivism” or we can “*do* locationism” by way of anatomical metaphor: the stomach (111; emphasis in original). For the doing of locationism, let us marginalise the mind and focus on “the brain [...] as a physical unit” which, according to Pachalska, “is presumed to do its work essentially the same way as the stomach does its work” (111).

Certain materials are first ingested, then digested, meaning that some of what goes into the system is converted into usable energy (mental, in this case), and the rest is excreted. The difficult here is that the power of such an analogy to describe mentation, emotion, and speech and language processes is extremely limited (111).

By way of contrast, for the doing of “cognitivism,” Pachalska suggests that,

by marginalizing the brain (as a messy biological structure consisting of nerves, glial cells and various other organic structures), [cognitivists] focus[] on intellectual processes as though they took place in a computer, and not in a biological organ (111).

The hypothetical “cognitivist diagram of the digestive system,” in contra-distinction to an “anatomical locationis[ts]” version (111), “would ‘explain’ how food is ingested, digested, and transported to cells, but without any particularly compelling reference to the stomach, the liver, the intestines, and other such all-too-concrete biological realities” (111). As Pachalska explains, “[b]oth the input-output model and the ingestion-digestion-excretion model presume that what goes into the system and what comes out at the other end is ontologically the same ‘stuff’ which has been consecutively processed and transformed along the way” (114).

If there can be no *rapprochement* between the two, as Pachalska asserts, then a “*via tertia*” must be considered (112; emphasis in original). Pachalska now presents the form of “plastic” in order to put forward Brown’s evolutionary model of microgenesis. Pachalska explains that the computer that she is writing on is “made largely of plastic [and we might suggest that it] has no essential bond with the petroleum from which the plastic itself was made, as the petroleum itself no longer bears any practical resemblance to the organisms whose decaying bodies gave it substance” (114). Pachalska’s is a round-about way of explaining that in evolutionary microgenesis, “[t]he earlier stages [of cognition] are not replaced or effaced by later stages, but remain as a part of the whole, shaping and constraining the growth of newer elements [...]” (114). She goes on to write, offering the form of a tree as a model, that

[s]uccessive stages emerge from the various (but never limitless) possibilities created by the previous stages. Higher – read: younger [e.g., neocortex] – processes evolve within the constraints imposed by lower – read: older [deeper, say, the brainstem] – processes, which continue to perform their functions regardless of what occurs later on (114).

As I have already suggested, “perceiving objects has an adaptive role,” that is to say, “[i]t is in the service of some action to satisfy a biological need” (Schweiger “Perception and Action” 94). John

Cegalis described the early phases in cognition as necessary “to derive a representation of shape” (“From Prototheory” 112). Schweiger, offering an example of the “adaptive role”, states that,

the perception of a prey embodies in it the whole sequence of hunting and devouring it. In other words, the “meaning” of an object is in the actions associated with it, whether this object is food or something to avoid or chase (“Perception and Action” 94).⁸

Pachalska and MacQueen complete their definition of microgenetic process (as noted earlier) by suggesting that from the “phylogenetically oldest part” of the brain (also known as the “reptilian brain” (301)), the rhythmic phases travel outward – over phases – “to the outermost and youngest regions of the brain, the gray matter that constitutes the neocortex” (300). Discussing visual perception as symptomatic, Brown and Pachalska suggest that “the percept [object] does not emerge from the accumulation of bits of sensory data organized in second-pass processing into whole, but rather from the articulation of gestalt figures into details” (“Symptom” 4). Brown suggests that “a mental image maps to entities in the external world, but this mapping occurs in an ‘inside-out’ direction, not the reverse” (MSCW 9). This outward directional mapping suggests that “the processors of specific visual details located in the occipital cortex [the youngest part of the brain] are in fact the end-point, not the starting point, for the process of object formation” (MacQueen, Foreword x). MacQueen goes on to write that “[i]t is now known that [approximately] 75% [...] of the neural input coming in from the retina is directed to the thalamus and from there to subcortical structures (including the limbic system), while the rest is directed to the occipital cortex (x).

Before referring to the “limbic stage” of cognition and how it forms the basis of a chapter on *The Voyage Out*, I should like to present Bachmann’s model of “photographic process” to describe how the antecedent phases in cognition (emphasised by Pachalska in her reading of Brown) remain a part of the whole, shaping and constraining the growth of newer, unfolding elements (“Microgenesis of Perception” 13). So, in order to elucidate “perceptual formation as microgenesis,” Bachmann offers a “gross technical analogue” for “*phenomenal microgenesis*” (13; emphasis in original). He states that, phenomenal microgenesis “refers to the unfolding or formation of an active mental representation of OM [the object matter] in the directly experienced, phenomenally explicit format” (13). In other words, phenomenal microgenesis gets us to our

⁸ The “instinctual drives that underlie thought and emotion” are fundamental to Brown’s microgenetic theory of “arising and perishing” mental states. He asserts in *Love and Other Emotions: On the Process of Feeling* “that things do not persist; they perish and recur” (LoE 31). Brown writes that “[a]rising, perishing, and replacement are central features of the mind/brain state, as of all entities in physical nature. The surge of feeling from the instinctual core [self] to value in the world, and the lapse of feeling as the state perishes or is incompletely revived in the ensuing state [...], account for all aspects of instinctual drive. The primary instincts [...], that is, fighting (aggression), fleeing (fear), feeding (hunger), and sexual behaviour [are] interpreted on the same basis” (31). I return to the primitive categories below.

representation of the external world. We keep in mind, as Bachmann suggests, “[i]n a less theory-laden sense,” that “*microgenesis can be defined as a short-term formation of a psychological process*” (12; emphasis in original). The said analogue for phenomenal microgenesis,

would be the photographic process where the photochemically structured information from the negative image within the emulsion layer of the photographic paper becomes developed into the pattern of reflectance gradients on the surface of the paper after it has been immersed into the developer liquid (13).

As Bachmann explains, “in photography the directly observable picture development usually takes dozens of seconds, in mental (perceptual) microgenesis the process unfolds within the first half second [...]” (13). As I suggested earlier, Bachmann asserts that microgenesis may be offered as an “explanatory concept” with “[four] key developmental regularities” in the process to surface perception (16). Firstly, the process develops across phases “[f]rom less differentiated to more differentiated content;” secondly, “[f]rom dynamic and unstable content to stabilised content;” thirdly, “from appearance to essence” and, fourthly, as an alternative to the “stimulus-driven format, microgenesis essentially is an exploratory search activity striving for the organismic-environmental, adaptively expedient interpretation of stimulation” (16). Bachmann states that “the ‘germ’ of the final experience” – that is, the object matter perceived, say, a tree in a park – has already undergone “a dynamic perceptual unfolding and differentiation” but, importantly, the “germ” of the final experience “is already embodied in the early stages of its development” (16). Adding grist to Bachmann’s critique of the “stimulus-driven format,” Brown suggests too that “through this transition [to microgenesis], a continuous sheet of mind actualizes in an object” which, in turn, “point[s] to the subjectivity buried in the final object” (MTPT 24, 22). According to Brown, “[t]he impression that perceptions enter the brain from outside [the stimulus] is so strong that the opposite possibility [...] of a continuum from image to object, or from mind to world, is rarely considered as the primary direction of mental process” (23). Brown suggests, therefore, “that sensory data are not ingredient in the assembly or synthesis of perception, which should be conceived as an endogenous image sculpted to actuality in conformance to a ‘niche’ in the social and physical environment” (MCP 55). I will now offer the limbic stage as the phase in cognition by which we can exemplify the “arising [onset of the mental state] and perishing [actual endpoint of the state]” of microgenesis (MN 26).

The limbic system is described by MacQueen as both “the dream self” and “the center of feeling” (“Identity, Autobiography” 215). The subjective self “becomes all-in-all at the limbic stage” and there is “a great fluidity of self” (216) in which “[t]he world takes on color, in both a literal and figurative sense, and the approach-avoidance scheme of behavior is replaced by like-dislike, which in turn signals much more clearly the presence of a will and a self, entering into

relations with objects that are liked and disliked” (Pachalska and MacQueen 303). Objects are endowed with an “highly subjective, emotional loading that takes precedence over objective features, which [at limbic stage] have not yet evolved into a perception” (303). The visual object is recognised by the brainstem [the oldest part of the brain] and midbrain as an object belonging to a rather small set of primitive categories (food, threat, etc.); at the limbic level, the object is imbued with affect; in the temporal and parietal cortex, memory is engaged; and finally, the cortex analyzes the object to identify it more specifically” (MacQueen, Foreword x). MacQueen states that “[a]t the limbic system, the operative self is the dream self, [that is], [t]he subjective, feeling self which scarcely exists at the earlier stages [of cognitive development]” (“Identity, Autobiography” 215). MacQueen reminds his readers that “[f]rom the microgenetic perspective, it is essential to bear constantly in mind that] this limbic self does not sleep when we are awake; in other words, dream (limbic) consciousness is subsumed in, not replaced by, waking consciousness” (215). The “limbic level” in cognition will be presented as a central concern in the forthcoming chapter on *The Voyage Out* (215). I centre the limbic stage as a tracking device by which I can investigate phylo-ontogeny and the preconscious aspects of the perceptual process (microgenesis).

4E: Models of Cognition

In what follows here, and as a way of situating my arguments alongside the contemporary field of consciousness studies, I consider microgenetic theory in relation to the cognitive models currently understood (collectively) as “4E” (e.g., Kiverstein 19, Newen et al. 5). In his article, “Interpretation for the Bodies: Bridging the Gap,” Marco Caracciolo “proposes that the notion of embodiment [...] can provide a link between hermeneutics and bio-evolutionary and cognitive level analysis” (386). Embodiment may provide the needed *rapprochement* to what Bitbol calls “the mutual exclusiveness between hermeneutic ‘understanding’ and scientific ‘explanation’” (“Science as if” 204). His article, “Science as if Situation Mattered,” is dedicated to the memory of Francisco Varela, with the latter offering, according to Bitbol, an “alternative conception of science” in the “broader sense of a ‘dialectical relation between subjective views and intersubjective invariants’ [that is, objectified structures we can agree upon]” (206). This alternative view is referred to by Bitbol’s own term of the “*technology of embodiment*” (206; emphasis in original). In *The Embodied Mind*, Varela et al. state that “our cognition emerges from the background of a world that extends beyond us but that cannot be found apart from our embodiment” (217). Offering a statement of the centrality of the body to cognitive phenomena, Albert Lewin et al. assert that,

[a]ccording to proponents of 4E cognition [...] the cognitive phenomena that are studied by modern cognitive science, such as spatial navigation, action, perception, and understanding other’s [sic] emotions, are in some sense all dependent on the morphological, biological, and

physiological details of an agent's body, an appropriately structured natural, technological, or social environment, and the agent's active and embodied interaction with this environment (5).

Moreover, proponents of 4E, according to Lewen et al., “have argued against the assumption that cognition is an isolated and abstract, quasi-Cartesian affair in a central processing unit in a brain” (5).⁹ Earlier, I discussed Pachalska's critique of the cognitivist and locationist models of cognitive process. I noted that Pachalska concludes that “[b]oth the input-output model and the ingestion-digestion-excretion model presume that what goes into the system and what comes out at the other end is ontologically the same ‘stuff’ which has been consecutively processed and transformed along the way (“Microgenetic Revolution” 114). I distinguished “cognitivism” from microgenesis by suggesting that, according to Pachalska, in microgenesis “[t]he earlier stages [to consciousness] are not replaced or effaced by later stages, but remain as a part of the whole, shaping and constraining the growth of newer elements [...]” (114). But what is the “stuff” of 4E cognitive science and in what ways does its significance differ according to each?

Embodied-Enacted

To begin with, however, I should like to now distinguish Varela et al.'s embodied enactive theory from “cognitivism,” by which the authors mean, “traditional cognitive science” (Varela et al. 5). Varela et al. suggest that “cognitivism,” as well as “ha[ving] the virtue of being a well-defined research program [...] is often simply taken to be cognitive science itself” (8). Cognitivism is described as “consist[ing] in the hypothesis that cognition – human cognition included – is the manipulation of symbols after the fashion of digital computers,” as noted earlier with reference to cybernetic theory (8); as “consis[ting] in the analysis of cognitive processes in terms of specific functions that must be performed sequentially in order to proceed from a given (known) input to a given (known) output” (Pachalska, “Microgenetic Revolution” 111); as consisting in “syntactic information-processing models” (Varela “Present Time” 116); as consisting in the belief “that even *computers* could be endowed with conscious experience” (Bitbol, “Consciousness Primary” 62; emphasis in original); as consisting in their role as “shared enemy” to those who focus on 4E cognition (Menary “Introduction” 460). In order to define “the cognitivist hypothesis,” Varela et al. offer a question: “[w]hat exactly does it mean to say that cognition can be defined as computation?” (40). According to the authors, if we take as given that “computation is an operation that is carried out or performed on symbols (on elements that represent what they stand

⁹ The authors conclude a chapter on “the Cartesian anxiety” in this way: [t]he greatest ability of living cognition [...] consists in being able to pose, within broad constraints, the relevant issues that need to be addressed at each moment. These issues and concerns are not pre-given but are *enacted* from a background of action, where what counts as relevant is contextually determined by our common sense (Varela et al. 145; emphasis in original).

for)” then the “key notion,” according to Varela et al. “is that of representation [...]” (40). To employ “the philosopher’s term,” the authors offer “intentionality” as synonym, accepting that what is meant is “*aboutness*” (40; emphasis in original). To begin with, then, representation is “relatively uncontroversial” and the authors suggest that “[w]e [...] cannot explain cognitive behavior unless we assume that an agent acts by representing relevant features of her [or his] situation,” that is to say, “intelligent behavior presupposes the ability to represent the world as being certain ways” (40). When I talk of representation in microgenesis this is what is meant. In microgenesis, according to Bachmann, “*representational microgenesis* [...] stands for formation of an active mental representation of an object, scene, or event, which is the object matter (OM) of cognition” (“Microgenesis of Perception” 13; emphasis in original).¹⁰

To return to Varela et al.: the authors put forward an “alternative orientation” to “computation” cognitivism by offering,

[t]he term *enactive* to emphasize the growing conviction that cognition is not the representation of a pregiven world by a pregiven mind but is rather the enactment of a world and a mind on the basis of a history of the variety of actions that a being in the world performs (9; emphasis in original).

That, then, is the “stuff” of embodied-enactive cognition; perhaps of all 4E models. Indeed, according to Eleanor Rosch, Varela et al.’s “*embodied cognition* [...] has become an active field of research, often hailed by its adherents as the new paradigm for cognitive science. Such research occurs under a loosely knit consortium of headings that include”:

[e]mbodied cognition, enaction, embedded cognition, extended mind, grounded cognition, situated cognition, nonrepresentational cognition, emergent cognition, and anti-Cartesian cognition. The differences in name, to some extent, map differences in theoretical orientation and research methods. Thus you can see that enaction, in its particulars, has now become one part of a more general scientific movement. Interestingly, *The Embodied Mind* is commonly cited as one origin of this entire movement (Introduction xlvii; emphasis in original).

¹⁰ In his “enactivist approach” to “experientiality of narrative,” Marco Caracciolo does not deny “representation.” For instance, he suggests that “tomorrow is Monday” involves a mental representation whose content is “tomorrow is Monday.” He does suggest, however, that “enactivists make a compelling case that basic, bodily experience does not need mental representations” (*Experientiality* 9). He goes on to write that experience is “an interaction with the world guided by the values that permeate the subject’s experiential background,” all the while accepting that “their [enactivists] anti-representationalism cannot be transferred ‘as is’ to conceptually and socio-culturally nuanced forms of experience” (9). At the same time, although “[s]emiotic and mental representation do play a role in readers’ interaction with literary stories,” “they are not the whole picture – for the experience readers get out of this interaction *cannot be reduced* to mental representations” (10; emphasis in original). In other words, stories may well “involve[] mental representations at several levels without being representational through and through” (10): in which case, experience may be defined “as a way of *responding* to the world,” that is, non-representationally. Later, Caracciolo, to bridge “yet another gap,” will engage in a “digging below mental representations” which seems to suggest that, as he has already suggested, there is a passage of exploration which passes, that is, is “below,” “mental representations” (11). I will return to microgeny and “mental objects” in due course.

Rosch clarifies enaction across two phases: in the first phase, “[t]he core idea of enaction is that the living body is a self-organizing system” and, in the second phase, referring to Buddhism, “enaction and the skandhas [a temporal account of how the false sense of self is constructed] are portraits of the confused and ignorant body, mind, and world [...]” (xxxix).¹¹ By her own admission, this second phase “ha[s] gone beyond phenomenology,” that is, into what the authors of *The Embodied Mind* call “groundlessness” (xxxix; emphasis in original, see also 228-234).

Microgenetic theory, read in the terms outlined above, is indeed an embodied process as Schweiger’s term “neurologized” microgenesis suggests, but Brown’s understanding of self and what it represents is distinguishable from embodied enactive models. In microgeny, it is suggested, the self is the “fragment of the self that happens to surface” at any given moment and which, after all, is not something we can rely on. I will come back to the question of “fragment of the self” and surfacing with reference to what is termed “derailment” in just a moment. What I want to suggest now is that the recurring, indeed fluctuating, process of self to external objectivity is central to Woolf’s own method of writing from “some kind of whole” (*Passionate Apprentice* 393), so that the “fragments [which] are unendurable” might thereby be avoided (E3 483); if not, the fragments will be written into her novels and so explained in the “momentary histories” of her characters (PAL 223). I will return to the question of stability and flux in my second chapter, on *To the Lighthouse*. The crux of the chapter addresses Anne Harrington’s identification of “th[e] tension between the imperatives of stable identity and those of transmutation and process” (Foreword v) via Woolf’s own conception of the “transmuting process” (as she terms it) as a matter of psychological and memorial time in which “the actual event was different” (D3 102).

Returning to Brown: he accepts that human selves are, for the most part, relatively stable events (noted earlier as Harrington’s concerns centred on the tension between stability and continually unfolding process). The self, according to Brown, is “a preliminary object [like any other object in formation] [which] embrac[es] all of the objects and images into which it develops [as it] struggles toward understanding” (70). In his latest work of 2019, *Mental States and Conceptual Worlds*, Brown returns to the potential of momentary cognition “as a movement toward individuality [...] and co-dependence” (21). The microgenetic theory which Brown offers calls for,

¹¹ The authors are well aware that to refer to the “Buddhist tradition” is to write “as though it were all one unified tradition” (Varela et al. 219). They note, however, that “the teachings of no-self – the five aggregates, some form of mental factor analysis, and karma and the wheel of conditioned origination – are common to all of the major Buddhist traditions” (219). Varela et al., however, offer “a (systematically constructed) example of the kind of argument that Nagarjuna makes” (221), i.e., in the *Stanzas of the Middle Way* (Mulamadhyamakakarikas) – usually referred to as the Madhyamaka – which describe (amongst other things) the “*Sunyata*”, that is, the tripartite concept of emptiness (220-221).

[a] suspension of analytical thinking and its destination in partition and isolation, and a recognition of the common origin of things, that is, the awareness that all things are renewed out of potentiality, the sense of “connectedness” to nature and to others and the common struggle to re-exist, is the antidote to alienation and apartness (MSCW 124).

Before addressing embedded and extended theories of cognition, I should like to elaborate briefly on a central aspect of microgenesis, the possibility of a disruption in the microgenetic process: here I focus on what is meant by “the transformation of [...] segment[s]” (MSCW 42) and how cognitive transformations may result in the earlier said “derailment of the [microgenetic] process” (Schweiger et al. 335). This possibility – of “numerous ‘possibilities’” (Smith, “Visual Perception” (307) – bears important implications for reading character and event in my upcoming chapters on *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Waves*. We will now look at derailment of process with reference to surface actualisation (that is, to the transformation) of external objects in microgenesis (Schweiger et al. 335).¹² I have already made mention of “phase transitions” in microgenesis which are understood as “conceptual anchors in the continuous flux of change” (Bradford and Brown 198). The unfolding process is, in large part, implied because the phases are unconscious and, according to Brown, “unstable” as well as “dynamic” (198). Brown suggests that all phases are symptomatic of cognition and “[w]hen one phase transitions to the next, it vanishes, having given up what it *was* to what it *becomes*” (198; emphasis in original). We may now indicate as symptomatic the “derailment of the process” (Schweiger et al. 335) – as when, for example, the sparrows sing “piercing in Greek words” from the trees in Regent’s Park (for Septimus Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway* (26)) or when we may find ourselves with “no face” (as Rhoda will in *The Waves* (23, 30, 91, 98)). As microgenetic process, I will argue that Septimus’s and Rhoda’s symptoms are “premature exposure[s] of preliminary levels in the microstructure of cognition that are normally transformed” (Hanlon xvi).

With reference to what we are naming “derailment of the [cognitive] process” (Schweiger et al. 335), Ralph Hoffman suggests that the speech pattern of “normal individuals is often deviant as well” (Hoffman 134). This is an important point which chimes too with Otto Ewert’s application, citing Werner, that “[t]he final procedure of a comparative developmental psychology is ... to derive developmental laws generally applicable to mental life as a whole” (“Microgenesis as a Model” 53; Werner qtd., Ewert’s ellipsis). To that end, Hoffman offers, by way of illumination, this incomprehensible example of “the verbiage of political speechmaking” (from the 1970s): “[i]n temperance due I don’t see any reason why two men can’t proceed as popular as ever both in themselves as a duocratic and as a democratic premise” (Hoffman; Laffal qtd. 134). The public

¹² Derailment is a sort of curtailment of cognitive process through which a full-blown perceptually stable state (to note Bachmann again) may be understood, per Andy Clark, as a “controlled hallucination” (Clark np.).

speaker is not named but Hoffman's point – via V.A. Fromkin – is explain how the latter's study led him “to argue that language deviance produced by schizophrenics is not distinguishable from deviance produced by normal speakers and therefore should not be classified as a [specific] type of neurological aphasia” (Hoffman 134-35).¹³ To repeat what I have just said, “[t]he final procedure [of development in microgenesis] is ... to derive developmental laws generally applicable to mental life as a whole” (Ewert, “Microgenesis as a Model” 53, Werner qtd., Ewert's ellipsis).

The life of the mind in microgenesis may be said to derive from the principle that “[w]hat mind perceives is the substance of what mind is for the moment of that perception” (SP 52). The theory of microgenesis states that “the objective (conscious), externalized world is visualized as growing out of a subjective (subconscious) personal core during the course of [microgenesis]” (Smith, “Stabilization and Automatization” 200). That is to say, the “error” identifies normal cognitive process but it is a process that (for whatever reason) is caught “prematurely erupting to the surface” (35). Following Brown and Schweiger et al., I have named this coming-to-the-fore of earlier stages, “derailment of the process” (Schweiger et al. 335). Microgenetic theory – microgenesis *per se* – “proposes that th[e] [organization of neural] dynamics [underlying cognition] are intrinsically constrained by the phylogenetic and ontogenetic processes in which the microgenetic process is embedded” (35). That the microgenetic process of perception is embedded and derived from phylo-ontogeny brings me to the next two Es of this introduction: extended and embedded cognition.

Embedded-Extended

The “full-blown stabilized state,” as Bachmann names the perceived object in the external world (“Microgenesis as Perception” 12), is not somehow separate, or isolable, from the antecedent phases which have grown out from what I have been calling, after Brown, the “core” self (SP 53, Pachalska and MacQueen 300). As I noted earlier, “the ‘germ’ [that is] the final experience is already embodied [and embedded] in the earlier stages of its development” (16). Microgeny's process is embedded in the antecedent phases which are “founded on [the earlier stages], carrying on their basic contents by refining and supplementing them” (16). Recall again, if you will, how the process of microgenesis suggests that “a single mental state is a temporary and transient state that appears in consciousness and immediately disappears to give way to the next” (Pachalska,

¹³ Hoffman goes on to paraphrase E. Chaika, who responded to Fromkin's paper “by arguing that the speech errors produced by schizophrenics can be distinguished from those of [normal speakers] because the latter are readily decipherable in terms of communicative intent while the former [so-called normal speakers] are not” (Hoffman, “Microgenesis of Schizophrenic Symptoms” 135). See Fromkin, V.A. “A linguist looks at schizophrenic language.” *Brain and Language*, vol. 2, 498-503.

“Integrated Self” 363). Recall too, that the process may be said to emanate from what I have called, after Pachalska and MacQueen, “the anatomically deepest and phylogenetically oldest [i.e., the brain stem] parts of the central nervous system, [to generate] over phases to the outermost and youngest regions of the brain, the gray matter that constitutes the neocortex” (Pachalska and MacQueen 300). A single act of seeing an object in the outer world is, therefore, “a multi-layered actualization, the tip of an iceberg that floats to the surface and then subsides, containing within itself the traces of all that has gone before, in phylogeny, ontogeny, and microgeny” (305).¹⁴

Writing on 4E cognition, Julian Kiverstein argues that “[t]he embedded theory [...] and the family of extended theories of cognition [...] disagree about what it is for a state or process to *count* as cognitive” (19; emphasis in original). I will now refer to the E of “embedded theory,” and to the task of situating microgenetic theory in relation to it. Explaining the embedded theory of cognition, Kiverstein states that:

[t]he strong dependence of some cognitive processes on bodily engagements with the world notwithstanding, EMT [embedded theory] claims that cognitive processes are nevertheless wholly realized by systems and mechanisms located inside the brain. Thus advocates of EMT [embedded theory] continue to interpret the concept of cognition along more or less traditional lines [...]. That is to say, they think of cognitive processes as being constituted by computational, rule-based operations carried out on internal representational structures that carry information about the world (20).

I have already discussed computational cognitivism above with reference to both enactive theory and microgenesis. That is to say (by way of swift recap), the alternative to “locationism” is the “functionalist thesis, which implies that, provided certain organized informational fluxes are in place, experience may arise irrespective of the material basis on which these fluxes are implemented” (Bitbol, “Consciousness Primary” 62). In his critique, Michel Bitbol suggests that “functionalists imply that even *computers* could be endowed with conscious experience, provided they have a certain functional structure, imposed by some appropriate *software* (62; emphasis in original). Pachalska, in like fashion, explains that functional cognitivism

consists in the analysis of cognitive processes in terms of specific functions that must be performed sequentially in order to proceed from a given (known) input to a given (known) output. The brain from the [functionalists] point of view is a biological computer, whose functions and operating principles are best deduced by examining what it does with the information it receives” (“Microgenetic Revolution” 111).

¹⁴ Pachalska and MacQueen reference Paul McLean’s model of the “triune brain” (301) – that is, firstly, “the reptilian” (brainstem and midbrain of the human), secondly, the “paleomammalian” (301) (“organised into structures known as the limbic system and the cerebellum (302)) and, thirdly, “the neomammalian” (301) (“cortex [...] that overlies and surrounds the entire brain (hence the name ‘cortex,’ which in Latin means ‘bark’)”) (304). As previously noted in this introduction, Brown’s neurologised microgeny, centred on the brain’s physical architecture, is a theoretical formulation of a cognitive process which offers an explanation for action and perception in microgeny. The layering of the human brain – the cortex, for example, which “overlies the reptilian and paleomammalian brains” – “can be revealed by dissection, and at the same time is reflected in function” (302).

Therefore, on the one hand, “we can *do* cognitive[] [functionalism] by marginalizing the brain (as a messy biological structure consisting of nerves, glial cells and various other structures) and focussing on intellectual processes as though they took place in a computer and not in a biological organ” (111; emphasis in original). On the other, “we can only *do* locationism by marginalizing the mind and focussing on the brain [...] as a biological unit [...],” as noted above (Pachalska 111; emphasis in original).

According to Bitbol,

[e]ither one thinks that the neuro-psychological correlation is an explanation by itself, or one asserts that science does not retain elementary conscious experience as something which has to be explained. Either the explanation is already there, or the demand for explanation is declined in the name of objective science. This is clearly a disjunction, and one cannot argue on both lines at once (“Science As if” 193).

I noted earlier that to locate the neural correlates of consciousness so that he or she might “assess the presence or absence of conscious awareness,” a neuropsychologist has to rely on “complex and integrated behavior” (“Consciousness Primary” 64). I might as easily refer to Crick’s Carrollian quip that humans are a “pack of neurons” or, for that matter, to Bitbol’s related question: “[s]o, how can we be sure that, when no report can be obtained, there *is no* experience *at all*?” (64; emphasis in original). In other words, how can we locate “the neural correlates of deprivation of consciousness”? (64). As I have noted throughout, Brown’s theory of microgenesis is a subjectivity-based model which would share bread with Bitbol’s assessment that “[c]onscious experience is and must be taken as methodologically primary, including when the research is meant to throw light on its so-called ‘material basis’ [i.e., its neural correlates] is concerned” (68). If we are to “claim [for example] that an area can be a neural correlate of consciousness only if it is connected to the frontal executive cortex,” then their view relies on “the subject’s ability to discriminate, to memorize, and to *report*, which is used as the ultimate experimental criterion” (65; emphasis in original).

Brown’s microgenetic theory was earlier noted to be (according to Schweiger) a “neurologized” account of microgenesis (“Reflections on Perception” 92), that is, Brown claims a transition from what McClean calls the “triune brain” out to surface actuality (Pachalska and MacQueen 300; see also (early work) “Structural Model” (MBC 1977, 10-14, (later work) PAL 2005, 205).¹⁵ But Brown’s model does not set its task as defining the neural correlates of consciousness, suggesting, alternatively, that all parts of the mind-brain cognitive system are growing out to “progressive specification,” that is, from “diffused meaning (e.g., ongoing, functionally related processes,

¹⁵ For “triune brain,” please refer to footnote 25 above.

associated actions, [...] [and] affective material [...] [...] to specific experience of either exteriorized, well-defined objects, and/or a sequence of coordinated output to motor systems resulting in purposeful action” (Schweiger, “Perception and Action” 92).¹⁶ I suggested earlier that the process to (what Bachmann calls) “the ‘germ’ of the final experience is already embodied in the early stages of its development; later stages do not replace the earlier ones but are founder on them [...]” (“Microgenesis of Perception” 16). According to Schweiger, Brown’s theory suggests an unfolding perception through the “neuronal substrates” of the triune brain toward the stabilized external objects of the world (“Reflections on Perception” 92). I have also mentioned that embodied enactive approaches, according to Rosch, view the “living body [a]s a self-organizing system” and this “lived body, lived mind, and lived environment are all thus part of the same process, the process by which one enacts one’s world” (xxxviii-xxxix). This brings me now to “extended cognition.” Kiverstein offers an example of what it means to be an extended agent in the environment.

Kiverstein suggests that we might “[c]onsider, for example, how thoroughly integrated mobile phones have become in those moments in our lives when we are left with our own thoughts” (19). He cites David Chalmers who describes “how he uses his iPhone to daydream, ‘idly calling up words and images when my concentration slips’” (19; Chalmers qtd.).¹⁷ The point of human to tool is to “argue[] that bodily actions and the environment resources that agents act upon can, under certain circumstances, count as constituent parts of a cognitive process” (19).¹⁸ Richard Menary posits an “extended mind” as one in which “mental and cognitive processes and states are integrated [i.e., are coupled with] states and processes found in the environment” (“Dimensions of Mind” 562). I will come to microgenetic theory’s response to extended cognition in a moment, but first I shall note Menary’s immediate concerns. Menary identifies a crucial problem. At

¹⁶ In *Process and the Authentic Life*, Brown suggests that “[a] neuron exists as the momentary envelope of its activity pattern. We have no knowledge of psychic experience associated with a neuron nor, for that matter, with the discharge of innumerable neurons in a normal brain, nor the presumably quiescent neurons in a sleeping brain” (PAL 132). Brown continues, suggesting that “[a] particle *exists* as the epoch of its waveform. A perception *exists* as a transition from inception to termination in a single epoch of brain process. On the completion of its phase-transition, the mind/brain state becomes a physical existent that perishes for the next cycle of actualization” (132; emphasis in original).

¹⁷ We can take note, for example, per Kiverstein, that “extended functionalism [...] is in agreement with the cognitive science orthodoxy that cognitive processes are essentially computational in nature” (20). Another branch of extended cognition might “propose an alternative explanatory framework to that of classical cognitive science drawn from dynamical systems theory and ecological psychology” (20). Extended, then, and yet one extension is opposed to the other.

¹⁸ The extended cognition of hand to tool puts in mind Graham Harman’s term, “tool-being,” which he formulates to refer to Heidegger’s “hammer” and “handiness” analysis, (Harman and Roffe 27). It shares something too of Rosch’s use of “Heidegger’s terminology,” that is, ‘being-in-the-world, in her introduction to *The Embodied Mind* to highlight, “the central image of a mind in the pre-reflective natural state, [that] is[,] of a person actively engaged in the world, a person with interests, cares, concerns, and goals, who is vigorously pursuing those goals using whatever comes before him as a tool” (Introduction xl).

moments of extended “coupling” with (say) Chalmers’s mobile phone, when or how is cognition “caused” and when or how is cognition “constituted”?¹⁹ Referring to Fredrick Adams and Kenneth Aizawa, Menary states that the authors “give no indication of how we are supposed to make the distinction” (“Holy Grail” 607). This is an important point. To clarify the idea of “coupling,” Menary offers a citation from Adams and Aizawa:

[t]ake a burning match to a piece of paper and the combustion process will extend into the paper, but take the same match to a steel wrecking ball and it will not extend into the ball. What will extend and what will not depends on what is coupled (609).

Menary also wonders what is meant or implied by the phrase “extended into the object” and goes on to write that whatever it does mean, “it sounds positively mediaeval” (609).²⁰ One may wonder, then, where or what exactly is this extension and what part does it play in terms of the object itself – the hammer, say? Menary, responds, stating that “I am not committed to the view that cognition is first in the head and then gets extended into tools” (611). Menary cites Mark Rowlands favourably to assert that “[c]ognitive processes are not located exclusively in the skin of cognising organisms because such processes are, in part, made up of physical or bodily *manipulation* of structures in the environments of such organisms” (Rowlands qtd. 610; emphasis in original). The manipulation of things “does not depend upon any kind of causal coupling (in Adams and Aizawa’s sense) and does not make any claims about cognitive processes extending from brains into bodies and tools” (610).

Andy Clark and David Chalmers offer an example of how “the mind extends into the world” (12):

Otto suffers from Alzheimer’s disease, and like many Alzheimer’s patients, he relies on information in the environment to help structure his life. Otto carries a notebook around with

¹⁹ In defining the enactive model of cognition, I noted that Varela et al. “situate cognition as embodied action within the context of evolution” which then “provides a view of cognitive capacities as inextricably linked to histories that are *lived* [...]” (Varela et al. 205; emphasis in original). The cognitive “as inextricably linked” to lived experience suggests that “cognition in its most encompassing sense consists in the enactment or bringing forth of a world by a viable history of structural coupling” (205). The authors offer a logic of coupling which states that “any action undertaken by the system is permitted as long as it does not violate the constraint of having to maintain the integrity of the system and/or its lineage” (205).

²⁰ Marco Bernini, mentioned earlier, and “applying the extended mind theory to the problem of literary intentions” (349), suggests, citing Paul Menary, that “thinking is not expressed but performed as an action, and ‘[t]he manipulations I can perform on external vehicles go beyond what I can perform neurally [...]’” (353). Menary’s conclusion, according to Bernini, is that “writing goes beyond simple storage, *writing is thought in action*” (Menary qtd. 353). That’s true, but so is moving a finger – as Brown notes in his chapter on “Action,” “a very simple concept (‘I will move my finger now!’) appears to require about 3 to 4 mental states” (TWMP 185). Karin Kukkonen, also mentioned earlier, states that “[w]e have a strongly embodied sense of what we perceive with our eyes because we make sense of the information on the retina by relating it to the ‘sensorimotor contingencies’ of interacting with the world” (369; Noë qtd.). This direction (of “standard theory”), according to Bruce MacQueen, and already noted earlier in this thesis, suggests that “[i]nput from the eyes [...] makes its way through the optical chiasmus to the occipital cortex, where the resulting ‘sketch’ is then compared to images stored in the long-term memory” (Foreword x). As we have already noted, “[t]he microgenetic theory of perception challenges this familiar model of perception at its very foundation” (x).

him everywhere he goes. When he learns new information, he writes it down. When he needs some old information, he looks it up. For Otto, his notebook plays the role usually played by a biological memory (12).

The “stuff,” then, we think, is the notebook. The notebook, however, is not supplementing Otto’s memory; it “plays the role usually played by a biological memory” (12). The authors provide a wife for Otto; Inga is perfectly well. There are two points I would like to take up here: firstly, if Otto’s wife, “Inga,” has use of her biological memory, then Clark and Chalmers suggest “that Otto has access to the relevant information [via notebook] only by *perception*, whereas Inga has more direct access – by introspection [...]” (12; emphasis in original). The second point, directly linked by the authors to the first: “we [Clark and Chalmers] are in effect advocating a point of view on which Otto’s internal process and his notebook constitute a single cognitive system” (12). They go on to posit that “[f]rom the standpoint of the system, the flow of information between notebook and brain is not perceptual at all; it does not involve the impact of something outside the system” (16). Brown’s microgenetic theory of cognition would counter point one by stating that,

[t]he surface of mind, the terminus of the mental state, is filled with developing objects, not just the images of private space anticipating those objects but the rich abundance of forms that make up the perceptible world. This world, the surface of mind as the skin is the surface of the body, changes instantly according to what is perceived. I glance at the field before me and that is my mind. I turn and take in the road [possibly located by way of a notebook (or guidebook)] and farmhouse and that is my mind. What mind perceives is the substance of what mind is for the moment of that perception (SP 51-52; square brackets mine).

Moreover, Brown’s theory of microgenesis would counter point two, so intricately linked to the foregoing citation from Brown, by stating that Otto and Inga are both introspecting and perceiving. Brown asserts that “[i]ntrospection (awareness of images) and exteroception (awareness of objects) are different aspects of the same process (SP 62). I am suggesting that Woolf’s writings are compatible with microgenesis because she describes the perceptual instantiation of momentary cognition in terms confluent with antecedent phases to surface actualisation. To offer an example, I will refer to Rhoda in *The Waves* and to a short section on her train journey home from school. As Brown suggests in “Reflections on My Body,” “[m]y body is a picture in my mind,” but that is not to say that one can’t “have an odd relation to the surface of my body” (SP 110). Rhoda’s journey is about colour, at least to begin with, it’s about “this blue sea” as well as about “see[ing] its colour,” such that “June was white,” as are “dresses” and the “tennis courts marked with white” (*Waves* 47). A little later in the paragraph, and some while into the journey, “the grey puddle” is recollected and described as “cadaverous” and she is immediately returned to some time when “holding an envelope in my hand, I carried a message” (47). Her body is described as fixed to the spot, “I could not cross it,” she says of the puddle, and this problem of crossing a border immediately leads back to a short and sharp sentence: “[i]dentity failed me,”

and then another, “[w]e are nothing” (47). Her body, shaken, we imagine, as the train rocks, and the external world, as she perceives, is “the surface of mind” just “as the skin is the surface of the body” and everything “changes instantly according to what is perceived” (SP 52).

Finally, what is the “stuff” of Chalmers’s mobile phone? Well, it’s mostly plastic and I will recall again Pachalska’s description of microgenesis via a writing implement made in the main of plastic. Pachalska, drawing a direct comparison with the evolutionary model of microgenetic theory, argues that “a computer made largely of plastic has no essential bond with the petroleum from which the plastic itself was made, as the petroleum itself no longer bears any practical resemblance to the organisms whose decaying bodies gave it substance” (“Microgenetic Revolution” 114). As I have noted earlier in this introduction, in microgenetic theory,

the underlying, basic process is conceived quite differently [to the plastic of the computer]. The earlier stages are not replaced or effaced by later stages, but remain as a part of the whole, shaping and constraining the growth of the newer elements but remaining essentially separate from them (114).

That is to say, according to Bachmann, (and noted above) “the ‘germ’ of the final experience is already embodied in the early stages of its development; later stages do not replace the earlier ones but are founded on them, carrying on their basic contents by refining and supplementing them” (“Microgenesis of Perception” 16). It is not simply that extended cognition is antithetical to microgenetic theory, but what I am saying here is that process of memory has already commenced; a notebook by way of extension cannot replace the sequence of microgeny as a cognitive process. As Brown and Tomaszewski suggest, “[t]o maintain a memory in consciousness is to revive it recurrently in spite of the dynamic of the self through which it develops, and the novelty of thought into which it distributes” (20). Brown’s point is that “[a]n actualization that does not complete one cycle of being does not achieve existence” (MCP 36). In microgenetic theory, as Brown suggests, “there is no abidance,” before going on to ask, “[h]ow does the last tone of the song [of a nightingale] cause the first tone of its repetition” (38). Brown argues that “[i]n the idea of replication of successive epochs, microgenesis resolves the causal gap from the endpoint of one sequence to the onset of the next” (38).

I argue that Woolf’s fictional narratives are suggestive of a microgenetic process of continuous sculpting from wholeness and from which – and out of which – we may perceive whatever is at the surface level of human consciousness. As Woolf suggests in a letter to Ethel Smyth, “it shoots out of one everything shaped, final, not in mere driblets, as sanity does” (L4 180). Woolf’s writings are attempts to investigate the “oscillations and vibrations” associated with “the loop” of human perception (*Waves* 85, 15) which is, according to Michel Bitbol, “inherently consciousness of

something *and* consciousness of itself *at the same time*” (“Is Consciousness Primary?” 58; emphasis in original). I suggest that Woolf’s fictions, however, set out to bridge the endless dyadic adumbrations of subjects and objects in favour of what she calls “mak[ing] a whole” (E3 482 [“Byron & Mr. Briggs”]), that is, as “making whole” in Lee’s (earlier noted) term (*Virginia* 413). Woolf’s works are examinations of myriad selves wandering in the labyrinth of “this omnipresent, general life” but they are at all times conscious of the human process which aims at wholeness (*Waves* 84). Woolf’s fictions offer the possibility (for example, in *The Waves*) that “[w]e are not single,” which she repeats and adds to in parenthesis, “(we are not single, we are one)” (*Waves* 50) and yet, crucially, nothing “[is] [l]ever the same twice running” (E3 456 [“The Antiquary”]). The human mode of perception is centred on the difficulty that “I am [each one is] made and remade continually. Different people draw different words from me [us]” (*Waves* 100). The problem, then, is the presence of a largely stable self in the midst of a continuously recurring external world. Woolf’s writings are constantly mindful of the inner and outer worlds through which the objective world relies, that is, on the contrast between one’s conception of self and that which surfaces in perception and how Woolf is able to describe this. Woolf’s process is one of shaping the very objects which form and are forming in human perception. The textual formation of self to object formation is sculpted from a pre-existing, albeit diffuse, idea of the objective presence of wholeness that she is striving to represent and to explain. Woolf’s works may well be guided by the perennial question of whether body and mind are one or two distinct substances but she attempts to solve the problem via her insistence on a process of wholeness.

Microgenetic theory is an explanation of the process of cognition which offers a high degree of compatibility with Woolf’s own narrative methods of describing a variety of modes of human and nonhuman representation. Woolf’s writings may be conceived as the descriptions of a microgenetic process through which “sense data influence the content and character of the *endogenous gradual process* which is [conceived as] the source of the mind” (Bachmann, “Account of Consciousness” 3; emphasis in original). At the beginning of this introduction, I suggested that the microgenetic model refers to external conditions as the constraints and modifiers of a process that begins and develops in mind. Brown’s microgenetic theory describes an object in the world as one that is “revealed [in perception] by the elimination of whatever is extraneous or irrelevant,” that is to say, what we humans perceive in the world arises and perishes from the modification of wholes (3).

Critical Context

I stated earlier that the forthcoming chapters of this project (on *The Voyage Out*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *The Waves*) respond to important and relevant debates which are particularly germane to cognitive microgenesis and to Woolf's fictions in particular. As I have mentioned, there are myriad ways of reading Woolf and the thesis itself is an ongoing engagement with existing literary and philosophical scholarship. That said, and in what follows, I should like to refer to a number of scholarly debates which may serve to situate my readings of Woolf's writings by way of the earlier noted interlinking themes of the forthcoming chapters.

A Question of Time

To begin with I should like to provide a brief recap of what we may term the "direction" of cognitive microgenesis (Bradford and Brown 194). The "'inside-out' direction" of microgeny has been described by Brown as "counter-intuitive," and may be regarded as the most difficult aspect of microgeny to grasp (194). If there's a tree in my garden, say, and I perceive it, then I automatically assume that the tree came first – that is to say, there's a "top-down" direction of tree to me. In microgeny, the direction of travel is reversed and so the transition is from me to tree. The "top-down feedback processing" is not, therefore, "a prerequisite for conscious perception" which, in microgenesis, must (at first) "exceed a threshold level for conscious registration of stimuli" (Öğmen and Breitmeyer 4). Without the internal threshold being reached, I am unable to consciously see the tree – along with perception of touch and taste, all audition too would be lost as well as olfaction. Furthermore, according to Edmund Rolls, "[t]he results [of his investigation into neuronal activity in macaque monkeys] show that there is insufficient time for top-down processing from higher cortical areas (such as the inferior temporal visual cortex) to lower order areas [...] to be a requirement for conscious visual perception" (Rolls, "Consciousness Absent and Present" 89).

The tree of my example takes a moment to be seen (by me) but the information (of tree thing) has already occurred: visual perception (of the tree) is an active internal cognitive process. Microgenetic theory, therefore, may be distinguished from the (top-down) passive reception of the externally sighted tree which would call for a "stimulus-dependent synchrony" (in the first place) and (in the second) would argue that this initial input is "a correlate for conscious perception" (Öğmen and Breitmeyer; Rolls paraphrased 4). The "threshold" to cognition that Öğmen and Breitmeyer note should be understood, according to Rolls, as "the number of spikes (or firing rate) of each neuron and not from [the said] stimulus-dependent synchrony" (90). Rolls concludes that "it is unlikely that stimulus-dependent synchrony [...] is an essential aspect of conscious visual

perception in humans” (90). Rolls was measuring “[s]imultaneous recordings from populations of neurons in the macaque inferior temporal visual cortex” (90). In microgenetic theory, the question of time is a recurring pattern which leads to cognitive microgeny, that is, “the genesis of the present moment” (MacQueen, Foreword vii). This brings me to the question of time in microgeny which is the central concern of the forthcoming chapter on *To the Lighthouse*:

Time is, therefore, of the essence in microgenetic theory: the evolutionary model of microgenesis states that,

[t]he idea that phyletic and ontogenetic growth patterns are retraced in microgeny implies that microgenesis may be an expression of a single process extending over different time frames. When the time is millions of years, the process is referred to as phylogenesis. When the period is measured in decades, ontogenesis, and when these processes are collapsed over a second or so, microgenesis (LM 4).

What is important to note is that, as Brown suggests, “[i]n both evolution and microgeny, the formative or developmental stages are obscured, while the final stages – object representations or living organisms – are no longer active in the formative process” (LM 9). As we shall see in due course, the word “obscure” is freighted with much weight as Rachel Vinrace in *The Voyage Out* makes an important point from the vantage point of a mountain top: “[t]owns are very small,’ Rachel remarked, obscuring the whole of Santa Marina and its suburbs with one hand” (*Voyage* 118). As I will show, her (and the others’) range of perspective is at once a matter of microgeny but the process which led to it is, as Brown and Woolf both suggest, obscure. What appears to be an optical illusion (towns smaller than hands) will be linked to cognitive phases in (and derived from) phylogeny and the primitive categories of, say, fear (self-defence mode) and, in some cases, may lead to the instability of self and inactive silence. Time will also be presented in the chapter on *To the Lighthouse* but with an emphasis of the “cyclical process spread out over a lifespan [ontogeny]” to suggest that “the arising, perishing, and re-birth of a cognition occurs in a fraction of a second as an epoch of change that replaces itself” (Bradford and Brown 191). But, first, to humans and fractions of selves.

Only Human

In what follows, I will refer to the relevant critical debates which have focussed not only on Woolf’s famous modernist manifesto of 1925, “Modern Fiction,” but on the apparent schism which may be said to divide along the fault-line of “subjectivist-centred analyses more prominent in Woolf (and modernist) scholarship” and “the various aspects of materialism and immanence” that form “part of a turn to new materialisms in contemporary theory” (Ryan 3). I will refer to a number of representative “new materialist” readings in the final chapter of this work (on *The Waves*)

but I should like to provide a brief account of the term “post-human” so that I might distinguish it from readings in microgenesis.

Derek Ryan’s article in *Virginia Woolf in Context*, “Woolf and Philosophy” assists by offering the following lengthy quotation from Karen Barad’s *Meeting the Universe Halfway* which presents a working definition of posthumanism:

[r]efusing the anthropocentrism of humanism and antihumanism, *posthumanism* marks the practice of accounting for the boundary-making practices by which the “human” and its others are differentially delineated and defined ... it refuses the idea of a natural (or, for that matter, a purely cultural) division between nature and culture, calling for an accounting of how this boundary is actively configured and reconfigured. Posthumanism does not presume that man is the measure of all things ... Posthumanism doesn’t presume the separateness of any-“thing”, let alone the alleged spatial, ontological, and epistemological distinction that sets humans apart (Ryan, footnote 43, 374; Barad qtd. and emphasis; Ryan’s ellipsis).

Ryan suggests that Barad’s “‘posthumanist performative’ approach to realism is one in which ‘agency is not an attribute’ of a being or thing, subject, or object, but is entangled in ‘the ongoing reconfigurations of the world’” (Ryan, “Contemporary Philosophy” 364; Barad qtd.). Barad’s term for the said entanglement is a neologism, “intra-action”, which, according to Ryan, “captures the new terms of debate brought about by [the] quantum philosophy-physics” of Werner Heisenberg and Nils Bohr (364). Woolf’s novel, *The Waves*, then, to cite Ryan’s example,

[r]ather than [emphasising] a reality of individuated subject and objects, a quantum philosophical reading of [the novel] emphasizes a reality consisting in ‘phenomena’, as foundational units which include all features in a given experimental arrangement, with no ontologically pre-determined separation (366-67).

This subtraction of agency, if that is what it amounts to, challenges, if not removes entirely, the element of anthropomorphism from what the human percipient understands to be the external world. According to Ryan, Barad distinguishes Heisenberg (“uncertainty”) and Bohr (“indeterminacy”) along the lines of ontology and epistemology respectively. Heisenberg “uncertainty” is concerned with what we can know or, as Ryan points out, “whilst we cannot know the value of a particle’s momentum due to the disturbance that measurement entails, it is nonetheless ‘assumed to exist independently of measurement’” (365; Barad qtd.). Bohr’s “indeterminacy” is primarily “about the nature of reality, not merely our knowledge of it” (Barad qtd. 365). Citing Barad, Ryan writes that,

[Bohr] understands the reciprocal relation between position and momentum in *semantic* and *ontic* terms, and only derivatively in epistemic terms [...]. Bohr’s indeterminacy principle can be stated as follows: *the values of complementary variables (such as position and momentum) are not simultaneously*

determinate. The issue is not one of unknowability per se; rather, it is a question of what can be said to simultaneously exist (Barad qtd. 365; emphasis in original).²¹

What Brown names as the enduring problem of the dyadic self (as one in flux and yet a largely stable state of being (SP 25)) deepens still if one considers the view (in microgenetic theory) that the self becomes “a multiplicity at the surface” (MSCW 93), that is, when perception actualises in, say, the object, i.e., the example of a tree in my garden. It is at this point (of actualised object), that there is a separation of self to what is perceived with the self left behind. The self remains as a kind of residue to the category of the tree, which is, of course, the potential for further sub-categories – a tree in winter or in leaf, an oak or a willow, a tree with “grey-green creases of the bark” (“Sketch” 84). The tree, in this way, fractionates. The self too is a fractionation of multiple, myriad, possibly infinite configurations: the self before the tree (time and place): the self in its own myriad modes, that is, “a multitude of constituent tissues, a manifold of moods, mental states, aging, sickness and health” (RoM 15). It is here, then, in fractionation, that there may be a “progression from the self to the almost limitless possibilities of thought and imagination [...]” (MSCW 93). I have argued (in this introduction) that, according to Brown, “the self is a unified construct that elaborates, enfolds and binds together a range of potential thought content” (131).

In this thesis, it will be argued that microgenetic theory responds to the problem of correlation between human being and external world, cognition and lived experience, by positing a singular process of mind-brain cognition to object formation at the surface of perception. As I noted earlier, microgenesis is a process of human cognition which refers to “the genesis of the present moment” (MacQueen, Foreword vii) and “to the concept of the mental state as a dynamic traversal – becoming – [...] [which] sweeps from depth (arising) to surface (perishing), [...] from the past to the present, with every traversal depositing a novel occasion” (MN 24-25). This brings me now to the question of cognition as whole-part transition.

²¹ What can be “known” is taken up by early Woolf scholar, S.P. Rosenbaum. He argues in favour of G. E. Moore as a philosophical influence on Woolf’s writings, suggesting that “it is the epistemological dualism, with its distinction of fact from knowing, that becomes a basic philosophical presupposition of Virginia Woolf’s criticism and fiction” (321). On the other hand, Ann Banfield argues in favour of Russell’s philosophy over Moore’s as overarching Woolfian influence. According to Banfield, Russell’s “unperceived perceptions” (39), for example, “[t]hink of a kitchen table then [...] when you’re not there” (*Lighthouse* 28), allows “[t]wo objects” to “be connected in the mental world by the association of ideas, and in the physical world by the law of gravitation,” that is to say, remaining with Russell, “[t]he law of gravitation, for example, is physical law, while the law of association is a psychological law” (Russell qtd. 39). Russell’s analogy is the “solution” to what Andrew Ramsay’s reply to Lily Briscoe states as “[s]ubject and object and the nature of reality” (*Lighthouse* 28). On the other hand, Graham Parkes argues in favour of existential and phenomenological readings of Woolf’s writings. Dan Zahavi points out that Edmund Husserl “describes naturalism as a fundamentally flawed philosophy” and goes on to write that Husserl “argues that it [naturalism] has two different aims: the naturalization of ideality and normativity, and the naturalization of consciousness” (“Naturalized Phenomenology” 2). I return to Parkes and Rosenbaum below.

Making a Whole

In her well-known essay “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown,” Virginia Woolf famously stated that the Edwardian writers “have laid an enormous stress upon the fabric of things. They have given us a house in the hope that we may be able to deduce the human beings who live there” (*Captain's* 112). But “Mr. [Arnold] Bennett has never once looked at [the hypothetical] Mrs. Brown in her corner [of the carriage]” (109). As Woolf points out, “[t]hey have made tools and established conventions [...] [b]ut those tools are not our tools, and that business is not our business” (110). Mrs. Brown is sitting right before them but “[t]hey have looked very powerfully, searchingly, and sympathetically out of the window [...] but never at her, never at life, never at human nature” (110). Referring to “Mr Bennett and Mrs. Brown,” Paul Armstrong suggests that Woolf is aware “that rendering first-person experience in all of its immediacy requires techniques and conventions [...] because ‘the Edwardian tools are the wrong ones for us to use’ and more adequate techniques have yet to be invented” (*Stories* 197; Woolf qtd. [*Captain's* 112]). The Edwardian writers “have given us a house in the hope that we may be able to deduce the humans who live there” (*Captain's* 112) but “we can only hear [...] facts about rents and freeholds and copyholds and fines” (109). Furthermore, Mrs. Brown’s “human nature” is missed – or ignored – because “not one of the Edwardian writers has so much as looked at her” (110). Mrs. Brown is not at all a marginal figure but by looking “out of the window; at factories, at Utopias [...]” (110) the Edwardians miss that “Mrs. Brown is eternal [...]” (110). According to Armstrong, “Modern Fiction” rejects “the ‘tyranny’ of plot and the ‘ill-fitting vestments’ of conventional representation that fails to capture life’s ‘luminous halo’” (196; Woolf qtd. [CRI 149-150]). Armstrong states too that “the issue [of style] is not which of the[] modernists’ distinctive modes of stylistic experimentation gets the ‘luminous halo’ of qualia right” (*Stories* 197). But, surely, there’s something more to it than that. For example, according to Armstrong, to ask whether “‘Time Passes’ in *To the Lighthouse* [is] a more accurate representation of [...] ‘atoms’ as against, say, ‘Oxen of the Sun’ in *Ulysses* [...] is not the right way to frame the problem” (197). In her poem in the “Virginia Woolf Miscellany,” Kristin Czarnecki states (in her second stanza) that “Life is a luminous halo, she says / a many-petalled flower” (Number 96, 30). But what if the “myriad impressions” and “luminous halo” of qualia is not Woolf’s method of composition at all?

Controversially, perhaps, there are a number of Woolf scholars who have argued against the view that Woolf is advocating in favour of “myriad impressions” in her 1925 “classic manifesto” (Armstrong, *Stories* 197), “Modern Fiction.” In addition to the haloes and impressions comes the most cited passage of all:

[l]et us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness. Let us not take it for granted that life exists more fully in what is commonly thought big than in what is commonly thought small (E4 161, CRI 150).

Early Woolf scholar, James Hafley, is one such critic who has concerns, writing in 1954 that the “materialists” (as Woolf terms Arnold Bennett, H. G. Wells and John Galsworthy) “falsif[y] life as it is; their emphases and major concerns are not the emphases and major concerns of lived life; their probability is the possible improbable in reality; their plots distort and oversimplify” (Hafley 36). The famous “let us record the atoms” passage, “which critics without exception have taken to be an exhortation by Virginia Woolf, is actually nothing of the kind” (37). Hafley directs readers to the “very next sentence” (from the aforementioned passage above, ending “what is commonly thought small”) which, according to Hafley, “makes perfectly clear that this passage is a statement, not of Virginia Woolf’s intention, but of what she thought to be Joyce’s” (37). The sentence he is referring to is as follows: “[a]nyone who has read *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* or, what promises to be a far more interesting work, *Ulysses*, now appearing in the *Little Review*, will have hazarded some theory of this nature as to Mr. Joyce’s intention” (Woolf qtd. at 37).

John Mepham is curious too about the “luminous halo” and that which “fall[s] on the mind,” and asks “[i]s the mind a passive receiver, a receptacle for this rain of impressions from elsewhere?” (Mepham 72; Woolf qtd.). Bernard Harrison is “inclined to agree” with Mepham, stating that “the essay [“Modern Fiction”] goes on to formulate a specific dissatisfaction with this way of doing things: it shuts the reader up in the self whose consciousness it represents” (Harrison 210). Jane Goldman also refers to the apparent emphasis on passivity in “Modern Fiction,” stating that:

Woolf’s injunction to “look within” and her description of the mind as a *tabula rasa*, passively receptive to “a myriad impressions,” along with her imagery of luminosity, become perfect fodder for interiorised, *reflective*, impressionistic models of modernist aesthetics where literature becomes the subjective site of an aesthetic haven, removed from the vicissitudes of life [...] (Goldman 69; emphasis in original).²²

In a different context, Pachalska, referring to consciousness, states that “[t]he patient before becoming a patient was not a *tabula rasa*, on which the illness or accident wrote something

²² Mepham, focussing on Woolf’s review essay, “The Tunnel,” suggests that Woolf’s writing method seeks “the hidden depths” in the banal settings of (amongst other places) a dentist’s chair: “[w]e find ourselves in the dentist’s room, in the street, in the lodging-house bedroom frequently and convincingly; but never, or only for a tantalising second, in the reality which underlies these appearances” (Mepham 74; E3, 11-12). The underlying process of perception may only be there for a “tantalising second” but it is most certainly worthy of our attention; in fact, it is “the reality” of our perceiving selves. He has a point, I think: Woolf is reviewing Dorothy Richardson’s fourth novel and she suggests that (in the dentist’s room), “her [that is, the character, Miriam Henderson] senses of touch, sight and hearing are all excessively acute. But sensations, impressions, ideas and emotions glance off her, unrelated and unquestioned, without shedding quite as much light as we had hoped into the hidden depths (E3 11, “The Tunnel”). The surface impressions, as far as Woolf is concerned, are not quite enough; this exploration of submerged levels of cognition to surface level is a primary focus of this study.

interesting, in the form of a deficit that can be counted and added to our collection” (“Microgenetic Revolution” 117; emphasis in original). Goldman argues against the “mind as a *tabula rasa*” and, as a consequence, is unconvinced by a mind “passively receptive” to “myriad impressions,” suggesting that this would cast Woolf’s fiction as little more than a “contraption to collect butterflies or the mind a piece of blotting paper with which to soak in life unadulterated” (Goldman 67; emphasis in original).²³

In *The Metapsychology of the Creative Process*, Jason Brown distinguishes his formulation of processual microgenesis from A. N. Whitehead’s process philosophy, stating that, for Whitehead, “creativity is an inherent property of the coalescence of the many to the one” (MCP 54). Whitehead’s “coalescence” (which Brown cites) and Paul Ricoeur’s (from Frank Kermode’s) “concordant discordance” (which Armstrong cites) take bits (parts) and assembles these into wholes. Armstrong cites Ricoeur’s borrowed Kermodian term to express a “synthesis of the heterogenous” which leads quite naturally to a configuration of “parts into a whole” (“Neuroscience and Social” 5). However, Brown continues his line of investigation by suggesting that for Whitehead,

[t]he many are taken to be objects, events, happenings, not only in an experiential state but also in the widest sense, i.e., as a convergence on an entity in a space-time continuum that creates a synthesis to ground the state that follows. [...] In process philosophy, creativity and many/one syntheses constitute universals that characterize all objects and entities (MCP 54).

In Brown’s formulation of microgenetic theory, “the opposite pattern is the case, namely the partition of the one to the many” (54). Out of “the immensity of events in a single perception [...], a single image” must be sculpted from “the environment (sensibility)” in order “to achieve an outcome that is most adaptive to external conditions” (MCP 56). A determinative and central preoccupation of this thesis, then, is motivated by Brown’s formulation of how the external world is perceived in microgenesis. As such, he suggests that perceptual microgenesis “should be conceived [not as a “synthesis” of “sensory data” but] as an endogenous image sculpted to actuality in conformance with a ‘niche’ in the social and physical environment” (55).

Earlier, I discussed the adaptive nature of microgenetic theory but, per Juris Draguns, “[w]hat is the adaptive significance of microgenesis?” As John Cegalis explains, “a meaningful answer to

²³ Paul Armstrong, citing Antonio Damasio, notes “the ‘as-if body loop’ [...], whereby the brain simulates body states that are not caused by external stimuli, “may indeed be set in motion by [possibly, empathic] participatory experience” (“Neuroscience” 12). “[O]ne might, then, “feel[] oneself into’ the experience of another” (11). Armstrong is investigating the “social powers of narrative” and how “stories configure our brains” (3). This “configuration,” according to Armstrong, is one of “a synthesis of the heterogenous,” that is, a configuring of “parts into wholes by transforming the ‘diversity of events or incidents’ into a coherent story” (5; Ricoeur qtd.).

this question assumes that microgenesis actually occurs in the natural course of human experience, that the phenomenon is not simply an artifact of the methods to study it” (“From Prototheory” 127). It is necessary, therefore, in responding to Draguns’ question, to look at how human beings cope in the wider world, that is, how they adapt to their everyday lives. To that end, in my chapter on *The Waves*, I attempt to articulate what happens when the search activity (from core self to surface object) which in the main should lead to orientation and the overcoming of ambiguities suffers instead a “derailment of process” prior to completion (Schweiger et al 335). The earlier noted notion of “incomplete resolution” suggests a level of attenuation and conflict in the process which begins in diffuse meaning and culminates in discrete objects. That is to say, the direction of microgenesis is governed by an “emergent process from depth to surface” and derailment of the process might reveal “submerged levels, which are normally transformed in cognitive formation” (Hanlon xii). What is perceived in perceptual microgenesis “is determined by the level achieved as the normal process unfolds” (xii). I suggest therefore that Woolf is describing an endogenous model of cognition to external representation or actualisation of surface objects: the multiplicity of events in perceptual microgenesis occurs at surface level of cognition by way of “pars[ing] out unfit forms” to reach what we take to be a satisfactory outcome. I take a closer look at what happens when the process is presented with a “derailment” (in the case of Rhoda in *The Waves*) and surface actualisation is thereby disturbed. We now arrive at what was earlier identified as the division in Woolfian scholarship between subject- and object-centred readings of her work.

Subject/Objects Splits

In her article, “Between Naturalism and Modernism,” Ann Banfield asks, “[w]hy did description of nature and objects [...] assume such a large place in Woolf’s novels, when the novel is thought to focus on character and Woolf seemed to insist on that?” (126). The problem Banfield identifies is the split between mind and world. Following Alexandre Koyré, she suggests that “the Galilean revolution [...] changed the idea of the real world as given to the senses; after Galileo, there is a rupture between the sensible world and the real world, that is, the world of science” (“Time Passes” 476). Banfield takes the opportunity, a few sentences before the last citation, to put forward the view that “Woolf’s aesthetic was dualist,” a model, she goes on to say, that “came from the visual arts, though it has a source in British science” (476). It is true, of course, that Woolf was well acquainted with the duality of perceptual experience (as mind-generated (inside-out) or as object-generated (outside-in). But (as noted earlier with reference to, for example, “The Tunnel”) it may be argued that Woolf’s *modus operandi* engages a process of “wholeness” which seeks to resolve, amongst other things, the “myriad of impressions – trivial, fantastic, evanescent” in favour what

emanates from the “dark region of psychology” (“Modern Novels,” E3 33, 35; “dark places [...],” E4 162)).

To that end, the debates within which I place Woolf are concerned with various aspects of what has been stated to be Woolf’s “emphasis on inner life” as set against her “sharp awareness of material and social realities [...]” (Hintikka 11). For example, Jaakko Hintikka famously asked how it was that “one and the same writer,” by which he means Woolf, “can be declared a subjectivist and idealist, and a realist” (11). In what follows, in the first instance, I will rely on two early articles which exemplify Hintikka’s split: one by S. P. Rosenbaum which argues for G. E. Moore’s influence on Woolf’s writings and one by Graham Parkes, focussing on what he names as, *inter alia*, “existentialist” readings (43).²⁴ I will then provide two recent examples, one centring on Plato and “the dialectical spiral of love and vision” in *To the Lighthouse* (Baker 333), and one on quantum physics and exploration of “the fuzzy boundaries between subjects and objects,” also focussing on *To the Lighthouse* (Tolliver Brown, “Lighthouse” 43). I provide these readings in order to highlight the ways in which Woolf scholars have offered interpretations along the demarcated lines of Hintikka’s early inquiry (idealism and realism) and Derek Ryan’s later division of “human- and subject-centred analyses” and “nonhuman[-] and material[-centred]” scholarship (Ryan 3).

From 1971 to just over ten years later, a questioning of terms and approach to Woolf arises between Rosenbaum, the first scholar to engage Woolf in a dialogue with G. E. Moore, author of “The Philosophical Realism of Virginia Woolf,” and Graham Parkes, author of “Imagining Reality in *To the Lighthouse*.” In 1983, Parkes puts forward the view that “if we look to the novels [Woolf’s novels] themselves, we find that their approach is phenomenological rather than analytical, and existential rather than epistemological” (Parkes 43). As we shall see, Parkes is keen to emphasise that Woolf’s works are better suited to readings from within “the traditions of existentialism and phenomenology” (43). I will return to Parkes’s view in just a moment but, first, it is worth noting that, according to Ian Watt, “the term realism in philosophy is most strictly applied to a view of reality opposed to that of common usage” (Watt 67). Watt suggests that “[m]odern epistemological realism [...] holds the view that the external world is real, and that our senses give us a true report of it” (67-68). We might bear in mind too that “the problem of knowledge” (Banfield, *Phantom* 38) – for (amongst others) Leslie Stephen, Russell, A. N. Whitehead and Moore – is, as Stephen puts

²⁴ Hintikka notes along the way that “sense data [a]re for [Bertrand] Russell and [G. E.] Moore objectively existing entities,” they are “the *objects* of our immediate perception, not a part of the act of perception” (Hintikka 11; emphasis in original). Sense data might eventually be distinguished from physical objects (via epistemological argumentation) but, as Hintikka writes, “[t]hey were real enough for us to ask about them” (11)

it, “the antithesis between subject and object” from which flows the question: “[h]ow are we to conceive of any reciprocal action between the two or of one upon the other?” (Stephen qtd. in Banfield, *Phantom* 38). Citing “Moore’s ‘religion’ as set forth in *Principia Ethica*,” Rosenbaum writes that it consisted “of ‘timeless, passionate states of contemplation and communion,’ the greatest of which were [...] ‘certain states of consciousness, which may be roughly described as the pleasures of human intercourse and the enjoyment of beautiful objects’” (“Philosophical Realism” 317). Banfield suggests that, for Moore, the term “realism” corresponds to that of a “common sense” view of the world whereas, for Bertrand Russell, the term refers “to the claims of science, especially physics” (*Phantom* 43). According to Banfield, Russell “hold[s] that ‘common sense leaves us completely in the dark as to the true and intrinsic nature of physical objects’” (43; Russell qtd.). Moore, according to Warnock and cited by Banfield, “found the view we all hold, the ‘Common Sense view of the world,’ to be perfectly unsurprising, undistressing, quite certainly true” (Warnock qtd. 43). An “[o]rthodox opinion,” according to Banfield, might suggest (as would Rosenbaum) “that ‘psychological reality’ is primary for Woolf” (60).²⁵ However, Parkes begs to differ.

Unlike Moore and Russell – authors Woolf knew personally as well as being familiar with their work – “there appears to have been no influence operating between Woolf and the existential thinkers,” asserts Parkes. However, remaining with Parkes, “the surprising congruence of many of their ideas suggests that they may be approaching from different disciplines and directions some of the same truths about human existence” (43). Parkes concludes his essay with an emphatic rejection of – that is to say, “a railing against” (35) – what Rosenbaum has called “[t]he significance of Moore’s realism for Virginia Woolf’s critical theory” (“Philosophical Realism” 321):

I suggest, therefore, that the attempt to articulate Virginia Woolf’s philosophy had best look for support to the Continental European traditions of existentialism and phenomenology (especially to such thinkers as Nietzsche and Heidegger), and secondarily – with regard to the psychological import of the novels – to the depth psychologies of Freud and Jung (Parkes 43).

As noted above, Parkes is keen to deny the influence of Moore in Woolf’s writings and, in fact, he takes an equally dim view of Hintikka’s claim that Russell’s writings have a “quasi-osmotic rather than direct influence” on Woolf’s fictions (Parkes 34; Hintikka qtd. [13]). Before going on to accept

²⁵ Rosenbaum suggests (in “Philosophical Realism”) that Moore’s conclusion is as follows: “if a color and the perception of a color were identical, then the statement that a color was being perceived would be the same as the statement saying that a color is a color” (“Philosophical Realism” 321). This is a stimulus-driven attitude to consciousness such that, for Moore, according to Rosenbaum, “we must distinguish between consciousness and the objects of consciousness that exist independently of it [...]” (321). Moore’s is a position, therefore, of “modern – as opposed to medieval – philosophical realism” (321). Rosenbaum writes that Moore accepts the “nonmaterial reality of consciousness” (and so he is not a materialist) but he “asserts the separate reality of material objects” (and is not an idealist) (321). According to Ian Watt, “Scholastic philosophy is realist because it holds that it is universals, classes, or abstractions, and not the direct and concrete objects of sense perception, which are the true ‘realities’” (Watt 67). That is to say, (as noted above) it is “diametrically opposed to that of common usage” (67).

that there is room for “participation in phenomena,” Rosenbaum asserts that “[Parkes] concerns himself with the putative influences of German philosophers for whom there is no evidence at all [in Woolf’s works]” (“Railing Against” 90). In other words, there is evidence that Woolf read Moore and Russell but there is nothing that could suggest Woolf knew, for example, Edmund Husserl or, indeed, Heidegger. As noted above, Parkes fully accepts this, but that is not Parkes’s point. Rosenbaum states that “the indications of Moore’s significance for Virginia Woolf ought to convince any disinterested reader” (Rosenbaum 90). Parkes wholeheartedly disagrees and he is not alone. According to Emma Simone, there are certainly (at least) two other Woolf scholars, Mark Hussey and James Hafley, who think otherwise. Mark Hussey states that the “Moorean universe, endorsed by such as Russell and Keynes, is continually questioned by the novels [i.e., of Woolf]” (Hussey 99). Hafley not only takes exception to Woolf’s apparent exhortation of recording atoms (as I noted above) (Hafley 37), but asserts, in addition to this, that “[a]lthough a superficial consideration of Moore’s doctrine [...] does suggest Virginia Woolf’s “moments of being,” the smallest amount of reflection makes evident a complete lack of correspondence between the two” (Hafley 4-5). A more up to date challenge arrives with Simone’s own Heidegger inflected Woolf study of 2017. In addition to Hafley and Hussey, Simone mentions Christy Burns who argues that the “thick connections [to Russell and Moore, for example], [...] ‘refutes the accepted construct of Virginia Woolf’s aesthetic as one marked by rebellion against rationality and logic’” (Simone 14; Burns qtd.). Simone states that her own phenomenological approach “runs contrary” to the “analytic philosophy of Russell or Moore” (15).²⁶ Simone’s work situates Heidegger’s seminal text, *Being and Time*, alongside Woolf’s “understanding and representation of the connection between self and world” as one centred on “an existential-phenomenological analysis of the connection between human beings and the world from the point of view of lived experience and average everyday involvements within particular physical, societal and historical contexts” (Simone 1).

²⁶ Examining philosophical structures (Germans among them) in the works of Woolf have included, amongst others: Hafley, 1954 (in the context of Bergson); Fleishman, 1969 (in the context of McTaggart and “the denial of matter and affirmation of selves,” n. 7 at 726); already noted, Rosenbaum, 1971 (G.E. Moore and realism); Hintikka, 1979 (on “fictionalized epistemology”: Russell, Moore and Whitehead (6)); already noted, Parkes, 1982 (on “world soul” (36)); Hussey, 1986 (in the context of transcendence and philosophy); Minnow-Pinkney, 1987 (in the context of Kristeva); Suzette Henke, 1989 (in the context of Heidegger); Porritt, 1992 (in the context of Derrida); Kramp, 1998 (in the context of Deleuze); Banfield, 2000 (in the context of Fry and Russell); B. Brown, 2000 (in the context of “thing theory”); Colebrook, 2000 (in the context of Deleuze and feminist theory); Monson, 2004 (in the context of Levinas); McIntire, 2005 (in the context of Bakhtin); Chen and Hsiung, 2007 (in the context of Derrida); Rupp, 2010 (in the context of Nietzsche); Caracciolo, 2010 (in the context of Woolf’s dual aesthetics: first aesthetics, “crystallization” and permanence, second aesthetics, that is, “the virtuality of art points to its ability not to achieve permanence [...] but to expand and attach meaning to our daily experience” (“Two Aesthetics” 252, 253)); Stevanato, 2012 (in relation to spatiality); Ryan, 2013 (in the context of Deleuze and materialism); van der Tuin, 2017, (in the context of Deleuze and “refractive readings”); Simone, 2017 (in the context of Heidegger and “Being-in-the-world” (9)); Stasi, 2019 (in the context of “anthropomorphic imagination”). Please refer to works cited section.

As we shall see throughout the present work, my intervention is a microgenesis-centred analysis which provides “a blend of idealism and naturalism that attempts to resolve” the problem of “naïve realism or direct perception of scientific thought” (PAL 36).²⁷ I argue that Woolf’s textual representations are descriptive of “moments of being” (“Sketch” 83) as the recurrent form of the past into the present cortical “now” (Pachalska and MacQueen 305); it is via Woolf’s conception of her conception of “invisible presences” (“Sketch” 92) that we might be “strong eno’ to lift the entire load” and get at “the exposed moments” at surface level (D5 63). Woolf’s fictions – based here on *The Voyage Out*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *The Waves*, but not confined to those novels – provide descriptions (the data, as it were) which may be re-interpreted in the light of microgenesis. I will return to this in due course.

More recently, the Hintikka split may be exemplified by Robert Baker who suggests that Plato’s dialogues examine “the relationship between [transcendent] Forms and the soul seeking wisdom and virtue is essential to Socrates’s account of philosophy [as presented in Plato’s *Phaedo*]” (“Plato and Virginia Woolf” 317). Baker suggests that “wholeness” is a key factor in *To the Lighthouse*, stating that “from the past to the present, from the present to the past, is a way of inhabiting time that Woolf evokes in the novel as a whole” (331). What Baker sees as “com[ing] from the dialectical spiral of a noble life and a clear vision of what matters” (in Plato) is presented as “[...] com[ing] from the dialectical spiral of love and vision: a gathering care and a creative seeing into the depth and distance of lives in time” (in Woolf) (333). Alternatively, Paul Tolliver Brown suggests that Woolf’s “[...] ideas of fluid subject-object boundaries offer a holistic conception of the world that proves far more compatible with the [...] assertions made by quantum physicists [...] in the early 1900s” (39). Examining relativity, quantum physics and consciousness in *To the Lighthouse*, Tolliver Brown writes that “[i]n the world of quantum physics, the thought problem of the realist-idealist debate has to be reformulated” (“Lighthouse” 42). He states that common sense “objective reality” of the kind where “[Samuel Johnson, a realist, respond[s] [to Berkeley’s idealism] [by] kick[ing] a stone” (41) “must now be understood as a more quasi-creative phenomenon” (42).

In the subatomic realm, as Tolliver Brown notes, “[e]ither the location *or* the momentum of an ‘object’ can be discovered at one time, but never at the same time” (42; emphasis in original). Jason Brown states that “Dr. Johnson’s fatuous refutation of Berkeley by kicking a stone shows

²⁷ In neurophenomenology, for example, the naturalisation of phenomenology calls for a physical basis for consciousness. Dan Zahavi defines naturalism typically along methodological and metaphysical lines: “The methodological commitment amounts to the idea that the right criteria for justification are those found in and employed by the natural sciences. The metaphysical commitment amounts to the monistic view that there is only one kind of thing, namely things with natural properties, so that everything existing is natural” (“Naturalizing Phenomenology” 2).

just how inadequate common sense is to these issues” (MN 109). Tolliver Brown’s illuminating article discusses “Woolf’s exploration of the fuzzy boundaries between subjects and objects” and how they “coincide[] with the quantum physical understanding of a holistic universe” (as noted) (“Lighthouse” 43). Tolliver Brown offers Lily Briscoe’s abstract tree (which she is attempting to represent) and her “obsession with moving a tree to the middle of her painting” (43). Later, Lily observes Mrs. Ramsay as “[she] grew still like a tree which has been tossing and quivering and now, when the breeze falls, settles, leaf by leaf, into quiet” (43; Woolf qtd.). The trees and “the quality of arborescence,” according to Tolliver Brown, are “objects that exemplify the interconnectedness of people and places [...]” (“Lighthouse” 43). Brown’s abiding metaphor of the “microgenetic tree” (PAL 114) is one of “recurrent generation of form” where “the root is the ‘core self’, the branch is the ‘concept’, and the leaf is the ‘object’” (Bradford and Brown 183).²⁸ A microgenetic reading of Lily’s growing “still” would suggest that her cognitive flow is continuous, that is, still growing, as well as categorical, a growing from what is “still” the tree from which she paints: the tree is recurrent form and at the same time a “quiet” category from which Lily paints.

Woolf’s writings are attempts to investigate the “oscillations and vibrations” associated with “the loop” of human perception (*Waves* 85, 15) which is, according to Michel Bitbol, “inherently consciousness of something *and* consciousness of itself *at the same time*” (“Is Consciousness Primary?” 58; emphasis in original). I suggest that Woolf’s fictions, however, set out to bridge the endless dyadic adumbrations of subjects and objects in favour of what she calls “mak[ing] a whole” (E3 482 [“Byron & Mr. Briggs”]). Woolf’s works are examinations of myriad selves wandering in the labyrinth of “this omnipresent, general life” but they are at all times conscious of the human process which aims at wholeness (*Waves* 84). Woolf’s writings are constantly mindful of the inner and outer worlds through which the objective world relies, that is, on the contrast between one’s conception of self and that which surfaces in perception and how Woolf is able to describe this. Woolf’s process is one of shaping the very objects which form and are forming in human perception. The textual formation of self to object formation is sculpted from a pre-existing, albeit diffuse, idea of the objective presence of wholeness that she is striving to represent. Woolf’s works

²⁸ Examining scientific structures in the works of Woolf have included, amongst others: Trombley, 1981 (in the context of Woolf’s doctors); Rose, 1983 (in the context of natural science); Glogowski et al (in the context of psychoanalytic criticism); Lambert, 1991 (in the context of Darwin and evolutionary discourse); Johnson, 1994 (in the context of second wave psychology); Bennett Smith, 1995 (in the context of psychoanalysis); Beer, 2000 (in the context of “waves” and “atoms”); Brown, 2000 (in the context of the neuroscientific body); Herbert, 2001 (in the context of Einstein’s relativity); Henry, 2004 (in the context of astronomy); Morris, 2006 (in the context of biocultural criticism); Zunshine, 2006 (in the context of cognitive science), Tolliver Brown, 2009 & 2015 (in the context of quantum physics); Priest, 2009 (in the context of neuroscience and mysticism); Kime Scott, 2012 (in the context of nature); Herman, 2013 “in the context of zoo-narratology”; Blair, 2017 (in the context of literary Darwinism). Please refer to Works Cited for details.

may well be guided by the perennial question of whether body and mind are one or two distinct substances but she attempts to solve the problem via her insistence on a process of wholeness. I will suggest that Woolf's mode of reading and of fiction writing engages a microgenetic process of continuous sculpting from wholeness and from which – and out of which – we may perceive whatever it is at the surface level of human consciousness. I argue throughout the thesis that object-formation is interpretable; microgenetic theory is, moreover (and as noted), a descriptive tool, the process of which, from core self to neo-cortex, is an outward journey of “the overlapping individual phases” (Pachalska, “Integrated Self” 366). To reiterate what I discussed earlier, the process enables me to track microgenetic theory alongside Woolf's own narrative techniques as well as how she has written characters which are so amenable to the earlier said “exploratory search activity” which Bachmann describes in his chapter, “Microgenesis of Perception,” in *The First Half Second* (16). I attempt to show that Woolf's descriptions of perceptual microgenesis in her fictions, essays, and diaries may be deemed to act as explorations of Brown's formulation of a microgenetic model of cognition.

Conclusion

Microgenetic theory argues in favour of consciousness derived from core self to surface actualisation. Not seeking neural correlates of consciousness, it nevertheless recognises that neurons exist as “the momentary envelope of its activity pattern” (PAL 132). Consciousness is embodied in microgenetic theory but it recognises representing figuration at surface level of actualisation. To situate microgenesis now in relation to the ‘4Es’, I would first note that enactive cognitive theory shifts the emphasis away from the subjective and objective standpoint in favour of a biological embodiment of lived experience. In microgenesis, however, objects are said to be growing out into the world and are formed by pieces of personal memory, building up and populating an external image of reality. The self embraces all other objects. However, “[t]he understanding is not to be found in the object but in the process of becoming through which the object appears” (TWMP 8). Embodied enactive theory moves away from the world as independent and extrinsic to a world that is inseparable from cognitive systems of “self-modification” (Varela et al. 139). These systems do not represent a world, they enact a world as a “domain of distinctions” (140). The self in microgeny, though, is a preliminary object which embraces all other objects and images as it develops and struggles toward understanding. Microgenetic selves are not instigators of acts and images but anticipators of such things. The attempt to know oneself is a reflection of the process in which meaning precedes object-formation. Surface representation contains all antecedent phases and is an active process of consciousness. Varela et al. suggest that “constraints

of survival and reproduction are far too weak to provide an account of how structures develop and change” (194).

In microgenetic theory all sustained specification of object-formation begins and is guided by the internal constraints of habit, value, belief and only then by the external constraints of sensation on the distal segments. Brown names this process, the “travelling wave” to individuation; an outward developing journey from an archaic core self to object consciousness (Brown and Tomaszewski, note 13, 15). Object-formation develops from wholeness and simplicity to complexity and diversity. To notice a static object in a park is to perceive an instant of psychological time which traverses the entire life history of the perceiver; I shall demonstrate that there are ways in which Woolf’s writing seems to know this. The progression is from a subjectivity (without object other than itself) to subject (with object) and then a self (with inner objects) to recurrent individuation of subjectivity. Finally, there are no memory-stores in microgeny: “thought is productive memory, while memory is reproductive thought” (MN 49). I argue that Woolf’s process of writing human perception is congruent with Brown’s formulation of microgenetic theory which, as he asserts is conceived as a “processual account in which the mind/brain is more like a living organism” (RoM xi). I attempt to show that microgenetic theory offers an “emergent [cognitive] process from depth to surface” (Hanlon xii) which demands serious consideration in dialogue with Woolf’s fictional output. I hope to provide new readings in microgenesis as “an exploratory search activity” (Bachmann, “Microgenesis of Perception” 16) which sheds new light on Woolf’s own cognitively inflected narrative writings.

Four Chapters

As I have already briefly mentioned above, the first chapter discusses archaic time (“phylo”-) and the time of one’s life (“onto”-) as recapitulated in cognitive “micro-genesis” (Levick, “Review” 101). In *The Voyage Out*, I focus on a segment of cognition, the early, dreamlike limbic phase, in order to put forward the view that the transition to microgenesis is a traversal across overlapping phases from “core self” to actualised object at surface level. As I have already noted, Brown argues that this transition “point[s] to the subjectivity buried in the final object” perceived (MTPT 23). *The Voyage Out* paves the way for the second chapter on *Mrs Dalloway* which I read alongside Brown’s formulation of “conceptual-feeling.” I provide a reading of feeling from the perspective of how the fusion of affect and idea impacts one’s own process of “self-completion” (Bradford and Brown 193). Chapter three investigates Woolf’s term, “transmuting process” (D3 102), which I read alongside Anne Harrington’s identification of the tension in microgenesis between the “imperatives” of stability of self and those of “transmutation and process” (Foreword v). I link

this process of change (transmutation) to the memorial and momentary histories in *To the Lighthouse*. The “transformation of early processing stages into subsequent stages” is emphasised in the final chapter on *The Waves*. The premise of the chapter on *The Waves* is this: to what extent can we suggest that Rhoda’s perceptual microgenesis transforms in a different way to Bernard’s?

Up to now, I have suggested that Brown’s microgenetic theory offers an “account of self and other as tributaries of feeling” (PAL 36) with “[t]he transition from self to object [understood] [a]s continuous [process]” (Pachalska et al. 2015, 210). I have indicated too, moreover, that Brown’s microgenetic theory of consciousness invites a positive intervention into Woolf’s own mode of theorising her fictions and which may be encapsulated in her formulation of the self as a microgeny through which “I am [we are] made and remade continually” (*Waves* 100). To recap: the microgenetic viewpoint suggests that all mental states pass through the physical brain, from “a ‘core’ in the anatomically deepest and phylogenetically oldest parts of the nervous system, over phases to the outermost and youngest regions of the brain, the gray matter that constitutes the neocortex” (Pachalska and MacQueen 2009, 300). According to Brown,

[t]he history of an individual is revived in each becoming, as process goes from private (inner) space to public (outer) space, from the intra- to the extra-psychic and from archaic to recent in evolutionary growth and cognitive process (MSCW 121).

As a microgenetic process to cognition and object actualisation, it is “[t]he archaic [that] gives the recent its force” (Pachalska et al. 2015, 214). According to Brown, “[t]he floor of the mental state in drive and experiential memory is rooted in ancestral levels beneath conscious remembrance” (MSCW 121). In Brown’s formulation, the unfolding mental state is a microgenetic process which “begins with unconscious presupposition, passes through [...] dream-like cognition, including primitive thought or animism, to actualize in rational thinking” (Brown and Tomaszewski 7).

Chapter ONE: *The Voyage Out*

In my first chapter, I argue that Woolf’s *The Voyage Out* encapsulates the unfolding of cognition as a transition of phylo-onto-micro-genesis to surface actualisation. I attempt, therefore, to draw out the resonating microgenies which are progressed through *The Voyage Out* as a series of narrated (and continually interrupted) journeys which follow the *Euphrosyne*’s outward sea voyage. The three journeys comprise the following: a mountain climb on Monte Rosa, a lovers walk into dense jungle, and the final death throes of a young person in a room in a distant country. I will suggest that Woolf’s novel is an attempt to trace not only the process of phylo-ontogeny of human beings but to posit the “all eye” (*Captain*’s, “Sickert” 189) as an “instantaneous evolution” in microgenesis (LM 5). This chapter is broken down into three sections, the first, “Microscopic Lives,” discusses

the smallness of “tame lives” (*Voyage* 124) in the presence of the magnitude of distance and perspective (on the mountain). From the instability of such perspective, I suggest that the scales of phylogeny (the process of species development) and ontogeny (the process of individual development) are inseparable from a third: the microgenetic scale, that is, “the genesis of the present moment” (MSCW vii). Sections two and three, “Limbic Engagements” and “Final Voyage Out,” allow me to trace the mind-brain state as a process derived from the “hidden depths” (“The Tunnel” E3 11) (the submerged levels of cognition) to outward surface actuality. In order to locate the said submerged levels of cognition, I will rely on the limbic level of cognition. This stage of cognition describes “the dream self” as a preliminary stage on the way to the “operative self” at surface level of cognition (MacQueen, “Identity, Autobiography” 215). I seek to investigate not only “the micro-structure of interaction” underlying any act of cognition but the micro-fluctuations at the surface of any given actualisation which are themselves recurring revivals on the way to decay and (possibly) further revivals (MSCW 5).

Chapter TWO: *Mrs. Dalloway*

In my chapter on *Mrs. Dalloway*, two lines of investigation are followed: firstly, from the standpoint of Clarissa Dalloway’s cognitive process, I explore the part played by Septimus Warren Smith, the said “young man” of the novel (*Dalloway* 201), who, according to Woolf, “was invented to complete the character of Mrs Dalloway” (L5 36). Following Brown’s definition, I argue that the element of “self-completion” is a recurring process through which our emotional response to objects and others in the external world may be said to mirror or to supplement our needs (LoE 109). Secondly, I will then track Clarissa’s cognitive microgeny as a “process of feeling” from the primitive category of “flight [and] defence” (LoE 34) to the “ascending limb” of “fight [...] as the forward motion in the arising of the state [...]” (33). In the first instance, I present Brown’s microgenetic theory as the context which frames my intervention into “feeling” as it is presented in *Mrs. Dalloway*. I will centre the discussion on Brown’s view that feeling and thought, that is, “the relation of affect to idea,” are not isolable phenomena (PAL 103). Brown asserts that feeling and idea are not independent but should be thought of as “fused from the start” – he refers to this process as “conceptual-feeling” (Bradford and Brown 193).

Chapter THREE: *To the Lighthouse*

The question of stable identity through time is a central theme in the novel, suggesting as Hermione Lee points out, citing Woolf, that “we have to possess ourselves [of] the whole” (*Virginia* 413; Woolf qtd.), but such wholeness is compounded by the shift from one moment to the next and to Woolf’s question in 1926, “what is the transmuting process?” (D3 102). This is a

process – and a tension – not only central to *To the Lighthouse* but to microgenetic theory as a whole. Woolf's question of time and place as one developed in memory and the possibility of its revival is identified by Ann Harrington's statement sixty-five years later which suggests that "the microgenetic enterprise has been all about mediating this tension between the imperatives of stable identity and those of transmutation and process" (Harrington, Foreword v). Both authors, Woolf and Harrington, identify the particular problem of how human perception is a process of micro-temporal magnitude. On the one hand, Harrington identifies the "tension" – noted above – between stability and transmutation and microgenetic process and, on the other hand, Woolf's writing of cognitive process is not only a problem for "[a]rt & [t]hought" but a questioning of "the transmuting process" across time, indeed, times (D3 102).

Chapter FOUR: *The Waves*

The cognitive formation of mind as the shaper of the external world is, I argue, central to Woolf's process of composition in *The Waves*. By centring the chapter on Brown's elaboration of how objects unfold as stabilising wholes in perceptual microgenesis, I will focus, in particular, on how Bernard and Rhoda come to exemplify differing responses to object formation in *The Waves*. In the first section, "Bernard's Opposite," I centre the discussion on a cognitive microgenesis which produces a philosophically more encouraging impact on Bernard's view of the world. Bernard, prone to "becom[ing] featureless" (*Waves* 172), manages, nonetheless, to revive his "identity" sufficiently long enough to "become robust" (201). His "oscillations and vibrations" lead him not into despair but to an "aware[ness] of our ephemeral passage" (85). By focussing in the main on the character of Rhoda in section two, "Rhoda's Dynamic Instability," I will explore Rhoda's cognitive process of object formation, the effects of which impact upon how she sculpts external objects to devastating effect, leaving her with "no end in view" (*Waves* 97). I argue that Rhoda's unfolding mental process throughout the novel might be better understood as the "symptoms of an incomplete resolution of the dialectic of self and other, in other words, signs of moral distress" (PAL 236). I will explain Brown's conception of "incomplete resolution" and how this term relates to Brown's metaphor of "sculpting" (236). I begin my investigation into object formation and microgeny in this chapter by providing a summation of *The Waves* as text and as the novel which was so central to Woolf's own thoughts on fiction – "I want to trace my own process" (D3 113) – and her own method for writing – "The Waves is my first work in my own style" (D4 53).

CHAPTER ONE

“As the rocks hide fossils, so we hide tigers”: Phylo-ontogeny as “Momentary History” in *The Voyage Out*.²⁹

In her late essay of 1934, “Walter Sickert,” Woolf underscores perception as a significant element in evolutionary theory by presenting it at a dinner party and then having the diners discuss “how different people see colour differently” (*Captain’s*, “Sickert” 189). One of the diners suggests that it is the course of time which “leads to atrophy of the [human] eye” and this aeonic dimming of human perception is compared to “those insects, said still to be found in the primeval forests of South America, in whom the eye is so developed that they are all eye” (188). The body, then, is a utilitarian business which once served “merely to connect the two great chambers of vision” (188). The question, which is of central interest and concern in *The Voyage Out*, is stated in these terms in “Walter Sickert”:

[w]ere we once insects like that, too, one of the diners asked; all eye? Do we still preserve the capacity for drinking, eating, indeed becoming colour furled up in us, waiting proper conditions to develop? For as the rocks hide fossils, so we hide tigers, baboons, and perhaps insects, under our coats and hats (189).

Another of Woolf’s diners points out that it is “ages ago [since] we left the forest and went into the world, and the eye shrivelled and the heart grew, and the liver and the intestines and the tongue and the hands and the feet” (190). According to Woolf’s essay, the passage of phylogenesis (“many ages now”) has resulted in the loss of “the microscopic eye” in ontogenesis (190). If the “microscopic eye” is presently lacking, the emphasis must fall on what and how we perceive – or no longer perceive fully – via our microgenesis in cognition.

In what follows, I should like to draw out the recurring microgenies which are progressed through *The Voyage Out* as a series of narrated (and continually interrupted) journeys which follow the *Euphrosyne*’s outward sea voyage: a mountain climb on Monte Rosa, a walk into dense jungle, and the final death throes of a young person in a room in a distant country. I suggest that Woolf’s novel attempts to trace not only the process of phylo-ontogeny of human beings but to posit the “all eye” (189) as an “instantaneous evolution” in microgenesis (LM 5). I argue that the “voyage[s] out” (*Voyage* 159) are intricately linked throughout the novel to Rachel Vinrace’s own process of

²⁹ “Walter Sickert” (*Captain’s* 189), “Walter Sickert: A Conversation” (E6 37). For the most part, in this chapter, I will draw on the essay in Woolf’s essays collected in the (Leonard Woolf edited) text: *The Captain’s Deathbed and Other Essays* which were published in 1950. There is another version of the essay included in the sixth volume of her (Stuart Clarke edited) essays which adds “A Conversation” to the title. I will follow MLA (8 edn.) by stating (*Captain’s* [plus essay title plus page number]) as required. If I draw on the Clarke edited essay, I will follow the abbreviated form (E6 [plus page number]).

perceptual unfolding and personal development and, ultimately, to the finality of death as proximate to “a long pathway upon the surface of the waves” (334). In the first section, “Microscopic Lives,” I will suggest that the scales of phylogeny (the process of species development) and ontogeny (the process of individual development) are inseparable from a third: the microgenetic scale, that is, “the genesis of the present moment” (MSCW vii). In sections two and three, “Limbic Engagements” and “Final Voyage Out,” I attempt to trace this process from the “hidden depths” of cognitive process outward to surface actuality by providing an account of the limbic system as indicative of a microgenetic process of cognition (“The Tunnel” E3 11). I seek to investigate not only “the micro-structure of interaction” underlying any act of cognition but the micro-fluctuations at the surface of any given actualisation which are themselves recurring revivals on the way to decay and (possibly) further revivals (MSCW 5).³⁰

In an article which bears on the premise of Woolf’s “Walter Sickert,” Jonathan Kramnick writes that “[w]ere the claims of literary Darwinism true, we might be at the threshold of what one of its [unnamed] advocates calls a ‘new humanities,’ in which the natural sciences and literary humanities would speak directly to each other” (“Against” 316). That premise, as stated above, interrogates the “los[s] [of] the ‘microscopic eye,’” all the while questioning what might be “furled up in us” and which may yet unfurl again given, indeed “waiting” for, “[the] proper conditions to develop” (*Captain’s*, “Sickert” 189). As Woolf’s analogy provides, just “as the rocks hide fossils, so we hide tigers, baboons, and perhaps insects, under our coats and hats” (189). Kramnick suggests that a comment like “our modern skulls house a stone-age mind” is an “eye-catching slogan” (322; Cosmides and Tooby qtd.). To be sure, that a modern skull might well house a stone-age mind is as perplexing as that of a mind housing the “all eye” of the insect (*Captain’s*, “Sickert” 188), as Woolf has it – or indeed, (for instance) the “paleomammalian brain,” according to Paul MacLean’s “‘triune brain’ model” (Pachalska and MacQueen, 301; MacLean qtd.). Brown’s formulation of microgenetic theory refers to the “triune brain,” that is, to the “[s]chematic representation of the three primary planes of evolutionary development in the human brain”: the “reptilian,” “paleomammalian,” and “neomammalian” planes (301; adapted from MacLean 1967).³¹ Brown states that “mental process is rapid and, like growth, unidirectional; [...] mental process is a form of growth with iteration over the planes in brain evolution” (“Reflections and Prospects” 65). That

³⁰ I use the Brownian term ‘microgenies’ to mean (as noted in the introduction to this thesis) the process which develops from biological core to surface (initial unfolding) and from self to surface (second, albeit continuous, unfolding) which is then sculpted via sensation to actualised word, object, or action. Brown suggests, however, that “[l]evels in mind, depth, and surface emerge over a series of microgenies, not within a single unfolding” (SP 135). That is to say, microgeny is a continually recurring process.

³¹ MacLean, Paul. D. “The Brain in Relation to Empathy and Medical Education.” *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, vol. 144, 1967, pp. 374-382.

is, per Avraham Schweiger, a physical, and, so “neurologized,” aspect is assumed in Brown’s formulation of microgenetic theory (Schweiger 92).³²

A link has thus been postulated between aeons (phylo-) and moments (micro-), but what about across the lifespan of a human being (onto-genesis)? Brown provides the example of the “growth circles” of a tree (Kales 448). If we assert that “morphogenesis is the link to mental process,” we are referring to the growth cycles of a brain across a lifetime. Brown writes,

[t]he similarity of the process of growth to that of cognition becomes clear when we consider morphogenesis not as an open-ended linear succession but as a recurrent pattern, in which new form is laid down over antecedent structure. This shift in perspective helps us to see how the same process that is for growth of the brain continues as the process that is responsible for [human] behaviour [in our day to day lives] (Brown qtd. in Kales 448)

According to Pachalska et al., “[a]s the brain matures, the emphasis shifts from structure to function, but there is no moment when structure ceases to change, or when function ceases to shape structure” (Pachalska et al. “Towards a Process” 240). As Brown writes, “[i]n addition to a common pattern underlying phyletic, ontogenetic, and microgenetic process – all a type of *growth* – the theory entails that perception is directed *toward* the featural detail of the world, not [...] beginning with features as the building blocks of objects” (“Reflections and Prospects” 65; emphasis in original). The process is a growing out from core self to what Talis Bachmann calls the “full-blown stabilized state” (“Microgenesis of Perception” 12). This final phase is not, of course, final; it is continuous, it is arising and perishing; it is as I noted earlier, a “type of instantaneous evolution” (LM 5). As I shall refer to in due course, the scales of phylo-ontogeny are recapitulated in microgenesis. Microgenesis, according to Brown, is evolution in microcosm.

I should like to now provide some background to the novel before returning to scale and “instantaneous evolution” (LM 5). *The Voyage Out* is the story of Rachel Vinrace, a young, motherless, woman who travels on her father Willoughby Vinrace’s steamship (the *Euphrosyne*) to Santa Marina, a sleepy resort in South America. Rachel will be accompanied by an aunt and uncle, Ridley and Helen Ambrose, who have been given leave to make use of a villa in Santa Marina. Rachel has been raised by her father and two elderly aunts and is somewhat shy and withdrawn, a sensibility which seems to encourage interest in a number of the other passengers: namely Richard

³² Brown states that “we should be cautious in interpreting patterns of animal behavior as archaic levels in human cognition” (PAL 2025). It is important to note, therefore, that Brown is not “implying that reptilian or early mammalian behaviors were stacked in the social repertoire of human action” (205). Brown states that such thinking “recalls older speculations on the brain-damaged, in which the symptoms of language and other disorders were viewed as markers of regression to early stages in the sequence of acquisition” (205). As noted earlier, Brown’s formulation of microgenesis seeks to describe the process which leads to cognition at the surface of perception. He asserts, accordingly, that “[w]e learn from phylogenetic or ontogenetic growth patterns that behaviors are not laid down as nested complexes that reappear in pathological states; rather, the behavior is a signpost of the process that deposits it” (205).

Dalloway, who arrives with Clarissa Dalloway at Lisbon; Helen Ambrose, who becomes interested in the development of the young woman, and Terence Hewet, a young aspiring writer with whom she falls in love. The story reaches its apogee as Rachel Vinrace, accompanied by a number of others, takes a short journey into the jungle where she contracts a typhoidal illness which will kill her. Rachel's exploration of self in Santa Marina (as well as her and Terence's acknowledged mutual love for each other) is thereby brought to an abrupt halt.

The question of scale – foregrounded in Woolf's "all eye" of the insect and the "microscopic eye" of "many ages" past (*Captain's* 190) – is a point of tension which has been picked up by a number of Woolf scholars in their readings of Woolf's first novel. Referring to Rachel Vinrace's *Bildung* in *The Voyage Out*, Claire Davison asks whether her formation and development should be interpreted within "an ontogenetic, individual scale" or "within an evolutionary, phylogenetic scale" (Davison 26).³³ Davison suggests that Rachel refuses "the call to rise to her destiny" by rejecting both the sound of Terence Hewet's voice as well as the "rhetorical prowess" that his voice might be expected to produce, that is to say, "she fails to admire his learning and eloquence as she is clearly intended to do" (15). Elizabeth Lambert suggests, similarly, that the implications of the novel, as well as its earlier incarnation as *Melymbrosia*, are made clear by Louse DeSalvo in her introduction to the earlier book where "[Rachel] is presented with women's traditional alternatives, 'marriage against their will *or* death; falling in love *and* death'" (Lambert 2; DeSalvo qtd., emphasis in original). According to Davison, Rachel's development in the novel requires her to reject "the classic, linear marriage plot [...]" (25) and this leaves her vulnerable. If Rachel's body rejects the evolved form of marriage (as the core instinct "coupling"), then "she does so," according to Davison, "by taking refuge in a less evolved form" (16). Rachel, then, prefers to "assume[] a form of primeval 'pre-Gibbonesque' shell life" (16). Her "shell life," Davison writes, is in her "[o]stentatiously seeking solitude" which she describes as "a distinct model of resistance, and within the codified context of the conventional middle classes, it is political" (18). When Terence does read (Edward Gibbon) to Rachel, his words, (a voice clearly heard by Rachel), are made merely deliquescent in Rachel's mind as "his words [are] water running against her ears, as water rubs a shell on the edge of a rock" (Davison, 16; Woolf qtd.). On the one hand, Rachel's "shell life" is that of an individuating ontogeny, on the other, Davison posits what Brown names as the "ancestral level[]" (MSCW 121), that is, a "phylogenetic scale, in which case [Rachel's]

³³ Judith Norman translates the German word "*Bildung*" in Friedrich Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Idols* as "both education and culture as well as formation and development" (Norman, n. 32, 190).

singular existence dissolves into insignificance; she is but one tiny example of the slow process of change [...]" (Davison 26).

Davison's reading, then, refers to a phylo-ontogenetic interpretation of the novel as a question of conflicting scales. Gillian Beer suggests that Woolf, amongst other things, juxtaposes "the density of the forest" with "the primitive self" and goes on to suggest that this combination of scale should be understood as a condensation of "the unconscious and prehistoric [worlds]" (*Common Ground* 14). Beer goes on to posit that "[e]volutionary theory had made a myth of the past. Instead of the garden, the swamp. Instead of fixed and perfect species, forms in flux" (17). At the opening of Beer's essay, she notes that "[t]he idea of origins and the idea of development are problematically connected in that of prehistory" (6):

The analogy between ontogeny (individual development) and phylogeny (species development) has proved to be the most productive, dangerous, and compelling of creative thoughts for our culture, manifesting itself not only in biology, but also in psychology, race theory, humanism, and in the homage of our assumptions about the developmental pattern of history (6).

Beer's reference to ontogeny and phylogeny, and to what is "dangerous, and compelling of creative thoughts," are enabling scales of reference through which Woolf's process of writing could find (indeed "make") "new meanings" as well as providing a useful dichotomy from which to interpret her work (*Common Ground* 6). Darwinism might be thought "dangerous" (6), amongst other concerns, because one "of the lurking fears it conjured was miscegeny – the frog in the bed – or what [John] Ruskin called 'the filthy heraldries which record the relation of humanity to the ascidian and the crocodile'" (*Darwin's Plots* 7; Ruskin qtd.). Beer's analogy – drawn between the onto- and phylo-genetic scales – may be said to centre on "the problem of what is truly 'natural and eternal' and what is susceptible to change [...]" (*Common Ground* 6; Woolf qtd.). Referring to Woolf's posthumously published novel, *Between the Acts*, Beer suggests that Woolf's "[h]istory is stationary" and that "*her* representations of history have something of the picture-book in them, figures held in superb but picturesque moments" (*Common Ground* 8; emphasis in original). Woolf thereby sets up a "paradox at the heart of her representation of history: with all her acute sense of the shifts in material and intellectual circumstances, she figures human being as unchanging, standing in for each other across the centuries" (8).

Microgenesis refers to human cognition as "to perceive the momentary history of an event as a whole, or as a collection of slices," that is, the process "entails that snapshots of varying thickness are perceived in a certain order" (Brown, "Time" 217). In my reading of *The Voyage Out*, it is not so much that human nature is unchanging but that "change in the motion from one event to another in the observer's world reflects the temporal order of events as they actualize in the mind"

(218). We might suggest, for example, that “unfolding of PMG [phenomenal microgenesis] can be directly observed from the first-person perspective” as it (in process) locates “binocular rivalry [and] the flash-lag effect” in human perception (Bachmann “Microgenesis of Perception” 14). What is meant by this, according to Brown, is that “[w]e know, *inter alia*, from the time-lag in perceiving an object, or from the image that results from binocular disparity, that perception is not *on-line* with physical nature” (“Time” 218; emphasis in original). Our eyes differ in perception, respectively (i.e., there is “disparity”) and, besides this, there is a time lag in the presentation and perceiving of external objects. Therefore, human beings are perceiving mental images that model physical events, we are not perceiving the physical events themselves. The objects of the external world “are inferred from the images” and are, according to Brown, “the outcome of sculpting and externalization of phases underlying image formation” (218). Objects and space, as I have mentioned earlier, “begin with the transition in the mental state from depth to surface or onset to termination in relation to time and change” (218). Sculpting, to recall Gudmund Smith’s “numerous ‘possibilities’” of preparatory stages of cognition (“Visual Perception: An Event” 307), may be defined thus:

[l]et us [...] call it an unspecific attention toward something that is going to emerge (e.g., to be seen), a mobilization of a system for many possible activities. [...] [I]n a situation with prolonged stimulation, however, more and more of these possibilities fall into the background in favor of one possibility that coincides with the stimulus (or, with normative conception of stimulus), in favor of the unequivocal reality of the individual (307).

Smith highlights an important point, that even though “*one* possibility has to be singled out for the perceptual process to produce a percept [sculpted to finality, according to Brown] – and, of course, not always the possibility that is correct from the point of view of the stimulus” (307; emphasis in original). I will note the problem of “error” in due course.

Finally, before embarking upon the first section, it is worth recalling that Pachalska and MacQueen define “[t]he essence of microgenetic theory” as “an account of the phases in brain process through which successive mind/brain states arise and perish over the duration of the psychological present, measured in milliseconds” (300). I will suggest, therefore, that Rachel Vinrace’s *Bildung* – her development and formation – invites an interpretation centred on the phylo-onto-micro-genetic scale since all three are inseparable: that is to say, according to Brown, “[p]hyletic and ontogenetic processes converge in the idea of microgenesis” (LM 5). I argue that Brown’s formulation of microgenesis provides the third scale to Davison’s and to Beer’s onto-phylogenetic interpretations of Woolf’s mode of theorising her fictions. In microgenetic theory, the commencement of all human thought is derived from primitive categories:

[t]he progression in each mental state, then, runs through layers deposited by millions of years of evolution, and by growth processes of ontogenesis, which in a general way replicate the course of evolution (Pachalska and MacQueen 300).

Woolf's novel highlights the microgenetic "microstructure of interaction" through which each perception, and intrinsically connected act, "is a multi-layered actualization, the tip of an iceberg that floats to the surface and then subsides, containing within itself the traces of all that has gone before, in phylogeny, ontogeny, and microgeny" (305). This metaphorical mapping of the "microstructure of [human] interaction" brings us to Woolf's microscopic lives.

Microscopic Lives

The following section explores perspective and scale as the group ride donkeys into the foothills of Monte Rosa. I argue that Woolf elevates the participants in order to suggest not only the limitations of human perception – the apparent loss of "the microscopic eye" (*Captain's* "Sickert" 190) – but how one's individuation is intrinsically linked to the instability and uncertainty of that very perception.

I noted earlier in this chapter that Davison, among other things, considers Rachel's dissolution and death and asks whether we should,

interpret it within an ontogenetic, individual scale, which implies that she is unfit to survive within the social and novelistic framework of an inherited order; or within an evolutionary, phylogenetic scale, in which case her singular existence dissolves into insignificance [...] (Davison 26).

The answer in microgenetic theory is both: each successive mind/brain state (to cognition) traverses (firstly) the phylogeny of the brain's (morpho-dynamic) process of development that has lasted for millions of years to (secondly) the ontogeny of the brain's plasticity over the lifespan. The human brain has undergone "phyletic change in the onset or timing of [its] development" (Gould 482). As part of the "triune brain model," the "brainstem" may be considered typically reptilian with the paleomammalian, a later layering, leading to the neocortex (neomammalian forebrain) (Pachalska and MacQueen 301; MacLean qtd.). The human brain is heterochronous but human brains remain "brains-in-the-making," the process is ongoing, which suggests "that each of them [brainstem to midbrain to forebrain] can do what a brain does, that is, produce behavior" (Pachalska and MacQueen 302).³⁴ Brown emphasises that all "[m]ental contents are finalities that 'contain' their momentary histories [...]" (PAL 223).

³⁴ To provide an example of "behaviour," Pachalska and MacQueen offer the early stages of development of mental process – say, on "the level of reptilian brain" (302). The authors state that "[b]ehavior [at this level] is primarily approach-avoidance, modulated by drives and instinctive reactions" (302). I will say more about the levels of cognition with respect to the "limbic system" in due course (303).

The concept of “momentary histories” leads me to the third in the series and that is, to give the quotation again, “the microgeny [of] the process of development of a mental state over milliseconds in the central nervous system” (MacQueen, Foreword viii). What Brown suggests is “a difficult concept to grasp,” is encompassed in a “past [that] is continuously active as the present is elaborated” (LM 5). As we shall see, it is this difficult notion, among others, that is given literary expression in Woolf’s fictions. For instance, the microgenetic “arising and perishing” (MN 26) of the objective world is intrinsically linked to the process of Rachel’s own arising and perishing self which brings the startling revelation that “she would vanish” (*Voyage* 114). Before her surprise invitation to join the party for the ascent of Monte Rosa, Rachel is sitting in her private room which is “a fortress as well as a sanctuary” (112). As the chapter begins, the reader is made aware that by Helen Ambrose’s own estimation “some sort of change was taking place in the human being” but we are not, I think, expecting Rachel to disappear. Rachel’s loss of self, “[h]er dissolution became so complete that she could no longer raise her finger any more,” will herald her own perception of objectivity as vanishing and of a kind, processually speaking, with her own perceived actions – or inability to act: “she forgot that she had any fingers to raise ...” (114; Woolf’s ellipsis). Rachel remains conscious of “these vast masses of substance” but the clock’s ticking in the background is now held to be happening “in the midst of the universal silence” (114).

From a microgenetic perspective, Rachel’s thought patterns are “rhythmically generated out of a ‘core’ in the anatomically deepest and phylogenetically oldest parts of the central nervous system, over phases to the outermost and youngest regions of the brain” and then to a phase in microgeny through which “successive mind/brain states arise and perish over the duration of the psychological present [...]” (Pachalska and MacQueen 300). Pachalska and MacQueen suggest that early patterns of thought in microgenesis are “automatic, innate, and by the same token primitive” (302). The authors suggest that the human brain stem as cognitive process may be reflected in “the frog” – presumably a thing which would have discomfited John Ruskin, as noted earlier (via ascidians and crocodiles). The frog does not perceive “in any meaningful sense of the word, but only a kind of gross sensation limited to whole objects and motion [...]” (302). Rachel is reported as dissolving while “the furniture in the room would remain” and things that might normally be meaningful are questioned, “[a]nd life, what was that?” (114). Her response is not entirely clear, and reported indirectly, querying whether “[i]t [life] was only a light passing from one place to another?” (114). The phylogeny of human lives, and what I have suggested is a way of writing remarkably akin to perceptual microgenesis, is a concern to which Woolf returns throughout her career.

In 1928, following an excursion “to Richmond in North Yorkshire to see from Bardon Fell the total eclipse of the sun, on 29 June 1927” (E4 524), Woolf wrote her essay, “The Sun and the Fish.” In her essay, human life spans and “passions” are but privative matters (“furtive and feverish” (*Captain’s* 217)) as “the level blackness enclose[s] squares of immortality, worlds of settled sunshine, where there is neither rain nor cloud” (216). Yet it is from the ensuing darkness that “the inhabitants [“one lizard [...] on the back of another,” for example (216)] perform forever evolutions” which show, by comparison, that “[t]he most majestic of human evolutions seems feeble and fluctuating compared to theirs” (217). This thought provides a vivid backdrop for my readings here. Rachel’s questioning of what she can perceive and comprehend from the gross noises of people moving about somewhere and the shapes of furniture in her room is later tested yet further as she brings her “microscopic eye” upon minutiae of an insect’s life on a leaf as she rests on the mountain side (*Captain’s*, “Sickert” 190). It is not specifically (what we might term) a normative mode of perception but one closer to dream and therefore to the limbic stage of cognising externality, the sounds she can hear, for example.

Presently, in her room, “a fortress” and a place to “defy the world.” (112), the demarcation of self and world in Rachel’s reflective state is loosened and she feels that she herself is at one and together with the world. She dissolves into the external world as the external world of universal silence dissolves into her. Rachel’s awareness or lack of awareness is felt within her own subjective microgenesis of time as, Brown explains, “[e]very object [up until actualisation or failure so to do] is shaped by experience” (the immediate past) and “every past experience in life is implicit in the occurrent state” (the present now) (MN 147). It is not that we need to know Rachel’s past in intricate detail (of which little is given in the novel) but that that immediate and more distant past is “continuously active” in the present moment (LM 5). At this point in the novel, Rachel’s dissolving self is not disturbing (as later it will be) and her moment of reverie is interrupted not with a worrying and symptomatic headache but with the good fortune of an invitation from a stranger to picnic on Monte Rosa: “[t]he utter absurdity of a woman coming into a room with a piece of paper in her hand [...] amazed Rachel” (*Voyage* 114). Those who will join the party on Monte Rosa include Terence Hewet, who sent the invitations, his friend, St. John Hirst, Evelyn Murgatroyd, the Elliots, the Thornburys, and Mr. Perrott and Helen Ambrose. Introductions are made, the most important of which for the novel’s trajectory, and final drama, is the meeting between Terence and “Miss Somebody Vinrace” (129). From the very beginning of the trip, Helen, who had earlier identified “th[e] blue flag” of the *Euphrosyne* “as a sinister token,” suggests that “[e]verything’s possible. Who knows what mayn’t happen before nightfall?” (118). The variable and aleatory passage of time and what is possible in the course of our lives will be later tested by

Rachel in a confrontation with one insect among millions, by which she means time and number. Helen is gently teasing Mrs. Elliott's pedestrian attitude to the awe of the mountain but a serious point is being made. Helen's ribbing of Mrs. Elliot suggests that none of us can "depend[] so implicitly upon one thing following another [...]" (118). What Mrs. Elliott takes to be "the mere glimpse of a world," presently alien to her usual routine, will "fill[] her with fears for her own stability" (118). This may at once seem an exaggerated position – that the mountain's elevation may somehow diminish one's own mental and physical stability – but it is one which is of central concern to this part of the novel's unfolding of "human evolution" set against the phyletic "forever evolutions" identified in "The Sun and the Fish" (*Captain's* 217). It would seem that even the "mere glimpse" of distant objects suggests not only the "atrophy of the eye" of human perception which Woolf declares in "Walter Sickert" (*Captain's* 188) but that "[t]he face of a civilised human being is a summing-up, an epitome of a million acts, thoughts, statements and concealments" (190). Human beings are unseeing creatures as well as assailed with the difficulty of "summing up" what they think and conceal, amongst other things. The problem of appearance and what we can see is the topic and conclusion of Terence Hewet's own summing up on the mountain.

Terence provides his listeners with an example of gathering and its complexities: "[c]ows [...] draw together in a field; ships in a calm, and we're just the same when we've nothing else to do. But why do we do it?" (*Voyage* 116). He concludes with a practical experiment. Taking his walking stick and then, "clouding the water [of a stream] with mud," he asks,

[b]ut why do we [...] prevent ourselves from seeing to the bottom of things [...], making cities and mountains and whole universes out of nothing, or do we really love each other, or do we, on the other hand, live in a state of perpetual uncertainty, knowing nothing, leaping from moment to moment as from world to world?

Brown suggests that it is crucial for survival that we feel "the self [to be] real and substantial" and that "without this illusion the self is embedded in a world of mental objects" (SP 74). At a level of perceptual microgenesis, Mrs Elliot (as well as the others) becomes aware that what she sees is continuous and her encounter can never reach a point-zero no matter how far she (may attempt to) step back (to get a better view). It is not that Mrs. Elliott no longer has external objects to rely on but that their increasing distance from her is felt to diminish her sense of "stability" (*Voyage* 118): her perceiving self is destabilised by what she takes to be receding objects. Brown suggests that human perception is driven by "a feeling of agency and the belief in the autonomy of self set against objects" (SP 74). Mrs. Elliott's sense of self takes a knock because what she assumes to be a real and substantial self turns out to be a disorientating deception. It is not only Mrs. Elliott who feels the disturbance of her perspective from the elevated position on the mountain. As we shall see, the perspective (of distance) and her phylogenetically derived fear – a primitive category – are

not separable; in Woolf's hands, they are part of a single mind/brain of whole-to-part transition: fear (from core self) developed from overwhelming distance (and flux). For example, having dismounted from their donkeys, Helen is heard to speak: "[f]lowers,' said Helen, stooping to pick the lovely little bright flowers which grew separately here and there" (*Voyage* 118). But it is the "enormous blue" which has impact as "[t]he English fell silent" (119). The party continue to climb, "[h]igher and higher they went, becoming separate from the world," and the perception of distance takes precedence: "[t]he effect of so much space was at first rather chilling. They felt themselves very small, and for some time no one said anything" (120). The distance provides too much for human eyes to see and the lack of the "microscopic eye," the "all eye" of insects (*Captain's*, "Sickert" 190, 189) in perfect harmony with their environment is replaced by a feeling of distance from their microscopic lives which are challenged by the "separat[ion] from the world" (*Voyage* 120). At the "ancestral levels" in phylogeny (MSCW 121), a sense of human instability is magnified (by Woolf) in order to diminish what we may take to be the common perception of her characters' everyday lives (MSCW 121). Perhaps we might say, when faced with the "forever evolutions" of phylogeny, Woolf appears to diminish human perception to insignificance (and smallness) and the excursionists "seem[] feeble and fluctuating" (*Captain's* "The Sun" 217). Feeling small – perceptively – is aligned thereby with a primitive category of fear (of instability) such that the excursionists fall silent as though (as they seem to be) on their guard.

Woolf's writing conjures up a collective and instinctual discomfiture in the overwhelming presence of the mountain itself which, if Terence's earlier conjecture is anything to go by, they are in the process of creating, and indeed constructing, (mountains and universes), "out of nothing" (*Voyage* 116). However, perception struggles since they, and indeed we, "live in a state of perpetual uncertainty, knowing nothing, leaping from one moment to moment as from world to world" (116). Woolf draws our attention to notions of stability and how that sense of self is generated in the moment from core to surface objectivity. The mountain now stands in for ancestral time on a phyletic scale and it is the distance from, say, relatively small hotel rooms and tended gardens, and microscopic "tame lives," which force Mrs. Elliot and the party to question their significance and individuating stability (124). Rachel comments too on the diminishment of the external world from the heights of the mountain and her view of the world, which resulted in her felt dissolution, becomes focused on distance and perspective: "[t]owns are very small," Rachel remarked, obscuring the whole of Santa Marina and its suburbs with one hand' (118). Rachel, having obscured the distant township and suburbs with her hand, replaces the overwhelming phyletic structure of Monte Rosa and thereby endows herself, momentarily, with Terence's earlier view of humans "making," and unmaking momentary worlds out of "perpetual uncertainty" (116). Rachel

assays her own shifting mental process in microgenesis, concluding that “strange adventures” may well rely on things happening beyond our control (129). When asked by St. John what she is “looking at,” the chapter concludes with her surprise at being asked the question and by her terse response: “[s]he was a little startled, but answered directly, ‘Human beings’” (123).

Woolf pre-empts Rachel’s later meeting with Terence (and their own relative smallness) with the ability seemingly to perceive microscopically the internal structure of objects, imbuing her along the way with great potential ability:

[...] it pleased her to scrutinise this inch of the soil of South America so minutely that she noticed every grain of earth and made it into a world where she was endowed with the supreme power. She bent a blade of grass, and set an insect on the utmost tassel of it, and wondered if it was that she should have bent that tassel rather than any other of the million tassels (129).

The insect is set as a question of chance or choice against which other competing interests might just as easily have arisen. The sense of sculpting out of numerous possibilities seems clear as the category of “insect” (and Rachel’s apparent control over its appearing) sets her on the path to “supreme power” (129). The core to surface objectivity that I have been talking about may yet be derived – that is, developed – from the features of the category (of ant, on earth, each inch scrutinised, minutely (size and time)) which play a greater or lesser role in her decision but which nonetheless are affectively charged. Rachel seems perfectly in control of her decision to notice “every grain” which she reacts to as though she herself is responsible for the elimination of all the variables: “and wondered if it was that she should have bent that tassel rather than any other of the million tassels” (129). Her control is only “wondered” at but it is momentarily powerful as well as evolutionary: it is phylogeny recapitulated as microgeny, that is, what she perceives is a type of “instantaneous evolution” (LM 5). However, (as the novel progresses) the insect will be made to stand in for something final as the novel nears its end: “[i]s it true,” [Rachel] demanded, “that women die with bugs crawling across their faces?” (284). Woolf makes the “insect” stand in for both the present and the future events (of which the reader cannot know) as well as a microgenetic process through which representations unfold.

Rachel’s elevated perspective on Monte Rosa is taken up with the minutiae of not only the object’s surrounding media, but the two-fold accident of her being there at that particular time (“pleased her to scrutinise [...]”) and to the aleatory nature of turning this rather than that – that is, one tassel rather than another. Rachel’s particular perspective seeks for something beyond the singular embeddedness of relations as her endowment of “supreme power” to perceive (129) is aimed, in Brown’s microgeny, to the internal structures of her own “personal meaning” (PAL 221) since “[m]ental contents are finalities that ‘contain’ their momentary histories” (223). Rachel, then,

in a far cry from Mrs. Elliot's fear of self's stability, is "endowed with the supreme power" (*Voyage* 129). Rachel's scrutiny of the insect on a leaf brings forth the sheer chanciness in nature of the external world and, at this point in the novel, it is she who stands in for the overwhelming mountain. Rachel becomes not only a human vessel which contains phylogeny (archaic structure) but phylogeny itself in action (via primitive categories at core self to surface objects). She wonders what the "insect realised" and whether the creature is aware of "his strange adventure" (129). Of all the myriad leaves in all the world and of all the insects engaged in "forever evolutions" (*Captain's*, "The Sun" 217) why did this one land on that "tassel rather than any other of the million tassels"? (129). As I noted earlier, Gudmund Smith suggests that cognition is made up of "numerous 'possibilities'" and "that *one* possibility has to be singled out for the perceptual process to produce a percept – and, of course, not always the possibility that is correct from the point of view of stimulus" ("Visual Perception" 306; emphasis in original).

Monte Rosa has a phylogenetic structure as well as one based on ontogeny, that is, a structure that comes of "making" akin to "cities and mountains and whole universes out of nothing" (*Voyage* 116). The ontogenetic structure is one of "perpetual uncertainty" that comes from "clouding" and "stirring" and "water" and "mud" but it is a shift from phylo-onto-genetic structures to us, frog-like microgenies, "leaping from moment to moment as from world to world" (116). Rachel does not obliterate Santa Marina "with one hand" from the mountainside but that distant world might as easily disappear as the insect on the tassel (118). One of the diners in Woolf's short essay, "Walter Sickert," became "completely and solely an insect – all eye" at "Sickert's show" and then goes onto recall the moment as "I [the diner] flew from colour to colour, from red to blue, from yellow to green. Colours went spirally through my body lighting a flare as if a rocket fell through the night and lit up [...]" (*Captain's* 189). Rachel was availed, if only for a short while, of "the microscopic eye" identified in "Walter Sickert" (190), but even the "forever evolutions" and the "lizards" of "The Sun and the Fish" (*Captain's* 217) and Rachel's "insect" upon the "utmost tassel" must become recapitulated in microgenesis as continuous with our "momentary histories" (*Voyage* 129, PAL 223). I have suggested that Rachel Vinrace replaces the overwhelming phyletic structure of Monte Rosa at the "ancestral level[]" (MSCW 121) so that she becomes suddenly "endowed with the supreme power" that Monte Rosa hitherto had been awarded (*Voyage* 129). Woolf thereby transfers the vastness of the view by making it a specifically human matter, if only for a matter of moments. The "ancestral levels" are "beneath conscious remembrance" but nonetheless it is here, at "[t]he floor of the mental state," according to Brown "that memory is rooted [...]" (MSCW 121).

Limbic Engagements

We now turn to what Bruce MacQueen refers to in “Identity, Autobiography, and the Microgenesis of Self” as the “limbic level” of cognitive process (216). As I said earlier, the “ancestral levels,” according to Brown, lie “beneath conscious remembrance” (MSCW 121). Woolf provides literary expression to this hidden mental state by referring to what passes in “every day [...] life” as the “invisible presences” and then going on to suggest that one’s own consciousness is influenced by “the consciousness of other groups impinging upon ourselves” (“Sketch” 92). However, in the following two sections I will attempt to provide a microgenetic reading from the perspective of what Pachalska and MacQueen name as “the ‘paleomammalian’ limbic system” (303). I will contend that Woolf’s Rachel-centred descriptions in the latter parts of the novel expose this level in cognition as a progression from core self to the “highly subjective, emotional loading” indicative of the limbic level (303). Before discussing the passages in *The Voyage Out* pertinent to an ill-advised boat journey into the hinterland of South America, I should like to offer a short description of the characteristics of “the anterior medial limbic cortex” (LM 55). As previously mentioned, (in the introduction to the present work), the “limbic level” is a phase of consciousness which, according to MacQueen, “does not sleep when we are awake: in other words, dream (limbic) consciousness is subsumed in, not replaced by, waking consciousness” (“Identity, Autobiography” 215). According to Pachalska and MacQueen, limbic perception “emerges from anxiety and desire as objects are endowed with a highly subjective, emotional loading that takes precedence over their objective features [...]” (303). Limbic perception, therefore, is the perception of memory, dreams, and hallucinations, and is conceived as “much more connected to the inner life of the perceiver than to any outer reality” (303). Finally, and it is a point to which I will return, “limbic time” is understood to be “the floating, recurrent time of dream consciousness,” which may be at once disorientating as, Pachalska and MacQueen suggest, “[t]hings happen, but they have already happened, and will happen again, perhaps differently, perhaps the same,” that is to say, to a very large extent, “[e]verything is blended into everything else, identities shift and flow, images fade in and out” (303). As the process develops, of course, “[l]imbic time” (303) gives way to what we might refer to as “cortical time,” as “the brain forms articulated pictures or representations of what is out there in the world [...]” (304).

Before Rachel’s final dissolution at the close of the novel, she and Terence will experience a walk in dense South American forest where they will encounter a mental state which surfaces at the limbic level of actualisation akin to hallucination and dream. As noted above, “the limbic system,” according to Pachalska and MacQueen, “is the primary source of emotion” (303). To

recall, Pachalska and MacQueen follow Brown's formulation of microgenetic theory by arguing that

mental states are rhythmically generated out of a 'core' in the anatomically deepest and phylogenetically oldest parts of the central nervous system, over phases to the outermost and youngest regions of the brain, the gray matter that constitutes the neocortex. The progression in each mental state, then, runs through layers deposited by millions of years of evolution, and by the growth processes of ontogenesis, which in a general way replicate the course of evolution (300).

In this section, then, I will focus on Rachel and Terence as they go on foot into the jungle, leaving the other various trippers back at the small boat. I shall argue that Woolf weaves into her text a pair of wandering (and indeed wondering) lovers whom she fixes at the limbic level of dream consciousness. Woolf merges the limbic system of perception with the surface of the external world but the reader is left in no doubt that the unfolding, microgenetic process is one centred on "the perception of memory, dream, and hallucination, [which is] much more connected to the inner life of the perceiver than to any outer reality" (Pachalska and MacQueen 303).

The Flushings are keen to arrange a short journey by boat into the depths of the jungle. Mr. Flushing is at great pains to assuage a doubtful Mrs. Ambrose of the journey's efficacy: "the expedition was really a simple matter; it took five days at the outside; [...] and was certainly worth seeing before she [Rachel/Helen] returned to England" (*Voyage* 246). Helen is not, however, convinced and refuses to "commit herself to one answer rather than to another" (246). The invitation comes from Mr. Flushing but will foster, unlike Terence's invitation to Monte Rosa which had "amazed Rachel" (114), an undercurrent of conflict between Helen and Rachel ("[i]s it because I didn't accept Mr. Flushing's invitation?" Helen asked [...] (248)). Helen at once suggests that "she would not be able to have a bath" but the somewhat limited concern of the comment is undercut with Helen's superfluous remark that "[i]t's so unpleasant being cooped up with [...] [p]eople who mind being seen naked" (248). Rachel focusses on Helen's worries about being "vilely uncomfortable," seizing this as evidence that Helen, far from "being honest," is "as a matter of fact [...] being lazy, being dull, being nothing" (248). "[P]resentiments" aside (for the moment) (7), Helen's comments appear to be obfuscations intended to avoid the trip into the hinterland. Rachel is aware of this and identifies the delaying tactics as dishonest. Helen does seem to rather enjoy the exchange, but "her sense of safety [i]s shaken, as if beneath twigs and dead leaves she had seen the movement of a snake" (249). The two, of course, are not in any danger, they are presently walking together down an avenue. Helen's thoughts, are, however, "exposed to" what are later described as her "presentiments of disaster" (270). The chapter will end with Helen's capitulation, precipitated by Rachel's anger at "[t]he lives of these people," as well as "the

aimlessness, the way they live”: “[b]y that time they had settled that if anything more was said, they would accept the invitation” (249). Rachel’s reference to the “aimlessness, the way they live” gestures to the trajectory of the *Euphrosyne* at the novel’s beginning, as the vessel shifts away from Britain, “a shrinking island in which people were imprisoned” and upon which they remain “swarming about like aimless ants [...]” (24). The river expedition, then, prepares the reader for Rachel’s later cognitive disturbance under the awning and which makes up the subject matter of the final section of the present chapter. As we shall see, the heat will be assumed to be the cause of Rachel’s headache, but her disrupted perception (as Terence reads to her) will be due to an oncoming fever. But before the episode of Rachel’s final dissolution and death, Rachel and Terence take a walk together into the hinterland, leaving the Flushings and the others back at the boat.

The young lovers step off the “very small boat” and spend an hour walking in the forest. Helen refuses the opportunity of joining the two, stating that “‘one’s only got to use one’s eye. There’s everything here – everything,’ she repeated [...]. ‘What will you gain by walking?’” (255). Hewet calls Helen unadventurous and he and Rachel take their leave. The immediate impression is of “a wide pathway striking through the forest [... which] resembled a drive in an English forest” with at least one exception: there are “sword-like leaves” which must be avoided (256). Any idea that the forest may resemble an English woodland is soon dispelled. The reader is struck by how (in like manner to Rachel’s later merging with “the repeated sigh of some exhausted creature” (308)) the sound of the forest is anthropomorphically distributed as “the light grew dimmer, and the noises of the ordinary world were replaced by those creaking and sighing sounds [...]” (256). Rachel and Terence are walking in the forest and what is known, or may be taken for granted (as it was for Mrs. Elliot on Monte Rosa), is put beyond Rachel’s and Terence’s reach. We are in no “ordinary world” (311). As they make their perambulation along the overgrown path, the two appear to shift from core self and what seems to be the primitive category of self-preservation to what we earlier described as the limbic level of perception, according to which “the operative self is the dream self [...]” (MacQueen, “Identity, Autobiography” 215). As Brown states, “every object in the world, in order to be there, survives a traversal and selection through a system of dreamwork mentation,” and it is this “buried” system that, I argue, Woolf seems so accurately to capture (SP 65). To discuss *The Voyage Out* as so closely aligned to the limbic level, operative during dream, may be to overburden the text in only a remote (merely figural) possibility. However, Rachel and Terence’s experience of this alien territory is consistent with “a state of arousal or vigilance” which seems not entirely directed at the external world (LM 55). As I said earlier, not only is the limbic level one of “fear, anxiety, or sadness” but the presence of these things is not always easily

verbalised (55). Brown suggests too that all objects – even the most prosaic and banal of things and actions in the external world – are developed outward from the biologically primitive part of the brain – a physical derivation from the brainstem – and then through the various levels to neocortex and a further unfolding in, say, object recognition or, indeed, word meaning. A fluidity of identity in dream is the first indication in the novel that Rachel and Terence are shifting away from the “ordinary world” as “the silence weigh[s] upon them, [and] they were both unable to frame any thoughts” (256):

‘That is what I have felt ever since I knew you,’ he replied. ‘We are happy together.’ He did not seem to be speaking, or she to be hearing.

‘Very happy,’ she answered

They continued to walk for some time in silence. Their steps unconsciously quickened

‘We love each other,’ Terence said.

‘We love each other,’ she repeated.

The silence was then broken by their voices which joined the tones of strange unfamiliar sound which formed no words (257).

In an earlier scene on Monte Rosa, with rival lovers Susan and Arthur, we see Arthur “look[ing] as if he were trying to put things seen in a dream beside real things” (127). Arthur’s response is written as a vain attempt at objectivity (via the fact of his “look[ing] as if” he might locate “real things”) and which soon progresses to “a long silence” which must (it seems) be broken by Susan. Still “clasped together” (126), Susan begins to narrate the situation, stating that “[i]t’s the most perfect thing in the world” as well as (the passion killer) “[a]nd what will Mr. Perrott say?” (127). The effect of Mr. Perrott is to bring Arthur back down to earth: “[d]ear old fellow,” said Arthur” and it is this prosaic exchange which coincides with the passing of “the first shock” (127). By contrast, the later scene between Rachel and Terence has something of the automaton about it, and the reader may feel directed to the eerie, incantatory repetition which commenced with Terence’s earlier question: “[y]ou like being with me?” and Rachel’s focus on the pronoun and repetition of “with”: “[y]es, with you,” she replied” (256). The echoing of each speaker gives the impression that one can only know one’s (limbic) self via the presence and sound of another voice and yet the noise they make must compete and become one with the external sounds of the jungle. It is soon after this interchange that the two “dropped to the earth” (as Arthur and Susan had on Monte Rosa) as though they might be expected somehow to find recourse in sleep and further dreaming. Arthur and Susan, again by contrast, had appeared (to Rachel and Terence) to be physically engaged in some kind of precipitous wrestling match: “lying on the ground beneath them, rolling slightly this way and that as the embrace tightened and slackened” (127-28). Indeed, at one stage the look on Susan’s face suggests that she is “not altogether conscious” and perhaps

“had suffered something” (128). Back in the forest, Terence’s sudden bout of tears may be read as an irrational response to his surroundings but they come immediately after hearing in the distance “the senseless and cruel churning of the water” and the reader may be reminded of Helen Ambrose’s tears at the beginning of the novel and “the tear [that] rose and fell and dropped into the river” (4). Time too lengthens in parenthesis, (“[a] very long time seemed to have passed”) (257), and Rachel and Terence become disorientated, “[w]hich way?’ she asked” (257). Terence appears sure of the way, but very soon “as they walked he became doubtful. They had to stop to consider, and then to return and start once more” (258). This description is startlingly close to Pachalska and MacQueen’s “limbic time,” and to what “might happen, but they have already happened, and will happen again, perhaps differently, perhaps the same,” (as I mentioned earlier) (303).

In Woolf’s narration, the limbic level is made a very present and powerful force in Rachel and Terence’s consciousness and their limbic consciousnesses appear to be subsumed in what I earlier noted as the “recurrent time of dream consciousness” (303): “he repeated as if he were talking in his sleep,” “[t]hey found themselves again [...],” “[t]hey walked on in silence as people walking in their sleep,” they “were oddly conscious now and again of the mass of their bodies” (*Voyage* 258). Brown notes in *Life of the Mind* that “different types of images are manifestations of different levels of object representation” (LM 207). There is a microstructure to all images and “[t]he image is a level in the realization of the object world” (207). Finding themselves back at the boat, along with the others, there is one final question of the chapter, spoken by Rachel in a murmur, responded to by Terence with repetition: “[i]s it true, or is it a dream?” Rachel murmured, when they had passed. ‘It’s true, it’s true,’ he replied” (*Voyage* 261). The rational response to their perception of the external world emphasises the underlying limbic self at play in every act of cognition. As Pachalska et al. assert, “[e]ven the most abstract acts of mental reasoning originate, not in the cortex, but in the brainstem, and then pass through the limbic system before the rule-bound cortex sculpts them into thoughts” (“Toward a Process” 236).

There is a scene in the novel which draws together Susan and Arthur’s passing (and short-lived) limbic level of engagement presented on Monte Rosa and the later delineation of the limbic system as Rachel and Terence walk in the jungle. To explain this, I should like to conclude this section by focussing on the scene in which Rachel and Terence find themselves alone in a room together and which ushers in a distinct alteration to Woolf’s earlier presentation of the limbic level of cognition in the jungle. We will then arrive at Susan’s own response (to an absent Arthur) in a little room alone at the end of the Monte Rosa section.

During a conversation, which centres on questions of belief, Rachel states an important point which has its own prophetic quality, if not quite an intended “presentiment[] of disaster” in the Helen Ambrose school of prediction (*Voyage* 270). Attempting to offer a view on representation, Rachel states that “‘I believe – I believe,’ Rachel stammered, ‘I believe there are things we don’t know about, and the world might change in a minute and anything appear’” (132). Terence suggests that there are indeed “important questions” but goes on to “doubt that one ever does ask them” (132). As I said earlier, he has not long ago “reflected” on “[c]ows” and the need of “drawing together,” a statement which is in line with “bunching human beings up together” (116). His question is reported as a reflection on cows (in fields) and ships (in calm seas) and humans (generally) but the important point is that he does ask a straightforward question: “But why do we do it?” At this stage, what seems crucial is that Rachel is now asking the “important questions” (132). Rachel takes Terence to mean matters of the heart and asks for a clarification: “[w]hether we’ve been in love?” she enquired. ‘Is that the kind of question you mean?’” (132). Helen draws attention to Rachel’s apparent *faux pas* by juxtaposing Rachel’s surmising with the machinations of a small animal. This does seem to be an interesting development which bears on Rachel’s earlier endowment of “supreme power” (129). Rachel’s sudden silence feels conspicuous but, given the reception of her question by Helen, seems nonetheless fitting: “[o]h Rachel,’ [Helen] cried. ‘It’s like having a puppy [...] that brings one’s underclothes down into the hall’” (132). If Rachel’s question on love is indecorous then Helen’s response to her niece is cutting and mocking. Again, the open air is soporific and silence again prevails, “[s]ilence fell upon one, and then upon another, until they were silent, their minds spilling out into the deep blue air” (135).

The chapter and the episode of Monte Rosa ends with Susan who expresses herself (to herself, in a small room) in exuberant fashion, stating that “‘I’m happy, I’m happy,’ she repeated. ‘I love every one. I’m happy’” (136). Sandra Wentworth Williams in *Jacob’s Room* comes to a similar conclusion, “[o]ne must love everything” but, although there may be some irony present in Sandra’s words, her thoughts are to the act of perceiving such that “everything has meaning” and so must be part of the process of valuation (*Jacob* 124). We can’t help noting that Susan’s valuation of Arthur loiters around the possibility that she might now “escape the long solitude of an old maid’s life” (*Voyage* 127). Her valuation is of “amazing good fortune” (127). The earlier fireworks (“the rush and embrace of the rockets as they soared [...]” (135)) were certainly not, however, a literary celebration for Susan and Arthur, who “riding down the hill, never said a word to each other, and kept accurately apart” (135). They are, however, reminders of Woolf’s essay, “Walter Sickert” and to the possibility of perceiving as, and indeed becoming, “solely an insect – all eye” (*Captain’s* 189). The “all eye” of human possibility describes how “[c]olours went spirally through

my body lighting a flare as if a rocket fell through the night and lit up greens and browns, grass and trees, and there in the grass a white bird” (189). Back in her room, Susan’s apparent assurance that there is happiness to be found in the union with another (albeit one tempered with the fear of solitude) is not a conclusion that Rachel will take up with much conviction.

Later in the novel, having returned to *terra firma* following their jungle jaunt, Terence’s statement, “[a]re we sure we want to marry each other?” brings with it a quantity of agitation. His somewhat burdening question stimulates a flurry of movement in the two as “[t]hey began pacing up and down the room” (*Voyage* 286). The shifting about the room, however, only goes to reinforce their immediate proximity to each other, “in their pacing, they took care not to touch each other” (286). While the thought of a given partition “unite[s] them” (as well as “they could not separate”), the possibility of intimacy signals a “lapse[] into silence” as the temporal circle is closed: “after a time [they] crept together in silence” (286). This is not the silence that was brought about by the elevation of the mountain where “they were all silent, their minds spilling out into the deep blue air” (135) and it is not the seemingly less contemplative silence of the jungle walk where it is both heavy, “the silence weigh[ed],” making them “unable to frame any thoughts,” and, to some degree, light, “they walked on in silence as people walking in their sleep” (256, 258). The silence in the room is not communal and it is not limbically dreamy – it is at once the product of an awkward exchange: “[l]et’s break it off, then” (286). However, their coming together, momentarily, feels like a resolution (after a momentary revolution) as “the divisions disappeared and it seemed as if the world were once more solid and entire” (286). But this merging will be short lived. Woolf has sited the young couple “on the edge of a precipice” (from the relative safety of a room) and the disappearing divisions are found to be wanting: “it seemed as if the world were once more solid and entire” (286). The first “as if” is then joined by a second one which undercuts the power of their union: “and as if, in some strange way, they had grown larger and stronger” (286).

Their growth, now physical and, indeed, psychical, “grown larger and stronger,” will be diminished as time intercedes, “[i]t was not long before they moved [...],” and what had seemed for a moment to be large and strong in union is perceived for what it is: they are not, as noted above, “vast and indivisible”; they are instead “really very small and separate” (286). The representation of themselves in the mirror shows them in perspectival competition with the greater whole of the room and from wholeness they are returned to what is potentially small, separate and divisible. On the mountain, Rachel played the role of the supremely powerful entomologist who questions the risk of so much as turning a leaf, but as the scene concludes, it is not simply that she sees herself in the mirror in a diminished form against an already small room, but that the scale of observation is pluralised. In the room, they are both “chilled to see themselves” in this way,

particularly after affecting “to make themselves look as if they had been feeling nothing all the morning” (286). As noted above, Susan and Arthur’s silence (“never said a word to each other”) creates a mathematical division as they are “kept accurately apart” (135). The conclusion to Rachel and Terence’s union is written, and so rests, on their own somewhat embarrassing reflection (in the mirror and in “themselves”) which reveals not only that ‘they were really very small and separate [...]’ all along but that there is “a large space for the reflection of other things” (286). The spell of the limbic stage is brought to a close, unfolding via constraints at cortex level to fit more precisely the situation at the surface. Anxiety and disorientation are present and correct but the quality of dream and subjective centrality is undercut if not entirely absent. The limbic system will, however, assert itself with fullest vigour in the section of the novel which deals with Rachel’s immediate signs of illness following her excursion into the jungle.

The Final Voyage Out

Helen and Rachel are walking down an avenue and Helen is explaining to her niece why it is that she is reluctant to take the trip into the jungle. In the first instance, and noted earlier, she states that “[i]t’s so unpleasant, being cooped up with people one hardly knows” (*Voyage* 248). Helen’s motivation is then narrated and her reasons appear to have a more ominous edge. As I said earlier, Helen is concerned with the general dangers of stumbling upon snakes hidden “beneath twigs and dead leaves” but, additionally, she is worried about something that she expresses (via Woolf’s narration) as a force at once ancestral and phylogenetic:

[h]er sense of safety was shaken [...] [and] it seemed to her that a moment’s respite was allowed, a moment’s make-believe, and then again the profound and reasonless law asserted itself, moulding them all to its liking, making and destroying (249).

On the journey itself, Helen suffers an “expos[ure] to presentiments of danger” (270) which together with her “sense of safety [...] shaken” (249), may be read, retrospectively, as having predicted Rachel’s final voyage out. This third section of the thesis chapter will focus on Rachel’s exposure to tropical fever and her subsequent death. Again, I draw attention to the “‘paleomammalian’ limbic system,” which I earlier referred to as a cognitive phase where, *inter alia*, “[e]verything is blended into everything else, identities shift and flow, images fade in and out” (Pachalska and MacQueen 303). This stage, as noted, develops to cortical levels of objectivity and conscious reasoning.

The first indication of Rachel’s jungle fever is described simply as a headache as she sits “on the terrace under an awning” (*Voyage* 308). At first, “[s]he was not quite certain, and therefore she did not know, whether to tell Terence now [...]” or, indeed, later (309). The soporific, limbic repetition of the walk in the forest, “happy together,” “[v]ery happy,” “[w]e love each other,” “[w]e

love each other,” “[h]ot,” “[v]ery hot,” (257), is replaced with a more urgent repetition, together with a “sense of dismay and catastrophe”: “her head ached this way,” “her head ached,” “it ached,” “[m]y head aches [...],” “[y]our head aches? he repeated” (309). What had once been a “[s]ilence [which] seemed to have fallen upon the earth” (257), impeding the ability “to frame any thoughts” (256) is, in the later scene, intensively shattered: “all round him he seemed to hear the shiver of broken glass [...]” (309). Terence perhaps overreacts to what might have been the relative discomfort of a mild attack of migraine, brought on by heat. He marvels that “[Rachel] was not sharing his dismay, but was only rather more languid [...] than usual” (309). The third person narration suggests as much, stating that “he had been unreasonably depressed the moment before” (309-10). Woolf dismantles Mrs. Flushing’s earlier pronouncement on “the survival of the fittest – a most excellent plan” (260) when she asks Terence and then replies to her own question:

What would he do, she wanted to know, if the boat ran upon a rock and sank.

“Would you care for anythin’ but savin’ yourself? Should I? No, no,” she laughed, “not one scrap – don’t tell me” (259).

At Rachel’s discomfiture, her distressing symptoms, Terence thinks only of Rachel’s welfare, but he is forced to rely on “Helen’s sense [which] seemed to have much in common with the ruthless good sense of nature [...] and might be depended upon now’ (310). Helen’s natural sense might yet “avenge rashness,” offering instead a calm and dependable head. Terence’s despair is his own presentiment of disaster and his feeling will be directly drawn to the dark territory of past memories which revive against the vast fractionating minutiae of what appears so very present in the external world:

[...] he thought of the immense river and the immense forest, the vast stretches of dry earth and the plains of the sea that encircled the earth; from the sea the sky rose steep and enormous, and the air washed profoundly between the sky and the sea. How vast and dark it must be to-night, lying exposed to the wind; and in all this great space it was curious to think how few the towns were, and how like little rings of light they were, scattered here and there among the swelling uncultivated folds of the world. And in those towns were little men and women, tiny men and women. Oh, it was absurd, when one thought of it, to sit here in a little room suffering and caring. What did anything matter? Rachel, a tiny creature, lay ill beneath him, and here in his little room he suffered on her account. The nearness of their bodies in this vast universe, and the minuteness of their bodies, seemed to him absurd and laughable. Nothing mattered, he repeated; they had no power, no hope (326).

His recollections of the distant past, of the “immense river and the immense forest” (326) take on gargantuan proportions, replacing the earlier claustrophobic setting “which suggest[ed] to the traveller in a forest that he is walking at the bottom of the sea” (256). The night is “vast and dark” and “lying exposed” seems to refer to Rachel (326). The “great space” and phylogeny of Monte Rosa is invoked again, returning now in the microscopic ontogeny of the “little men and women, tiny men and women” (326), and all of this “when one thought of it” unfolding in microgeny, “the

little rings of light” and the “uncultivated folds of the world” (326). Out of such darkness and vastness, there is only one thing to do, “to sit here in a little room suffering and caring” (326). Terence (seemingly) hovers above, looking down, looking back, as Rachel “lay ill beneath him,” and yet “[n]othing mattered” (326). Terence now revives those past and intimate moments with Rachel to the present setting of a (yet another) small room. What I described as the limbic level of perception in the forest in the previous section was felt as disorientating and in keeping with “[t]he fluidity of identity in dream” (MacQueen, “Identity, Autobiography” 216). His recollections return him to the forest but his present situation feels resolutely “cortical” (Pachalska and Brown 96) – that is, by reaching the level of “conscious decision” (as we shall see), Terence begins to “form[] images of what might be or could be out there, or could have been, or should have been, and [perhaps] was not” (Pachalska and MacQueen 304).

Terence’s thoughts, alone in his “little room,” shift with ease from the phyletic scale of the mountain and his recollection of the forest, “immense,” “vast,” “enormous,” seemingly bereft of people, from its power to “encircle[] the earth,” to the human ontogeny of habitats which are “scattered here and there” (326). The human scale, with the added complication of the “nearness of their bodies” (Rachel is ailing a short distance away in another room) is, in the present circumstances, a far cry from their “walk[ing] on in silence as people walking in their sleep” (256) and serves only to surface in Terence’s present moment of microgeny and the absurdity of “the minuteness of their bodies” (326). In the earlier setting of the forest “they were both unable to frame any thoughts” (256) but now Terence is drawn as being entirely and resolutely conscious, if only via nihilism: “[n]othing mattered, he repeated; they had no power, no hope” (326). In the forest, the “ordinary world” (256) was replaced by the novelty of their surroundings but Rachel’s world and “the ordinary world” of Terence are presently unbridgeable, no matter what “effort to cross over” is made (311). The repetition of “nothing mattered – nothing mattered” remains central and leads Terence, now in his own bed, to ask “[s]urely the world of strife and fret and anxiety was not the real world, but this was the real world, the world that lay beneath the superficial world [...]” (324). Terence can hear “the shore far away, and the soft wind passed through the branches of the trees” and the “encircl[ing]” of this “peace and security” gestures again to the earlier jungle walk “into the woods together” (255), but in the present moment, “the quiet and peace” is freighted “with dark and nothingness” (324).

Rachel’s onset of illness is indicated as the sounds of breaking waves become “the repeated sigh of some exhausted creature” and her efforts “to cross over into the ordinary world” (as I just mentioned) are in vain. Rachel’s earlier “dissolution complete” (114), her inability so much as to “raise her finger any more” (114), is in the present circumstances the more ominous as she

struggles to shift her body and mind back into the ordinary world. As Pachalska points out, all of “[o]ur existence at this [or any] moment is thus the product of a flow of evolution that began millions of years ago [...] and] which initiates a particular cycle of becoming that continues to death [...]” (“Microgenetic Revolution” 115). Rachel’s inability to cross over into some semblance of the quotidian takes a stark turn, “[w]hile all her tormentors thought she was dead, she was not dead,” but this development from the depths (prior to her eventual death) is given reinforcement in its repetition:

[...] but curled up at the bottom of the sea. There she lay, sometimes seeing darkness, sometimes light, while every now and then some one turned her over at the bottom of the sea (*Voyage* 322).

There is nothing Terence can think of that will make the slightest difference to what he describes as the absurdity of his own and Rachel’s present condition, the repeatable (and repeated) phrase of “[n]othing mattered” (326, 324). The repetition comes from an earlier section in which he sought to “stand in an unvexed space of air, on a little island by himself” and it is here that he might find some relief and so avoid the memorial revivals of the voyage into the hinterland, into the jungle, and to the present hopeless scene of death: “he allowed himself to lapse into forgetfulness” (323). The relief that “nothing mattered – nothing mattered” (324) may be short lived but for a moment Terence’s “mind seemed once more to expand, and become natural” and this forgetfulness brings with it a kind of solace before the realisation that the superficial world may intervene, “here was a world in which he would never see Rachel again” (334). This, of course, is so, but, as Pachalska suggests, “[death] can hardly be understood [...] as the stoppage of time, the end of history, the immovable object struck by the irresistible force of evolutionary change” (“Microgenetic Revolution” 115) but, for Terence, Rachel’s death translates to a complete lack of substance and consequence in his questioning of what really matters.

To return to the scene of Rachel under the awning: the first symptom is given as “Rachel had a headache” (*Voyage* 309). As I have said, the first indication that something is amiss comes at the opening of the chapter: not only are the sounds of distant waves described as “repeated sigh[s]” but Rachel finds herself at one with this audible “exhausted creature” as the narration piles up the details of her vivid perception (“the bricks were hot,” “air danced perpetually,” “red flowers [...] drooping,” “white blossoms [...] thick and smooth,” “edges were curled and yellow,” “stiff and hostile,” “fleshy leaves,” and the words “hot” and “heat” which run through the first paragraph (308)). This generative process is indicated by Rachel at this stage in the narrative. Her perception of externalities is derived from her core self but it is “preliminary,” becoming “a momentary terminus” (Brown and Pachalska, “Symptom” 1). Brown and Pachalska suggest that “in both normal and pathological behaviour, microgeny deposits a cognition in the same way that phylogeny

and ontogeny deposit the human mind/brain” (1). The authors suggest, and Woolf’s narration evidences, a process whereby “[t]he cycle of birth and death, waking and sleeping, is replicated each moment in the arising, perishing and replacement of the mental state” (4). The external world’s surface develops from an initial stage of diffuse perception through “progressive differentiation and discrimination” to the distinctly perceived object (Hanlon xiv). The narration brings to the fore the “derailment of the [cognitive] process” compatible with what I have suggested are indicators of the limbic stage of consciousness (Schweiger et al, “From Coma” 335). Woolf isolates this process, making Rachel’s symptoms dreamlike and hallucinatory distortions of process. This is, however, the early stage of Rachel’s fever. As we shall see, and noted above, major characteristic effects of limbic-level disorders “are changes in mood – fear, anxiety, or sadness – which are usually not verbalized” (LM 55). Brown and Pachalska define symptoms in microgenesis by way of fusion, asserting that that “the process of structural growth (morphogenesis) and behaviour turns out to be one and the same process, reiterated over time [...]” (“Symptom” 1). The only survivors able to withstand heat and time, according to Rachel’s perception, are the endemic plants, “the stiff and hostile plants of the south,” with “fleshy leaves [...] grown upon spines” which “still remained upright and defied the sun” (*Voyage* 308).

To begin with, Rachel is aware of Terence’s reading of *Comus*, a text which has been identified by Terence as having “substance and shape” to such an extent “that it was not necessary to understand what he was saying; one could merely listen to [Milton’s] words; one could almost handle them” (308). Rachel immediately begs to differ, “[t]he words, in spite of what Terence had said, seemed to be laden with meaning,” but this meaning brings trepidation, “it was painful to listen to them; they sounded strange; they meant different things from what they usually meant” (308). The sculpting of phonemes (the sounds she hears) begins to become derailed (the semantic quality) in the unfolding of the mental process at the particular moment. She is unable to “keep her attention fixed upon them [the words and the speaker]” and this develops into “curious trains of thought” as she hears “words such as ‘curb’ and ‘Locrine’ and ‘Brute’,” which bring various images and “unpleasant sights before her eyes, independently of their meaning” (309).³⁵ In microgenesis, as noted in the introduction to the thesis, it is the moment that defines the symptom.³⁶ The microgenetic detachment of self to unfolding world travels in “an ‘inside-out’

³⁵ Jane Wheare notes that Terence is reading “a masque in which the Lady, trapped in a silver chair, is rescued by the water nymph Sabrina” (Wheare, *Voyage* n.1, 372). Claire Davison notes a link to the *Euphrosyne*: Milton’s “[*Comus*] invites rich parallels with Woolf’s novel [*The Voyage Out*], including a long prologue developing a fable of human and animal metamorphosis, [and] a speaking/singing role given to the muse Euphrosyne [...]” (25). I argue that Rachel’s symptoms are indicative of a phase in the limbic stage of cognition which is disorientating and hallucinatory.

³⁶ Helen is aware of the importance and the genesis of the present moment in *Melambrosia*. Sitting with Richard Dalloway and Rachel Vinrace, “[i]t [i]s just his eyes and hands,” she concluded, ‘at dinner,’ by which she means to

direction” (MSCW 9) and “derailment of the process” (Schweiger et al. 335) is deposited “as the image adapts to an experiential world” (MSCW 16). Rachel, at this point – at the opening of the chapter – begins to reconfigure the boundary between self and object as she herself becomes continuous with the external world. Once she is put to bed, Woolf will physicalise the process as Rachel herself becomes aware of “an animal in the room” (310) and, later still, she herself is “like a wounded animal” (338). What is happening to Rachel is extremely disturbing but she attempts to rationalise (and so objectify) the process as “[o]wing to the heat,” which gives reason to the impression that “the dancing air [in] the garden too looked strange – the trees were either too near or too far, and her head almost certainly ached” (309). As Brown suggests, the motor responses of one’s limbs are orientated to one’s physical self but even here, Rachel is quite unsure whether her head hurts at all, it “almost certainly” aches but that is all. As we shall see, the limbic system is “richly connected to the memory system” (Pachalska et al 235) and Rachel will call on the past so that she might make sense of her confined and internal state. Brown concludes that objects in the world develop as “the culmination of [the] historical process” of mentation by which he means the development of all objects in cognition (MN 127). Brown calls this (as earlier noted) the “invisible ancestry of the mental state” which “empowers action with agency and belief” (127).

The external narration is noteworthy as Woolf weaves the microgenetic moments of Rachel’s developing “limbic level [of] dream self” (MacQueen, “Identity, Autobiography” 215) (actually, a nightmare: “an animal in the room,” “piercing her forehead” (*Voyage* 310)) with moments of apparent acuity, “she made an effort to cross over into the ordinary world,” but she is forestalled as “she found that her heat and discomfort had put a gulf between her world [the limbic level] and the ordinary world [the effort to externalise this] which she could not bridge” (311). At one moment, she seems to manage some semblance of what she calls the ordinary, identifying “[the] little dark man who had [...] very hairy hands” whom we take to be her South American doctor (who is administering to her). At another moment, she sets herself a task which may guide Terence to her as a physical presence, enabling her to (yet again) “cross over into the ordinary world” (311). Rachel’s wish for the stability of the quotidian (and cortical) recalls her listening to Terence reading passages of Milton when “[h]er chief occupation during the day was to try to remember how the lines went” (311). It is here that the lines are repeated but again, not as direct or indirect speech, but as stand-alone lines in the novel as though she herself recalls them from the text itself:

Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,

express that “[t]here were no facts for her to wonder about, but there were symptoms” (*Melambrosia* 91). Rachel concurs, “[she] too had seen those eyes,” and recognises that Helen’s reliance on hands and eyes are symptomatic of the human being before them: “[t]hey were the eyes which no longer saw clearly. The unreasonable heart which seemed to have a separate life of its own [...]” (91).

In twisted braids of lilies knitting
The loose train of thy amber dropping hair (311).

The repetition, although it flows from Rachel's initial fears and Helen's instruction that she be taken to bed, foregrounds a sense of psychological (and subjective) time: "[t]he second day did not differ very much from the first day, except that [...] the world outside, when she tried to think of it, appeared distinctly further off" (311). It is at this point in the narrative that the words of the poem, again not given as speech or even thought (we assume), but which must be attributed to the latter, begins to merge with Rachel's ongoing attempts to realise the external world:

The glassy, cool, translucent wave was almost visible before her, curling up at the end of the bed, and as it was refreshingly cool she tried to keep her mind fixed upon it. Helen was here, and Helen was there all day long; sometimes she said that it was lunchtime, and sometimes that it was teatime; but by the next day all landmarks were obliterated, and the outer world was so far away [...] (311).

The landmarks which Rachel seeks are not physical structures in the external world but the internally driven "invisible ancestr[ies]" (MN 127) by which she attempts to match external sounds with memories as a mode of orientation. The heterochrony we noticed on "Monte Rosa" is the unfixable process of arising and perishing which, over time, shifts all hope of agency and meaning; her own past is obliterated and obscured in her present state just as "one [of her] hand[s]" was capable of "obscuring the whole of Santa Marina and its suburbs" out there in the distance (*Voyage* 118):

the different sounds, such as the sounds of people passing on the stairs, and the sounds of people moving overhead, could only be ascribed to their cause by a great effort of memory. The recollection of what she had felt, or of what she had been doing and thinking three days before, had faded entirely (*Voyage* 311).

Rachel has recourse to other perceptions which remain present and fractionating to surface detail. Distant objects may be lost in sounds but the endogenous process remains – albeit increasingly derailed – as a memorially driven modality of things in the room as well as from the parallel development of her own actions. The awareness of her own physical being becomes central as it takes its place as another object in the room: "[s]he was completely cut off, and unable to communicate with the rest of the world, isolated alone with her body" (312). Her body is a companion to her but her action upon it flits between self-control and the complete lack of it. Rachel is not lying still and her awareness of her body is due, in part, to a great deal of shifting around (voluntary and involuntary): "[y]ou must try and lie still," "if you lie still you will be less hot," "[a]nd the quieter you lie [...]," "[i]t's just as difficult to keep you in bed [...]" (311-312).

We discussed earlier the scene where Rachel is sitting in her chair “in the midst of universal silence” inspired by the sound of a “ticking” clock (114). This “dissolution” prompts the all-important question: “[a]nd life, what was that?” (114). Her conclusion is entirely visually orientated and is described as “only a light passing over the surface and vanishing” (114). We noted that in order to indicate her own existence, Rachel lifts her finger and “let[s] it fall on the arm of the chair so as to bring back to herself some consciousness” (114). In her small room, in her bed, she shifts about, consciously and unconsciously, because she now wishes to animate what appears to be a dreadful external solidity:

[i]n order to get rid of this terrible stationary sight Rachel again shut her eyes, and found herself walking through a tunnel under the Thames, where there were little deformed women sitting in archways playing cards [...] (312).

What were the “small noises of midday” of the earlier scene (as she mused in her chair) is now “the movements, and the lives of the other people in the house [who] went on in the ordinary light” (313). Rachel’s contemplation of “what was [life]” as “surface and vanishing” (arising and perishing) is now described by Terence – in his response to “understanding words” – as “the struggle of life; the hardness of life” (325). On the subject of Rachel’s death, the external narrator suggests that “this was death. It was nothing; it was to cease to breathe” (334). I say, external narration here, as opposed to Terence’s free indirect-discourse because the reader can’t make out with complete confidence who is doing the thinking – or, indeed, the free indirect-discoursing. The reader can be quite sure when the text reads, “it suddenly came over him that here was a world in which he would never see Rachel again” (334). That’s clear: “it suddenly came over him [...]” (334). In the section I refer to above, the text reads, variously, that “he went on thinking,” “they seemed to be thinking together,” “he seemed to be Rachel [...]” and then “he listened again” (333-334). At this precise moment, Rachel seems not to be breathing (again, we can’t be entirely sure). But if they are doing this together (“thinking together,” “he seemed to be Rachel”) and the two are somehow merged, then “this was death, [i]t was nothing [...]” might well be Rachel’s thinking. Her last thoughts could be, “[i]t was perfect happiness.” The words which follow are pluralised, “[t]hey had now what they wanted to have, the union which had been impossible while they lived” (334). My point is that the text is merging and fractionating between the two minds as well as the externally driven narration itself. We can’t know whose indirect-discourse is whose; it’s externally driven by Woolf’s descriptions of internal process.

Woolf’s writing of death as ceasing to breathe is not a declaration that an individual life is thereby rendered insignificant. On the last page of the novel, Woolf indicates by way of a single phrase that phylogenesis, ontogenesis, and microgenesis are all part of one process: “Lightning

again!” The lightning, on this occasion, does not indicate a coming storm but is “only the reflection of the storm” which has passed, leaving “[t]he sky [...] once more deep and solemn blue” as though it is itself engaged in the process of mourning (353). From her chair in the earlier scene, Rachel had pondered the possibility that “she would vanish” (114). The scene which ends the novel is a drawing together of the phyletic vastness in microgeny (“the shape of the earth was visible” (to them) and “rising and tapering mass of the mountain”) as well as the ontogenetic smallness of microscopic lives (“pricked here and there on the slopes by the tiny lights of villas”) which are recapitulated in the microgenesis of those who respond to the immediate moment as the novel ends: “[s]plendid! Splendid,” “[t]o bed – to bed,” “it was the move with your Queen that gave it away,” “Pepper beaten at last” (353). Rachel declared that she “would vanish, though the furniture in the room would remain” (114). She was right, but it is now St. John who is “half asleep, and yet vividly conscious of everything around him,” and it is to the finality of this – and Woolf’s – microgenetic concatenation that the novel ends:

[a]cross his [St. John’s] eyes passed a procession of objects, black and indistinct, the figures of people picking up their books, their cards, their balls of wool, their work-baskets, and passing him one after another on their way to bed.

Woolf’s novel may be said to incline to Terence’s view which states that all human beings “live in a state of perpetual uncertainty, knowing nothing, leaping from moment to moment as from world to world – which is, on the whole, the view *I* incline to” (116; emphasis in original). It is not, I would say, that Rachel Vinrace loses out in Mrs. Flushing’s assertion of “the survival of the fittest” (260) nor is it quite true to say that lives set against the vastness of phylogeny are insignificant. The latter would suggest, as Terence asked earlier in the novel: “Miss Somebody Vinrace ...” (*Voyage* 129; Woolf’s ellipsis), and to which we might add “Miss Nobody Vinrace” or, for that matter, “the life of anybody” (Briggs 242, Woolf qtd.). Rachel dies because she catches a jungle fever which cuts short her own potential to embark on any further “strange adventures” (*Voyage* 129) but, as noted earlier, this does not mean that her development thereby ceases too. As I have suggested, death in microgenetic theory is to “enter into a new series of transformations” (Pachalska, “Microgenetic Revolution” 115), it is to become something else. In microgenesis, phylogeny is recapitulated in ontogenesis but in life and in death both are recapitulated in microgenesis and to the unfolding of other future “momentary histories” (PAL 223).

Finally, *The Voyage Out* presents a complex world defined in part by principles readily associable with the development of human being and “the flow of mental process” as phylo-onto-microgenesis, that is, “from archaic to recent forebrain evolution” (Pachalska and MacQueen 312). I have attempted to demonstrate that momentary cognition is a “growing out” (Bradford and Brown

193) from the “intrapsychic to the extrapersonal in spatial and temporal representation” (312). I have argued that Woolf’s novel very clearly sets out to describe and delineate a process of cognition in continuous change. I linked the process of cognition to phylo-ontogeny which is recapitulated in microgenesis and surface awareness and experience of the world so presented. Woolf’s novel attempts to expose the “hidden depths” (E3 11) of what she also names in “Modern Novels” as “[the] dark region of psychology” (CR1 150; in “Modern Fiction,” “the dark places [...]” E4 162). In the first section, “Microscopic Lives,” I suggested that Woolf’s novel presents the natural world of “Monte Rosa” as a phylogenetic entity which disturbs the equilibrium of the “tame lives” (*Voyage* 124) of “Human beings” (123). I argued that Woolf transfers this sense of phylogeny to Rachel who presents her momentary cognitive process as one of continuous change and, indeed chance. I suggested too that the “forever evolutions” of the “insect” within us (*Captain’s*, “The Sun” 217) (or indeed, “the frog in the bed” (Beer, *Darwin* 7), “leaping from moment to moment,” as Terence has it (*Voyage* 116)), is a process subsumed in “human evolutions” even when they – we – appear to be, or “seem[]” to be, but “feeble and fluctuating compared with theirs” (*Captain’s*, “The Sun” 217). I suggested that Rachel’s “microscopic eye” was indeed engageable as she scrutinises every “inch of the soil of South America so minutely” and which, if only momentarily, “endowed her with supreme the power” (*Voyage* 129). In the final two sections, it was suggested that Woolf’s narrative strategy encompassed and presented a “‘paleomammalian’ limbic [stage]” (Pachalska and MacQueen 303) of cognition in order to expose the “hidden depths” of psychological process (“The Tunnel” E3 11). When antecedent phases of cognition are “unconscious” matters, new readings of Woolf were provided from the perspective of the dream consciousness of the limbic stage of cognition, in order to express the momentary microgenies at surface actualisation of human lives.

**“[H]ow do our feelings take their colour from the dive underground [...]?”:
The Microgenetic Process of Feeling in *Mrs Dalloway*.³⁷**

“There were no religious consolations for the appalling family catastrophe”: so Hermione Lee writes on the Stephens’ ill-starred journey to Greece in the autumn of 1906 (*Virginia* 227). The tourists were made up of Vanessa, Virginia, Thoby, and Adrian, plus Violet Dickinson who was there to look after them. According to Hermione Lee, “[t]he family made great preparations” for their trip but there were problems from the very beginning. Lee explains:

Vanessa began to feel ill on the voyage out, and by the time they reached Corinth they had to stop. The party split up: Thoby and Adrian went to Delphi (so Virginia missed that great sight [...]), then the three of them went to Euboea while Violet looked after Vanessa in Athens. But when they got back she was worse. One doctor said appendicitis, another “hysterics”, a third recommended ice packs. It *was* appendicitis [...] (230; emphasis in original).

We imagine that it might all have been looked back upon quite differently, given Virginia Stephen’s expense sheet naming, according to Lee, “champagne (to revive Vanessa), smelling bottles, doctors’ bills and medicines (though they did buy a lot of Turkish Delight, too)” (229). Instead, Vanessa’s recovery notwithstanding, things got progressively worse upon their return to England. Thoby had left for London on 14th October 1906, the others returned via the Orient Express and arrived back on 1st November. As Lee explains, “they found Thoby at home, seriously ill” and what was thought to be malaria was in fact typhoid (229). Violet Dickinson also returned home with a serious bout of typhoid. In a letter to Violet Dickinson, Woolf joked that “when their visitors came ‘I begin now by saying my brother has typhoid, my sister appendicitis – dont laugh’” (230; Woolf qtd. [L1 243]). Lee notes too that “[s]he [Woolf] did not fall ill or break down” as she did (for example) when her father died just two years earlier (230).³⁸

Across the time-frame of nearly a month, Woolf writes consoling letters to Violet Dickinson, detailing the daily progress of her siblings’ recovery from their respective illnesses (L1 248-66). “Old Thoby” is reported as saying, “‘I must be bad indeed before I shall forget you,’ to his nurse” on 19th November (L1 247) and, more poignantly, on the 20th, Woolf states that “[w]e are going on well through our stages. It’s a long business, but there’s no need to be anxious” (248). Thoby was not “going on well” at all; he was dead. Following an operation on the 17th November, Thoby

³⁷ L2 400, Virginia Woolf to Janet Case, 19 November 1919; *Dalloway*, 212.

³⁸ Hermione Lee explains that “[f]ive times in her life (four of them between the ages of thirteen and thirty-three) she suffered from major onslaughts of the illness and in all (possibly all) of these attacks she attempted to kill herself” (*Virginia* 175). Lee suggests that “the strain of Leslie’s long dying” precipitated “a severe breakdown in 1904, during which she made some kind of suicide attempt” (178). Lee states that during her breakdown in May 1904, “Virginia Stephen experienced auditory hallucinations” (185).

Stephen died at the age of twenty-six on the 20th November 1906. However, on the 25th November, Woolf writes that “Thoby is going on splendidly. He is very cross with his nurses, because they wont give him mutton chops and beer” (250). Woolf continued these almost daily updates of her brother’s improving condition until her letter of 18th December: “[d]o you hate me for telling so many lies! You know we had to do it” (266). A little later in the same letter, Woolf writes that “[t]he only thing I feel I could not bear would be to think that this news should make you worse” (266). In the just cited sentence, Woolf fuses what it is “[to] feel and what it is “to think” as inseparable components in her decision to spare Violet Dickinson the anguish of Thoby’s death. It seems to me that Woolf opens up to inspection the question of thought and feeling “as fused from the start” in what Brown refers to as “conceptual feeling” (Bradford and Brown 193).

What we seem to be reading in Woolf’s letters (across the month) is her own response to the grief she herself feels following the death of her brother. At one point, she suggests that what sustains the mortal part of Violet herself (food and sleep, for example) “would sink into your nerves and arteries and your gross pads of flesh, and perhaps your flame might snuff and die there. Who knows?” (L1 259). In the first instance, it would seem that Woolf is writing her fictional account (of her brother’s welfare) to spare Violet Dickinson from any further distress which then becomes interwoven with the possibility of death. In the final letter of the series, as I have stated, Woolf asks for forgiveness “for telling so many lies” (266). However, in this letter she directly, and finally, centralises herself by connecting the (now known) presence of death with her own feelings (“I can feel happy about him; he was so brave and strong, and his life was perfect”) and, only then, to what she takes to be another’s feelings, again from her own perspective (“[t]he only thing I feel [...] would be to think that this news should make you worse” (L1 266)). We, as readers of these letters, are given the sense that not only is Woolf sparing another’s feelings but she is at the same time digging deep into her own primitive self-defences.

According to Brown, the element of “self-completion” is a recurring process through which our emotional response to objects and others in the external world may be said to mirror or to supplement our needs (LoE 109). Woolf’s way of “*keeping* Thoby,” as Lee suggests, in her fictional account of his ongoing progress, is a way of delimiting her own potential loss of self (*Virginia* 231; emphasis in original). Lee highlights an essay which Woolf wrote six months later. In the review-essay of Sir Fulke Greville’s *Life of Sir Philip Sidney*, Woolf writes that “[w]hen Sidney died, at the age of thirty-two, his death was but the final harmony of a life that was too short, but that was complete indeed [...]” (E1 142, “Philip Sidney”). The amelioration of a young life lost (Sidney’s, Stephen’s) yet “complete” in death allows Woolf herself to find a way through her writing to remain “complete” in life. As Lee states, she did not “fall ill” (*Virginia* 230). This concern with the

sources of our microgenetic “completion” is (for example, and as I shall later show) written as microtemporal and memorial in Woolf’s later work, *The Waves*. Thoby’s life is presented as complete, “his life was perfect” (L1 266), but in Woolf’s novel, this idea of completion is presented in Bernard’s summing up as a sought-after wholeness which nonetheless fails to take hold and so remains incomplete: “[w]e saw for a moment laid out among us the body of the complete human being whom we have failed to be, but at the same time, cannot forget” (*Waves* 213). Published in 1931, it is hard not to see Thoby’s young life and the loss of it as the exemplar from which Woolf may judge her own life and the life of the soliloquists in *The Waves*. Brown suggests that “[t]here is feeling in the object; rather, objects are filled with our own feeling that travels with them from the mind” (Bradford and Brown 202). The more one accesses the intense feeling for an object, a person, for one’s self, the more there is a feeling “growing out” (Bradford and Brown 193) from “depth to surface” (184) or, as Woolf suggests in her letter to Janet Case many years later, “our feelings take their colour from the dive underground” (L2 400). In this case, to repeat, Woolf did not “break down,” she remained, as she presents Sidney’s life, “complete” (*Virginia* 230; Woolf qtd. [E1 142]).

This brings me to the broader outline of the coming chapter. In what follows, I attempt to follow two lines of investigation: firstly, from the standpoint of Clarissa Dalloway’s cognitive process, I explore the part played by Septimus Warren Smith, the said “young man” of the novel (*Dalloway* 201), who, according to Woolf, “was invented to complete the character of Mrs Dalloway” (L5 36). To that end, I will refer to Woolf’s comment that she should “be honest about the [...] process of the mind” (E4 549-550) so that I can argue that the invention of Septimus (by Clarissa as well as by Woolf herself) is an operating factor in Clarissa’s own deeply felt mode of “self-completion” (LoE 109). Secondly, I will then track Clarissa’s cognitive microgeny as a “process of feeling” from the primitive category of “flight [and] defence” (LoE 34) to the “ascending limb” of “fight [...] as the forward motion in the arising of the state [...]” (33). But first, I should like to present Brown’s microgenetic theory as the context which frames my intervention into “feeling” as it is presented in *Mrs. Dalloway*. I will centre the following discussion on Brown’s view that feeling and thought, that is, “the relation of affect to idea,” are not isolable phenomena (PAL 103). Brown asserts that feeling and idea are not independent but should be thought of as “fused from the start” – he refers to this process as “conceptual-feeling” (Bradford and Brown 193).

The Process of Feeling as Microgenesis

Brown's "account of feeling," then, begins with "the problem [...] of how feelings and ideas come together" (Bradford and Brown 193). As I will suggest below, he was not convinced that feeling should be thought of as separable from emotion or, indeed, that emotion should be considered "as a kind of peripheral phenomenon" (193). Brown's contention – and starting point in what follows – is that "it did not seem to [him] that they actually did come together" (193). That is to say, "[a] more intimate and profound relation of feeling to object is needed if we are to avoid the mistaken view, especially in psychoanalysis and neuroscience, that feeling is mere energy in an adventitious contact with objects" (PAL 109).³⁹ To that end, Brown provides a theory of "feeling" which for convenience I will separate into three inter-linking parts. Firstly, "the energetic theory [...] of emotion," that is to say, "emotion begins as energy" (PAL 106, 107), secondly, as I mentioned earlier, that "feeling" has a "conceptual framework" (Bradford and Brown 193), and thirdly, I will describe the impact of "primitive categories" (MacQueen, "Identity, Autobiography" 216).

The "energetic theory of emotion" (as the phrase suggests) is centred on Brown's "thesis [...] that emotion begins as energy, e.g., the wave-form of a basic entity" before "it takes on an aim or direction," that is, a "phase-transition" across which "energy is transformed to feeling" (PAL 107). Therefore, in the first place, if the external world is the surface of one's mental state, then to arrive at that surface appearance of a pre-given world we "must trace[] conscious experience back to the physical foundations of existence, or from the facts of perception – object data or their *appearances* – to a deeper reality" (MTPT 66; emphasis in original). "Feeling," then, from its energetic inception, "is a quality that propels evolutionary process from its origination in inanimate nature and non-cognitive entities to its manifestation in the higher mentality, exhibiting trends in nature that transfer to the human brain as a physical entity" (MTPT 67). In theory, according to Brown, if all else could be eliminated from human interaction (acts, objects, mental contents), "mental activity would likely be felt as *pure feeling* without origin or subjective aim" (66; emphasis mine). This idea of "pure feeling" in microgenesis is "thematic in the evolution of mind, and foundational to the

³⁹ Microgenetic theory describes an intrinsically produced process of emergent and holistic consciousness which surfaces to recurring object-formation: "[t]he MG [microgenetic] concept of perception is that of an intrinsic-productive process, a continuous sheet of mentation from the instinctual core to perceptible reality, and not, as in PSA [psychoanalysis] [...], the passive reception of external stimuli that are stored and secondarily activated in relation to sexual drive (MSCW 42)." If perception is the foundation – or the "linchpin" (35) – of microgenetic theory, as Brown suggests, then "the doctrine of repression is the foundation-stone on which the whole structure of psychoanalysis rests" (MSCW 47; Freud qtd. [*Collected Papers*, Vol. 1, *On the History of the Psycho-analytic Movement*, Hogarth, 1924, 297].) In perceptual microgenesis, then, "the transformation of one segment [in mentation] to the next is inferred from clinical symptoms, which allow the alignment of errors as formative phases to reveal the path of object formation" (42). Of central importance to microgenetic theory, "but not a part of PSA [psychoanalysis], is the microtemporal process that accounts for self – and object realization" (47).

derivation of instinct, drive, desire and emotion” (66). So, “pure feeling” – as I shall term this originary entity – is a deeper activity that comes before emotions and ideas and thoughts but which is the basis, as it were, of those very emotions, ideas and thoughts. In other words, “pure feeling” is the very centre of the onion around which mental contents and events may be said to be growing and becoming at surface level. Unpeel the layers of the hypothetical onion and we would (in reverse order) eventually reach – and thereby expose – this “originating activity” (68).

This idea of “pure feeling” as originating activity may now be expanded to the second interlinking part of this explanation of “feeling” and to what Brown names as “conceptual-feeling” (Bradford and Brown 193). Therefore, secondly, Brown suggests that “[a] mode or category of feeling has a conceptual framework for which a context or name determines the content, orientation and locus” (PAL 101).⁴⁰ In that respect, what he calls “conceptual-feeling” is very specifically the feeling that travels outward as part of the object, inhabiting (whatever the external object is) as a thing of interest and especial value (say, in the example of the beloved) (Bradford and Brown 193). Brown’s formulation of his theory of microgenesis posits feelings, and our thoughts about an object, as not, in fact, coming together at some point in the cognitive process but as a fusion of feeling and concept from the very commencement of the process – that is to say, “‘conceptual feeling’ [...] individuates into what appear to be discrete concepts and feelings, though even the most abstract concepts have a feeling tone and the most primitive feelings devolve out of categories” (193). The question now presents itself: how do we separate “feeling” from “emotion”? “Pure feeling” may be understood as travelling outward – as energy – and it is this originary presentation which “implies a relation to emotion or an affective tonality that suffuses experience and enlivens objects” (MTPT 68). According to Brown, a thought and a feeling are not dissociable (conceptual-feeling, is one process) so that feelings “embody concepts” and concepts are drenched with affect; in Brown’s terms, “[a] thought saturated by a feeling is an emotion,” say, infatuation for a beloved one. Conversely, one might as easily (and metaphorically) drain that saturation affect “when [for example] reason or abstract thought seems independent of emotion” (in quiet contemplation, say), but, as Brown writes, “it is only a matter of emphasis” (Brown and Tomaszewski 3).

⁴⁰ According to Brown, the self is “a singular category [which] retains a stable identity over a lifetime [...]” The self, then, is “self-identical” – in the main, we know who we are (our identity) throughout life – but there is (as Brown describes it) a “downside”: that is, “a near-infinite number of selves accumulate over a lifetime, each actualizing the category and contributing to the sum of the self to that moment [...]” (MSCW 128). MacQueen, in a work on identity and autobiography, states that “[t]he psychological paradox of identity as a feeling consists in a desire to be and not to be the same as others” (“Identity, Autobiography” 200).

This brings me to the third interlinking part, that is, primitive categories. As discussed above, we can put forward the view that “[e]motions such as drive or will, pain and pleasure, approach and avoidance, are vectors of [“pure feeling”] that distribute [...] as energy into emotion” (MTPT 66). According to Bruce MacQueen, primitive categories operate at the lowest level of the central nervous system:

[t]he organism perceives and reacts to stimuli in broad, primitive categories which it would be misleading to name. The perceived object is encoded with its response, which makes behavior on this level scarcely more than reflex, controlled by instinct. What defines a category at this stage in the microgenesis of behaviour is thus a stimulus that evokes a given behaviour and directs it toward itself (“Identity, Autobiography” 216).

MacQueen notes “that the microgenetic perspective gives primacy to a small set of transitive verbs [to flee, to fight, to eat, to couple with it] whose objects are the stimuli that evoke the action” (215). He notes too the importance of “the pronoun *it*,” for example, fleeing from it, fighting it, suggesting that “objects which cannot be ‘it’ are *indifferentia* or simply non-existent” (215; emphasis in original). MacQueen states that when “[t]he stimulus appears in the perceptual field, there is an immediate reaction (or not) which ends in success or failure in a few moments, and then the entire event is finished, one way or another,” that is, the stimulus is understood as a “reaction category” (215).⁴¹ Brown suggests that a theory of “pure feeling” is a “psychology of becoming” (MTPT 82) oneself which by its very nature “is fleeting and unobservable” and yet “the dynamic of process theory [...] must explain why the world seems to contain innumerable substances, how they are stabilized and how they appear independent of the observer, since the cognitive process that underlies substance has no perceptible correlates” (83). To that end, Brown suggests that “[a]ll mental contents and objects are categorical frames of [pure feeling]” (83).⁴²

⁴¹ According to MacQueen, in “Identity, Autobiography, and the Microgenesis of the Self,” the Heraclitean paradox (“you cannot step into the same river twice”) foregrounds “being and not being” (MacQueen 189). He cites Heraclitus thus: “[i]nto the same rivers we both enter and do not enter, we both are and are not” (Heraclitus qtd. 189 f. Diels-Kranz translation). MacQueen suggests that “[t]he psychological paradox of identity as a feeling consists in a desire to be and not to be the same as others” (200). Brown’s metaphors have a stable quality (a fountain or tree (or, indeed, a person) in a park) of ongoing recurrence. MacQueen’s Heraclitean river is specifically concerned with “the play on words, involving the contrast between [...] ‘the same rivers’ [...] [and] ‘other, different waters’ [...]” (197). The river that passes beneath you as you stand on a bridge has passed once and for all, the fountain recurs from the form (or the tree from its roots, the self from its core): “microgenetic theory,” as MacQueen continues, “is the continual re-actualization of the past in each passing moment, the advancing wave of the present moment that guarantees the continuity of existence” (200; Brown paraphrased).

⁴² Brown refers to the development of categories in microgenetic theory in this way: “[a] category is a set of actual or potential objects that are related by shared attributes [a tree, say, an ash or an oak, in winter and in spring], but it can be thought of as an envelope that frames an entity, an elementary particle, a mind/brain state or a segment within the state” (MTPT 79). In the unfolding of the mind/brain state, becoming incorporates all of the preceding phases through which it has developed. If what actualises – the perceived tree in a city park (say) – is the category, that is, “the being or ‘substance’ of the entity,” the end-point (the tree before you) is the becoming of what is perceived: the arising and perishing of the tree – an oak, an ash, in winter or in spring – continuously perceived. Brown suggests that “[t]his relation of mass to energy foreshadows that of substance to process. This relation is replicated in the categorical primitives that enclose a drive, or in the conceptual-feelings that embody affectively-charged ideas or objects” (79).

I will now refer to Clarissa Dalloway's purely felt but ultimately distanced connection to the figure of Septimus Warren Smith – Septimus is the enigmatic figure brought to Clarissa's party via the hearsay of two of the invitees. It is he who becomes the "germ" from which we might evaluate Clarissa's own self-preservation as a mode of what we have been calling, after Brown, "self-completion" (LoE 109).

The "Complete" Clarissa Dalloway

There are two enigmatic statements made by Woolf upon which this section on "completion" may be said to rest. The first is contained in a letter to Harmon H. Goldstone (a Harvard student) in which she states that "[a]s far as I remember, Septimus in Mrs Dalloway was invented to complete the character of Mrs Dalloway [...]" (L5 35). The second, perhaps the most enigmatic of all, is stated in Woolf's own introduction to the first North American edition of *Mrs Dalloway*, written in 1928:

[o]f *Mrs Dalloway* then one can only bring to light at the moment a few scraps, of little importance or none perhaps; as that in the first version Septimus, who later is intended to be her double, had no existence; and that Mrs Dalloway was originally to kill herself, or perhaps merely to die at the end of the party (E4 549).

Woolf may suggest that the "few scraps" she mentions are of little importance but, at the end of the above cited, she goes on to say that "[s]uch scraps are offered humbly to the reader in the hope that like other odds and ends they may come in useful" (549). Both comments, to Goldstone and to her (North American) readership (and so to us), are stated as recollections but their value – their usefulness – is strong and not, I think, in the least diminished by Woolf's denial that "[t]he book [...] was the deliberate offspring of a method" (549). The said "method" is stated thus: "[...] in the present case [of the novel] it was necessary to write the book and to invent a theory afterwards" (550). What is called for, then, with regards to her method of writing, ("as far as it is possible") is that she should "be honest about the mysterious process of the mind" (549-550).

In this section, then, I should like to respond to Woolf's statement in the "first version" where Clarissa was to kill herself, or come to some other mortal end. I am also keen to address the just mentioned declaration in her introduction to *Mrs. Dalloway*, that she should "be honest about the [...] process of the mind" (549-550). The invention of Septimus Smith (as Clarissa's "young man" (*Dalloway* 201) and Woolf's assertion that he might be "founded on me [Woolf]?" ("Hours" 418; see note 43 below)) may be understood as an operating factor in Clarissa's own deeply felt mode of "self-completion" (LoE 109). I think there are some striking similarities between Woolf's fictionalising of Thoby and the way Clarissa has been written as composing a representation of a dead person. Woolf's brother was, of course, known to her, but in the case of Clarissa it is a

deceased “young man” who is brought in to the foreground (201). I suggested earlier that Woolf’s motive was a way to respond to her own grief (as well as considering Violet Dickinson’s own well-being). As I noted above, according to Lee, Woolf writes her letters as a way of “*keeping* Thoby” in situ as it were by continuing to play a role in her process of completion (and not breaking down) (*Virginia* 231; emphasis in original). How will Septimus, as Woolf suggests, “complete” Clarissa during the course of the novel? What is it about this particular death, with its fictionalising potential (for Clarissa), that she may draw on so that she might supplement her own needs, if not, precisely, to mirror him – since she herself remains alive? The one suicide does not lead to another. If Clarissa does not meet Septimus, let alone set eyes upon him (she may notice him as she advances to a shop window: “Mrs. Dalloway, coming to the window with her arms full of sweet peas, looked out with her little pink face pursed in enquiry. [...] Septimus looked” (*Dalloway* 16)) then the question of concern flows not from physical connection but from how Woolf manages to interconnect the lives of Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Warren Smith so effectively. Finally, it must be owned from the very beginning that there is no known extant “first version” and so I am relying on Woolf’s North American introduction which I have noted above and which gives substance to the possibility of a suicidal Clarissa.⁴³

The question of Clarissa’s mortality in the novel is, then, a somewhat conflicted matter for a number of Woolf scholars. That is to say, the possible suicide of Clarissa (to come as the novel concludes) is not only noted by Julia Briggs and by Woolf herself in her introduction to the novel that we have just seen (Briggs 141, E4 549). For example, Elaine Showalter’s own introduction to the Penguin version of 1992 adds her authority to the possibility that Clarissa and Septimus might be brought together in a kind of dual suicide. Showalter cites Woolf’s journal entry of 1922, that “[t]here must be some sort of fusion,” and the reader is left to conclude whether the fusion might not be for Clarissa, standing away from her party and alone at the window, to jump at the novel’s end (xxvii). Alex Zwerdling suggests too that “[t]he party at the end of the novel [...] is a kind of wake” (121-122). It is true that Clarissa disappears from her own party, leaving Peter Walsh and

⁴³ There are two points I should like to make here. Firstly, referring to Woolf’s introduction to her own novel (for “the impression of the first [North] American edition” (E4 An Introduction 550, no. 1)), Julia Briggs points out that “there is no independent evidence of any such ‘first version,’ and she later commented that ‘the character of Septimus in Mrs Dalloway was invented to complete the character of Mrs Dalloway’ (which looks nearer the mark)” (Briggs 141, Woolf qtd. [E4 549]). Secondly, just who Septimus is may be assisted with reference to her writing notebooks for “The Hours.” Kathryn Van Wert notes Woolf’s entry from 19th November 1922 where “she has been musing on possible foundations for the character of Septimus Smuth. ‘Founded on R.? His face. Eyes far apart – not degenerate. Not wholly an intellectual. Had been in the war. Or founded on me?’” (Van Wert 75, Woolf qtd. [“Hours” 418]). Van Wert speculates that the “R” might be Rupert Brooke (75). In the present chapter, I am not speculating as to who Septimus is but merely drawing a parallel between Woolf’s process of fictionalising Thoby’s ongoing recovery and Clarissa’s own account of a young man she had never met in person; her vivid account of him is drawn from overheard hearsay at her party. I will return to this in due course.

Sally Seton to reminisce on their shared pasts with their hostess and old friend. Moreover, Clarissa's health is an issue from the very beginning of the novel. At the hush before Big Ben strikes, Woolf foregrounds Clarissa's influenza in parenthesis: "(but that might be her heart affected, they said, by influenza)" as well as stating that Clarissa "has grown very white since her illness" (*Dalloway* 4). Hermione Lee cites Peter Walsh's thoughts, early in the novel, which centre on Clarissa's death: "[...] the sound [of the bell of St. Margaret's] suggests to him both her life [...] and her death ('Clarissa falling where she stood, in her drawing room')" (Lee, 2010 114; Woolf qtd.). Avrom Fleishman argues that Clarissa's "temptation by death is furthered by her anxiety in the face of the dangers of living" (87). Alice van Buren Kelly, in explaining why Clarissa takes no deadly action at the novel's end, suggests that Septimus absolves Clarissa from taking any such rash action: "[n]ow that her need for the purification of death has been fulfilled through [...] [Septimus]" (111). Furthermore, Makiko Minow-Pinkney links Septimus's "momentary pause" ("I went under the sea. I have been dead, and yet am now alive [...]") with Clarissa's: "and yet [...] solemn, feeling as she did, standing there at the open window, that something awful was about to happen" (81; Woolf qtd.). Minow-Pinkney suggests that these moments are "a pause or indeterminacy between life and death" (82). Briggs, foregrounding the death of Septimus in *Mrs Dalloway*, states that "[t]here is no suggestion of Clarissa's death in 'Mrs Dalloway in Bond Street' where it is the young men who die, and are survived by mourning older women" (141). That is quite right, of course, and in keeping with Clarissa's own mode of survival which, as I will argue, is in large part brought about by her empathy for Septimus's bravery in war and in his suicide. As I shall note, there is a certain level of completion as well as embodiment in their metaphorical embrace.

In order to indicate the background to *Mrs Dalloway*, Julia Briggs takes a well-known quotation from Woolf's essay, "Modern Fiction": "[e]xamine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day" (Briggs 132; Woolf qtd. [CRI 149]). Briggs notes, however, that "though the ordinary day turns out to be an extraordinary one, this is just what she does in *Mrs. Dalloway*" – she writes from the perspective of a single day (Briggs 132). But is it, as Briggs suggests, "extraordinary" (132)? It is true that the novel is set, in the main, among people from a particular social background, that is, *Mrs. Dalloway* contains men and women who hold high office or are titled people, but the suicide of a young man suffering from "the deferred effects of shell shock" (*Dalloway* 201), following war, cannot, perhaps, be said to be extraordinary. What is extraordinary, however, is that the hostess of a glittering party which houses such luminaries as the Prime Minister might well have ended it with her own suicide. However, that is not what transpires. Instead, Woolf produces "an embrace in death" (202). The emotional connection of the "young man" to Clarissa (at the novel's conclusion)

is of a non-existent Septimus (unknown to her and, in any case, dead) which, none the less, saves her from herself: she decides against the suicide that Woolf had originally intended – opting to return to the party and to life. It may be noted along the way that in addition to Septimus's invention to “complete the character of Mrs Dalloway” (L5 35), Woolf states (to Harmon Goldstone) that, without Septimus, “I could not otherwise convey my whole meaning about her [Mrs Dalloway]” (L5 36). This makes Clarissa the main protagonist but it is Septimus who becomes the pivotal figure upon whom the novel – *Mrs. Dalloway* – may rest.

The novel is set on one day in “the middle of June” (*Dalloway* 4). It is hot and London is in the midst of an early summer heat wave. Clarissa Dalloway (aged about “fifty – fifty-two” in “Mrs. Dalloway” (*Haunted House* 147); a few years older in the novel) is making preparations for the glittering party that she and her husband, Richard Dalloway M.P. (“not in the Cabinet” (*Dalloway* 204)), will host that evening. The prime minister is on the guest list (190) along with Sir William Bradshaw, “the priest of science,” (103), Peter Walsh, an erstwhile suitor, and Sally Seton, Clarissa's childhood friend, among others. The various characters and incidents, narrated directly (and omnisciently) or (at times) through indirect discourse, are intertwined, operating alternatively, but merging at particular moments in the time and space of the novel. The collision of fate (if I can term it so) arrives in the form of the said Sir William Bradshaw, espouser of (the capitalised) “Proportion” and a specialist in nervous conditions (109), and “[h]er ladyship” (the former's wife) (103), who tell of Septimus's suicide. Sir William Bradshaw, after a “little talk” with Septimus, earlier in the day, arranges for him to “go into a home” which precipitates Septimus's suicide and his final questioning of what remains of his life: “[o]nly human beings?” (164).

To what extent is it possible to suggest that Septimus's death has a life-affirming – indeed, self-completing and emotionally responsive – effect upon Clarissa who, absenting herself from her own party (at the novel's end), stands alone before a window in a “little room” (201)? This would have been – if Woolf had meant to do it in the “first version” – the perfect opportunity for Clarissa to jump as Septimus has a little earlier in the day. Indeed, she instantly feels a most terrible tremor through her body as “her dress flamed, her body burnt” (201). This intense feeling of fire and heat might bring death and so to be “parted from the earth” (198). But it is not her; it is “[h]e [who] had thrown himself from a window” (201). Whatever Woolf meant to do, this is the crucial moment of tension between Clarissa and the young man who is now, in fact, dead just as Thoby was when Woolf was writing her fictionalised account of her brother's recuperation. As well as avoiding a “break down,” as noted earlier (*Virginia Woolf* 230), Lee suggests that “[p]robably these extraordinary, detailed, inventive letters were making the fact of Thoby's death bearable to her” (231). As I suggested above, Woolf's letters to Violet Dickinson are an emotional response to

Thoby who remains a material entity so long as he is presented as a fictional entity. There is also a process, a method perhaps, which helps Woolf to compose her letters. Writing to Violet, but imploring herself, she writes: “and tell me to efface myself – efface myself and efface myself – but when you see me next you will regret the loss of my nose” (L1 256). Woolf makes her “finest feature” the subject of spiritual obliteration, and personal and divine, as “[t]he noseless enter where the nosy are denied” and where the experience of “pain on earth is ease in Heaven” (256).

Woolf writes a phantom figure of the dead (the “unseen part of us”) to whom one may attach one’s own vivifying process of self-completion and, indeed, of fellow feeling. Clarissa goes so far as to visualise the fall, stating that “up had flashed the ground; through him” (201-202). Woolf (Virginia Stephen) represents Thoby as a “form that looms behind – that queer ghost. I think of death sometimes as the end of an excursion which I went on when he died. As if I should come in & say well, here you are” (D3 275). In the case of the novel, Clarissa enters into a small room and via interior monologue, makes Septimus’s death an “attempt to communicate” (202). As I said earlier, in death, Woolf’s attitude to life is one of present emotion, “I can feel happy,” as well as satisfaction with her brother’s past and fortitude, “he was so brave and strong, and his life was perfect” (L1 266). Clarissa will re-join the party, having had what we earlier referred to as “an embrace in death” (*Dalloway* 202). Her ability to fictionalise and to feel Septimus as physically present is also her way to de-sentimentalise his suicide and to choose to go on living. The materiality of fellow-affection is present too in the letters Woolf writes to Violet Dickinson and she ends one letter (a month since her brother died) by saying “I wish we could put our pens in the fire, and take to the material embrace” (L1 261). Clarissa returns to the throng of her party, remaining still the “pure hearted” hostess who “had come to feel that it was the only thing worth saying – what one felt. Cleverness was silly. One must say simply what one felt” (*Dalloway* 210).⁴⁴ Her feeling for Septimus is a decision to live and to express what it is “to feel” in the present and what “one felt” in the past. Septimus is therefore “felt” as an external (and unknown) object, that is to say, he the individuating object bringing together “concept and feeling” into Clarissa’s mode of “self-completion” (LoE 109).

Clarissa’s contact with the death of Septimus, however, has been brief, spread over only three pages of text at the end of the novel, beginning “[a] young man (that is what Sir William is telling

⁴⁴ Annalee Edmondson suggests that ‘Clarissa’s physiological response to [Septimus’s suicide], may have come in part from Vanessa Stephen’s response to the death of a young man at a party she attended on 26 June 1922: “Dinner with Nessa last night. My attempt[s] at sensation were over-shadowed by her really & surprising one – nothing less than the death of a young man at Mrs. Russell’s dance. They sat out on the roof, protected by fairy lamps & chairs. He crossed, perhaps to light a cigarette, stepped over the edge, & fell 30 feet onto flagstones. [...] He died in the ambulance that fetched him. The dance was stopped. Nessa says the younger generation is callous. No one was upset; some telephoned for news of other dances”’ (Edmondson 33-34, n. 20; Woolf qtd. [D2 51]).

Mr. Dalloway) had killed himself” (201) and ending, “[a]nd she came in from the little room” (204). It is a short span to justify Septimus as the agent of her completion. But his effect upon her is immediate and profound. We know that as soon as she hears of the suicide, Mrs. Dalloway enters “into the little room” (201). It is written as though she herself is having some kind of panic attack as “[a]lways her body went through it first” by which she means when “she [i]s told, suddenly, of an accident” (201). But this is not someone she knows and the heat and distress may seem out of place and somewhat exaggerated. Clarissa, approximately twenty years older than Septimus, comes to realise that she is “done with the triumphs of youth” and, having been “lost [...] in the process of living,” manages “to find it [again], with a shock of delight, as the sun rose, as the day sank” (203). In terms of time, Septimus’s sun, shortly before his suicide, is beginning its descent, it is approximately 1800hrs.: “[t]he sun [is] hot” but it is perishing. Another reversal may be indicated. Away from the party, Clarissa’s perception of the sun’s arising is juxtaposed against what has past, “the day sank,” and may be read as an alteration to optimism which foregrounds the coming of natural colour: “the sun rose” (colour and movement). The metaphor of the arising (Clarissa’s) and perishing (Septimus’s) sun is made a matter of life, in Clarissa’s “shock of delight” (203), and of death, in Septimus’s “I’ll give it to you!” (164). Perhaps the life he is about to give away is his gift to the external world or perhaps it is a response to what one feels forced to do when “human nature is on you” (107). I will refer to Woolf’s fractional phrase – “Perhaps – perhaps” (167) – in due course. Clarissa does not jump: Septimus jumps and is so “horribly mangled” that he “would not recover consciousness” (164). It is Dr. Holmes who directs that his wife, Rezia, “must not see him [...]” (164).⁴⁵ Clarissa, who does not know Septimus, responds to him as though her own feeling is travelling with him from her mind to his. His violent death will be made life-affirming and will give substance and feeling to Clarissa’s own sense of completion.

There is another figure too, who will make an appearance. As she stands at the window, Clarissa notices an elderly woman across the street: “[o]h, but how surprising! – in the room opposite the old lady stared straight at her!” (203). The “old lady” is “quite quietly going to bed alone” (204). It is at this moment in the novel, just as the woman “pulled the blind,” that “[t]he clock began striking” (204). Clarissa repeats the phrase that “[t]he young man killed himself,” adding that “she did not pity him; with the clock striking the hour, one, two, three, she did not pity him, with all this going on” (204). Just as Clarissa states that “she did not pity him,” she notices that “the old lady put out her light!” which is given the exclamation mark as if the light’s loss

⁴⁵ The phrase ‘[f]ear no more the heat o’ the sun’ is shared between Clarissa (10, 32, 204) and Septimus. The refrain has an echoing of Woolf’s own refrain of a later diary entry, ‘[f]light, fight. If I could catch the feeling, I would [...]’ (D3 260). In Septimus’ case, the refrain arrives as he hears ‘dogs barking [...] far away’ before his suicide: ‘[f]ear no more, says the heart in the body; fear no more’ (*Dalloway* 153).

responds to the elderly woman's diminishing life ("the whole house was dark now with this going on" (204)). Clarissa can no longer see anything of the elderly woman and so gives up her place at the window and returns to the party. It is important, for "she must go back to them" and then, chiming with Briggs, as I noted earlier, we hear that it was indeed "an extraordinary night!" (204). Her feeling is past but "[s]he felt somehow very like him [Septimus]" (204). The exhilaration of the "extraordinary night" may well be reinforced by the woman going to bed (as ongoing life), but we as readers feel too that we have witnessed Clarissa's mode of self-completion via Brown's "microgenetic idea" that "feeling accompanies the [...] object outward in its trajectory from mind to world" and from mind to surface objects (Bradford and Brown 193).

In the letters to Violet Dickinson, Woolf suggests that the horrors of typhoid may offer something new. The letter is written on (or around) 4th December 1906, and she suggests something may be available for Violet which quite clearly is denied her brother. As the letter ends, she states that "it's a thing [typhoid] that leaves no ill effects [...], so you can look forward to a double life in purity and cleanliness" (L1 257). The young man has died – Septimus, Thoby – but the elderly woman (the "old lady") who puts out her light reveals herself as present ("how surprising") and as past ("the whole house was dark now") (204). As the "clock strikes the hour," it is reported that Clarissa "did not pity him" as Septimus becomes a past event as well as present and futural, "with all this going on" (204). The externally narrated sounding bells are more than simply heard, they become objectified in microgenesis as a "type of spatial music" (MN 151): "the leaden circles dissolved in the air" (*Dalloway* 204). The solidity of sound is felt too by Septimus whose feelings are indirectly given as part of his unfolding emotional derailment: "(that music should be visible was a discovery)" (75). It is this sense of time as emotionally charged which offers Clarissa the opportunity of a "double life" – from past to present, youth to age, sickness to health – and which dictates that now "she must go back" (204). Septimus's separation from Rezia is an end by self-destruction, but his presence in Clarissa's mental state provides an alternate end: her decision to go on living – Septimus becomes the object of emotion and a mode of Clarissa's self-completion. This brings me to what I named earlier as primitive categories and how the distribution of energetic "pure feeling" to "conceptual-feeling" is intricately linked to human survival and recovery (MTPT 66).

Clarissa's Flight and Fight Mode

I have suggested so far that Septimus is the unseen figure who makes up a central component of Clarissa's "mode of self-completion" (LoE 109). I argued that Clarissa's emotional response to objects, self and others in the external world may be said to mirror or to supplement her emotional

needs. I would like to return Clarissa to her “little room” for a little while longer in order to follow the trajectory of her primitive categories of survival and recovery. To begin with, however, I should like to present Clarissa as a progressively diminishing figure, which I touched on earlier. At the beginning of the novel, Clarissa is making haste with the preparations for a party which will end the novel, but what she feels is at once reported as insubstantial: “[s]he had the oddest sense of being herself invisible; unseen; unknown [...]” (11). Woolf’s consideration of a suicidal Clarissa might well call for a continuously diminishing Clarissa right up to the point of death. There is a detectable process of her dissolving throughout the entire novel: from the first bell’s “leaden circles” (4) and sense of “herself being invisible” (11) to the oddly enigmatic “final stroke [that] tolled for death [...], Clarissa falling where she stood, in her drawing room” (54) and onward to the etiolation of “I fade, she was beginning, I disappear” before her very own party (177). It was noted earlier, among other things, that Woolf intriguingly offers a glimpse of Clarissa’s physical condition in parenthesis: “(but that might be her heart affected, they said, by influenza)” as well as letting the reader know that Clarissa “has grown very white since her illness” (4). But Clarissa is not continuously drawn as a figure without substance or as one that is dissolving. We can refer to the indirectly given, “nothing mattered,” as Peter intricately links the dual phrase (of materiality and a thing of importance) to her “falling in love with Dalloway” and “Dalloway falling in love with her” (68). Falling in love should bring elevation and self-completion but what we have is “[a]nd then in a second it was over” (69). Falling in love is a momentary descent and little more. Peter is made the “prey to revelations at that time” and Clarissa becomes “like iron, like flint, rigid up the backbone” (70). Feeling and falling is centralised, as it is in Septimus’s falling, but Peter is made prey, he is the one “with the tears running down” and Clarissa who says, “[i]t’s no use. It’s no use. This is the end” – “it was as if she had hit him in the face” (70). This certainly smacks of survival and perhaps recovery (over time) and the ambiguity of Clarissa’s feelings are important: is the love felt for Richard Dalloway the “[n]othing mattered” or are we to take it as an indictment of her feelings for Peter, or both? As I say, feeling and falling are a matter of arising and perishing.

In an early work by Beverly Schalk, “A Freudian Look at *Mrs. Dalloway*,” she discusses Clarissa Dalloway’s reading matter and links a particular text to her rejection of Peter Walsh as well as to her “sometimes yielding to the charm of a woman [...] she did undoubtedly then feel what men felt” (Schalk 50; Woolf qtd. 51 [*Dalloway* 34]). Clarissa reads Baron de Marbot’s *Memoirs* and this “interest in Napoleonic, belligerent, warlike masculinity” is given a Nietzschean (as well as Freudian) spin by Schalk, who describes the de Marbot as “an indication of the frustrated will-to-power hidden within her [Clarissa]” (50). The rejection of Peter, then, according to Schalk, “reflects a curiously male orientation” (50). A reading in microgenesis, would highlight the sentence which

comes immediately after “she did undoubtedly feel what men felt,” that is, “[o]nly for a moment; but it was enough” (*Dalloway* 34). Each revival of memory is momentary; it is micro-temporal as microgenesis and it is arising and perishing – “the past must be revived in the present” (Brown, “Time” 218). “It was a sudden revelation,” as Clarissa is given to express it, “a tinge like a blush which one tried to check and then, as it spread, one yielded to its expansion [...]” (34). To realise Clarissa as the diminishing and whitening figure to one who may carnate on occasion – “tinge like blush” (34), “coloured, in a way she had” (70) – is to describe the perishing and arising as a process of cognitive microgenesis.⁴⁶ But Clarissa does not dissolve, Clarissa returns to her party, and so gives sustenance to her “transcendental theory” (“which, with her horror of death, allowed her to believe [...]” (167)). What is this “transcendental theory,” and why does it (the theory) come to an end, following the “[o]dd affinities she had with people she had never spoken to, some woman in the street, some man behind a counter – even trees, or barns” (167)? We are brought up sharp here, wondering when it was that Clarissa was holding her conversations and encounters with trees and barns (as Septimus will in hearing sparrows sing in Greek (26)). Although she has not yet heard

⁴⁶ Early work on Woolf and psychoanalysis includes, Joseph Blotner (1956) who, among other things, links Sigmund Freud’s “interpretation of the Oedipus myth” to James Ramsay’s “jealousy and feelings of rivalry with his father.” Blotner argues in favour of an intensifying process derived “perhaps [by James’s] unconscious knowledge of the sexual aspect of the relationship between his parents” (560). Years later, according to Blotner, James substitutes Mrs. Ramsay with his sister, Cam, who is eventually won over by Mr. Ramsay. According to Blotner, “James acknowledges his defeat. ‘Yes,’ thought James pitilessly ... ‘now she will give way. I shall be left to fight the tyrant alone’” (561). Claire Kahane’s essay (1980), among other things, provides an account of how “[c]ontemporary theories of the self agree that our sense of self develops from seeing and experiencing our reflection through others” (72). She suggests that “[f]rom mother to other, from beginning and to some extent always, the outside world serves a mirroring function, so that we continue to perceive the things around us ‘narcissistically,’ if not as much a part of ourselves as our hands and feet, yet still reflexively endowed with the quality of self. In this way we know the world” (72). Also, Suzette Henke (1981) argues that “[i]n Freudian terms, Septimus Smith would probably be diagnosed as ‘paraphrenic’ – a category used by Freud, without special connotation, to describe *dementia praecox* in relation to paranoia” (14). Henke suggests that “[t]he objects that Smith enumerates take on private, autistic connotations,” for example, the phrase “alone with the sideboard and the bananas” may have some “privileged significance” (although “difficult to penetrate”) as well as “the obvious phallic symbolism of the bananas” (16). Henke suggests that “Septimus illustrates in his ravings the schizophrenic tendency toward symbolism, displacement, and condensation” (16). Brown suggests that there are certainly two ways of looking at the unconscious in relation to consciousness. We might suggest that “experience first passes through consciousness in order to be revived in the unconscious” (Brown, “Simultaneity” 83). In microgenesis, it is the other way around: “consciousness is always preceded by, and enfolds, an unconscious transition, so that an attenuated mental state, such as dream, or a variety of pathological states, even coma, could exist without realizing consciousness” (83). Other Woolf scholars with a psychoanalytic bent include, early work by Jan Ellen Goldstein (1974) (on “‘Moorism,’ and Freudianism,” referring to G. E. Moore); Elizabeth Abel (1989) (on, for example, a base that “Woolf’s engagement with psychoanalysis was deeply embedded in history” (xvi). For instance, “through the 1920s [...] Woolf’s narratives move backward toward the maternal point of origin that Freud, in the same decade, both acknowledged and occluded and that Klein mapped with greater complexity” (xvi)); Nicky Platt (2010) (on Woolf’s interest in Freudianism as undergoing a change “[i]n or around 1939” (155); “there is no firm evidence that before 1939 Woolf had read Freud’s work in any sustained manner [...]” (160)); Heather Roetto (2019) (also on Freud’s influence on Woolf: “it would seem that Freud’s theories of hysteria, depression, and psychosexual development took shape within her pages,” particularly as “Woolf looked closely at her own mental illness through Septimus Warren Smith” (21)).

of Septimus, she is described as having a “horror of death,” and then, as culmination to this transcendental theory, she is given to reflect (perhaps with some scepticism),

that since our apparitions, the part of us which appears, are so momentary compared with the other, the unseen part of us, which spreads wide, the unseen might survive, be recovered somehow attached to this person or that, or even haunting certain places, after death (167).

Apparitions are usually felt as lacking solidity in their spectral presence, their momentary being appears and soon disappears, but it is the “unseen part of us,” by comparison, which is spectral and potentially haunting. By foregrounding the “unseen part of us,” Clarissa anticipates Septimus’s arrival into her life as the non-physical presence who “may be recovered somehow” by way of attachment to “this person or that” and in this way the “unseen” may survive after death – in “us” (*Dalloway* 167).

The dual phrase, “unseen part of us,” is both the internal process which surfaces momentarily to actualised objects, selves and others, and it is Septimus himself who is the “unseen part” of Clarissa. The passage offers us a glimpse beforehand of how Clarissa will respond to the news of Septimus’s death which I suggest is so crucial to her own survival and recovery. There is the *caveat*, of course, the repetition of “[p]erhaps – perhaps” which ends the paragraph (167). In what follows, I will focus on what I named earlier as Brown’s conception of “pure feeling” as an energy-driven process through which Clarissa Dalloway’s mental state may be said to be “growing out” from the conceptual primitive of “[f]light (defence)” (LoE 35), following the distressing news of Septimus’s suicide, to that of “the forward motion [of] [f]ight” as a mode of her own survival and recovery (33).

Following the news of Septimus’s suicide, which may well be the result of “the deferred effects of shell shock,” Clarissa indirectly reports that “[a]lways her body went through it first, when she was told, suddenly, of an accident” (*Dalloway* 201).⁴⁷ Although she does not specify how she usually responds on such occasions, this physical eruption precipitates a momentary decision to take flight from her party. What is clear, is that she disappears from sight, “[b]ut where’s Clarissa?” (204),

⁴⁷ We cannot know whether Septimus’s “shell shock” is the result of organic damage to the brain, that is, whether it is caused by a physical lesion. This question continues to be a contested area of neurology. Stefanie Linden and Edgar Jones’s study of shell shock in 2014 suggests that “[b]y 1918, most British doctors had moved away from the idea of an underlying organic lesion caused by the impact of the explosion. The shell explosion was rather seen as part of a complex aetiological model, where physical and psychological triggers interacted.” They note too the interesting condition of “dog chorea” where soldiers displayed symptoms such as twitching and tremors and howling (535). One rifleman was described as “*crying for two days. At the same time his arms began to twitch, very frequently at first*” (535, emphasis in original). Woolf’s novel – possibly with some knowledge of the symptoms of shell shock – ameliorates the condition as Septimus and his comrade at arms, Evans, are seen to be playing like dogs: “[i]t was a case of two dogs playing on a hearth rug; one worrying a paper screw, snarling, snapping, giving a pinch [...], the other lying somnolent, blinking at the fire, raising a paw, turning and growling good temperedly” (*Dalloway* 94). Of interest too, the authors include among the “case Consultants” into “shell shock” a Dr Gordon Holmes (527; photographed at 530). Please refer to works cited for details.

“[o]h, Clarissa” (207), “if Clarissa did not come soon” (211), until the moment that she re-emerges from the “little room” (201). It is Clarissa’s return which sparks Peter’s penultimate sentence of the novel: “It is Clarissa, he said” (*Dalloway* 212). However, the initial feeling to defend herself comes from her own considered invisibility and that all effort was “too much like being – just anybody [...]” which is compounded by an overwhelming “feeling of being something not herself,” in an environment where “everyone was real in one way; much less in another” (187). The status of “this being [...]” one thing, or anybody, real and unreal, is jolted by the news of Septimus’s death. Clarissa’s flight mode has been flagged by Woolf, in Clarissa’s own words from the very start of the day: “[t]he (she had felt it only this morning) there was the terror [...]” along with the possible solution: “the overwhelming incapacity, [...] this life, to be lived to the end, to be walked with serenely; there was in the depths of her heart an awful fear” (203). Life may not be perfect but she will face up to it, she will live it to the end in a manner in which Rhoda in *The Waves* will not and, indeed, seemingly, cannot (“I have no end in view” (*Waves* 98)). Having been lost in “the process of living,” Clarissa will now “find it” in Septimus’s “attempt to communicate,” which I earlier centred on her own mode of self-completion. This locating of Septimus brings both a “shock of delight” as well as the arising and perishing of moments, “as the sun rose, as the day sank” (*Dalloway* 203). Clarissa and Septimus both claim (directly and indirectly) to suffer the loss of their feeling self (and certainly from the fear of its deprivation): Septimus “[is]n’t Septimus any longer” (71), and Clarissa’s fear of feeling unreal, that she is “not even Clarissa any more [...]” (11), will call for living “to the end” and not, as is the case for Septimus (and Rhoda), for dying.⁴⁸

The reader is perfectly aware that Clarissa and Septimus will meet only through hearsay and so, according to Annalee Edmondson, the criteria for “the double plot novel” where two particular characters eventually connect is not met (Edmondson, 28). For example, Edmondson states that “[James] Joyce creates a significant delay between Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom’s meeting that ratchets up narrative tension, but these major protagonists do eventually meet” (33, note 20). She asks, therefore, “how can Mrs. Dalloway be singularly affected by someone she doesn’t even encounter?” (28). As I noted earlier, the “unseen part of us” as somehow “attached” is the anticipation of such an encounter (167). That is to say, Septimus is “recovered somehow” (167). The “unseen” (167) and unnamed Septimus is, as “the airs” in “Time Passes,” an invisible presence

⁴⁸ The earliest indications are that Clarissa is concerned with superficial matters such as society parties or the aesthetic attractiveness of a human face and the process of aging. She thinks of Lady Bexborough, ‘with a skin of crumpled leather’ but with the consolation of ‘beautiful eyes’ in direct comparison with herself: ‘a ridiculous little face, beaked like a bird’ (11). If anything, Clarissa finds great store in what she takes to be Lady Bexborough’s countenance: ‘very dignified, very sincere’ (11). Bexborough may give the possibility of future hope to Clarissa but, following her abstract encounter with Septimus at the novel’s end, she rejects such society baubles: ‘[s]he had wanted success – Lady Bexborough and the rest of it’ (203).

throughout the party, “detached from the body,” “cr[ee]ping round corners and ventur[ing] indoors” (*Lighthouse* 138). As Woolf says of her “certain airs,” “one might imagine them” – or, indeed, him (138). We are given to understand that “Sir William was mentioning [him], lowering his voice,” (201) and then, in the next paragraph, Lady Bradshaw, taking up the story elsewhere in the party, “murmured how, ‘just as we were starting, my husband was called up on the telephone, a very sad case. A young man (that is what Sir William is telling Mr. Dalloway) had killed himself. He had been in the army’” (201). Clarissa responds (to herself), almost absentmindedly, with the repetition on the “thought” which bookends the sentence: “[o]h! thought Clarissa, in the middle of my party, here’s death, she thought” (201). Shortly after this, her approach is more hard-lined: “[w]hat business had the Bradshaws to talk of death at her party?” This, at once, might seem callous, that Clarissa herself feels her party might be spoiled by the news, but it turns out to be an indictment of the Bradshaws: “[a] young man had killed himself. And they talked of it at her party [...]” (201). Clarissa seems to feel – again she is thinking – that the Bradshaws are diminishing the young man, not the party: “the Bradshaws talked of death. He had killed himself – but how?” (201).⁴⁹ If Clarissa is so worried about the tinkle of her party, which may be disturbed by talk of death, then why does she evoke such interest in how the young man had died?

The indictment continues. In complete agreement with Clarissa, Richard Dalloway feels something is not quite right with Sir William Bradshaw, that he “didn’t like his taste, didn’t like his smell” (201). We must bear in mind that while this information is being reported, Richard is in conversation with the great man. Sir William, on the face of it, “looked very distinguished” but is, as far as Clarissa is concerned, genuinely terrifying:

[a]nd Sir William, who looked very distinguished, with his grey hair and blue eyes, said yes; they had not been able to resist the temptation. He was talking to Richard about that Bill probably, which they wanted to get through the Commons. Why did the sight of him, talking to Richard, curl her up? He looked what he was, a great doctor. A man absolutely at the head of his profession, very powerful, rather worn. For think what cases came before him – people in the uttermost depths of misery; people on the verge of insanity; husbands and wives. He had to decide questions of appalling difficulty. Yet – what she felt was, one wouldn’t like Sir William to see one unhappy. No; not that man (200).

Her feeling is very clear, if one is “unhappy,” avoid Bradshaw at all costs; not to mention his skill to “curl her up” (200). These words of Clarissa’s come just before she hears of the young man’s suicide. The scene is set. Clarissa already knows the “case” of Septimus (the category of “people”

⁴⁹ Without doubt, death has been a constant presence throughout the pages of this scene. For example, “battering the brains of a girl out in a train” (190), “it is certain we must die” (192), “an underworld” (193), the levity of “Miss Helena Parry was not dead: Miss Parry was alive” (195), “what a tragedy” (197; repeated from 163, “their idea of tragedy”), “even in death parted from the earth” (198), “her death; her martyrdom” (199), to “talk of death” is the starting point of Clarissa’s thinking on Septimus (201-204).

(“depths of misery”) and the “husbands and wives” (and insanity), and is able to feel and to empathise in the young man’s plight.⁵⁰ This is not specifically because she herself is necessarily suicidal (as Woolf had considered she might be written) but because she knows and is able to make a valuation of Sir William Bradshaw’s methods and need for what the consultant names as “a sense of proportion” (111, 112, 119). On the face of it, her own experience of Bradshaw will create empathy and sympathy for Septimus but also common feeling – she herself, it would seem, has been one of Sir William’s patients. Indeed, Clarissa has already been narrated as having “once gone with some one to ask his advice,” but there is nothing conclusive here. Clarissa leaves the consulting rooms with certain relief, that’s true, but the reader is left unsure as to whether it is Clarissa who was in need of the advice or whether she is the companion of the one who needed the consultation. Whatever it was or whomever she accompanied, we as readers feel their relief:

[b]ut Heavens – what a relief to get out to the street again! There was some poor wretch sobbing, she remembered, in the waiting room. But she did not know what it was about Sir William; what exactly she disliked (200-201).

I have already noted that Clarissa’s health is a matter of concern in the novel and how news of her parenthetical influenza and progressive paling brings the first warning of the Big Ben refrain, “[f]irst a warning, musical; then the hour, irrevocable. The leaden circles dissolved in the air” (4). Clearer still, is Lady Bradshaw, Sir William’s wife and yet another victim: “there had been no scene, no snap; only the slow sinking, water-logged, of her will into his” (110). Again, the bells are heard but, this time, as the guests leave the Bradshaws (following Lady Bradshaw’s “fumble, stumble and confusion” (110)): “the clock struck ten” as “they breathed in the air of Harley Street even with rapture; which relief, however, was denied to his patients” (111). We should bear in mind that Lady Bradshaw remains behind, ailing and alone, with Sir William, a thought which Clarissa has already suggested is not to be recommended. There is, then, a clarifying picture forming as to why Clarissa may suddenly feel compelled to enter the little room by way of escape, that is to say, why she feels inclined to take flight. The text is clear that hearing about Septimus brings on a physical (at first) and mental response.

In microgenetic terms, her line of thinking is “infused with feeling” but it will be buoyed up with Septimus’s “defiance” in death; her cognitive process begins to be shaped and conceptualised

⁵⁰ Scholarly writings on Woolf’s own mental condition include both Caramagno and DaSalvo; scholarly texts on Septimus as schizophrenic include Sabine Sautter-Léger who argues that “[in previous critical texts] irrationality, when it is read positively, promotes a turn inward” but, conversely, Sautter-Léger wishes to prove that “irrationality is propitious because it can help us to get out of damaging introspective tendencies” (3). She supports this finding with, amongst other things, “recent innovative interdisciplinary research into schizophrenia” (3). Other texts with similar findings include James Naremore, “on the phenomenology of [Septimus’s] schizophrenia” (247); Wang, on R. D. Laing’s definition: “a schizophrenic knows no boundaries, no limits and no distinctions” (186). (See works cited for details.)

into the ascending limb of fight (LoE 37). Clarissa's earlier mode of "[f]light (defence)" drive, (35) in her recollection of the appointment in Harley Street, is now transfigured to something closer to "[f]ight [...] [a]s the forward motion in the arising state as it surges to the immediate present" (33). It is, as I have suggested, a survival mode and it is derived from "the unseen part of us" (*Dalloway* 167). The "ascending limb of the state" in anger is set for "the replication and protection of the organism," that is, her present self (in the presence of Bradshaw who is holding court with her husband). Septimus's defiance in death may put us in mind of Thoby and the letters which Woolf writes to Violet Dickinson. As I mentioned earlier, Woolf writes that "[she] can feel happy about him [Thoby]; he was so brave and strong" (L1 266). In *Mrs. Dalloway*, following Clarissa's thoughts on Septimus's "defiance," and on whether he had "plunged holding his treasure," she repeats the refrain from earlier in the novel: "If it were now to die, 'twere now to be most happy" (*Dalloway* 202), recalling that "she had said [this] to herself once, coming down, in white" (202). Happiness (Woolf's) and bravery in the face of death may link Thoby to Septimus but it is also a recollection of "feeling as she [Clarissa] crossed the hall" to meet Sally Seton and which heralds the first instance of the Othello line, "if it were now to die [...]" (37). The feeling that she transfers to Septimus may be in part driven by "the purity, the integrity, of her feeling for Sally" (37). What is interesting about this feeling is that it is not only "completely disinterested" but "[i]t was protective" and based on "a presentiment of something that was bound to part them" (37). The word "protective" is repeated in the long sentence, returning as "this protective feeling" which suggests, as I have been arguing, a defence mode albeit one doomed to a failure which Clarissa describes as "her feeling – Othello's feeling, she felt it, she was convinced, as strongly as Shakespeare meant Othello to feel it, all because she was coming down to dinner in a white frock to meet Sally Seton!" (37). The return of "that old feeling" revived each time in the present, suggests again the arising and perishing of Clarissa's microgenetic process as "the rooks flaunting up and down in the pink evening light, and dressing, and going downstairs" and all suffused with "feeling as she crossed the hall" (37).

As I have demonstrated, a connection is made between Septimus and Clarissa, making the latter feel that "[d]eath was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate" (202), and it is through death that Septimus is seen and heard – indeed, he is felt. As he was for Rezia, Septimus is brought back from the dead; in mind, certainly, but physically too: "one was alone," yes, but "[t]here was an embrace in death" (202). (Moreover, in Rezia's pre-drugged state, the "striking bells" represent a sensible and ongoing form of Septimus's continuing "unseen" communication.) Septimus, then, becomes a communicable source for Clarissa, that is, the death of Septimus appears to be "[a] thing there was that mattered" (202). The odd phrasing of the opening clause

seems to refer to the party going on beyond, and that, yes, it is Septimus (as the sentence continues) who is “a thing wreathed about with chatter, defaced, obscured in her [Clarissa’s] own life, let drop every day in corruption, lies, chatter” (202). Far from Septimus’s death being somehow remedial, the chatter and lies and defacement are things that “he had preserved” (202). He does, however, make “an attempt to communicate” (202). He is an embodiment worthy of respect: “[d]eath was defiance,” as well as a consolation (202). The d’s alliterate and bank up across two pages: “defaced,” “let drop every day in corruption,” “death” and “defiance,” “[d]eath was,” “embrace in death” (202), and one feels that through this alliterative proliferation one is reading of death, and only death, all the way through the passage of the text: “in the depths,” “her disaster – her disgrace,” “sink and disappear,” “profound darkness,” “shock of delight” (203). There is certainly no shortage of death at Clarissa’s party, or at least there is the ambient undertow of its presence.

At the beginning of her party, Woolf, in addition to death and “the depths,” among other things just noted, creates a sense of absence or, perhaps, of being someone else or “something not herself” (187). I shall provide the quotation in full. Once again, death or at least serious injury is invoked, reminding the reader of Septimus’ fall onto spiked railings:

It was too much like being – just anybody, standing there; anybody could do it; yet this anybody she did a little admire, couldn’t help feeling that she had, anyhow, made this happen, that it marked a stage, this post that she felt herself to have become, for oddly enough she had quite forgotten what she looked like, but felt herself a stake driven in at the top of the stairs. Every time she gave a party she had this feeling of being something not herself, and that everyone was unreal in one way; much more real in another (187).

The repetition of feeling in the present (she “couldn’t help feeling” and “this feeling of being something not herself”) merges with “old feeling[s]” and what is taken to be real and unreal. What is of interest, I think, is not specifically that Clarissa could be “just anybody” but that she is so singular in this endeavour: “she felt herself a stake driven in at the top of the stairs” (187), and it is this singularity, the point of what is at stake (herself), which deprives her feeling of self each time she throws a party. The stake itself feels like a violent image, a vampiric one, and we are reminded again of Sir William Bradshaw (who is made a presence at Septimus’s suicide) and how his method of proportion calls for “Conversion” which goes by the name of “[the] fastidious Goddess [who] loves blood better than brick, and feasts most subtly on human will” (110). Clarissa is both stake itself (“driven in”) and held stiff and the self through which the stake is driven. As I have said, Clarissa escapes from her party and the idle chatter which centres on Septimus’s suicide. It was Rezia’s removal of self to another room which precipitates Septimus’s suicide. Although life is good, he fears separation and being abandoned in one of “Holmes’s homes” (106). Clarissa’s removal from her party to the little room brings her into contact with Septimus himself. She begins

to feel him as a physical presence which prompts a turn from flight (defence) (and “loss of self” (and “perishing”) (LoE 35)), as discussed above, to “fight” mode (and “protection of the organism” (and “arising”) (33-34). Clarissa has an alternative calibration to the soldier’s suicide which is brought into focus and which may or may not be enacted in Parliament: “[i]t had its bearing upon what [Sir William] was saying about the deferred effects of shell shock” (201).⁵¹ Clarissa’s alternate view is one of fellow feeling, declaring (in the “little room”), as she thinks of Septimus, how difficult it is to remain in this life, a “life [that] is made intolerable [by] men like that” (202). As noted earlier, Clarissa is referring to specialists like Bradshaw and Holmes and, presumably, politicians like her husband, Richard Dalloway.

The idea of suicide as response to the domestic setting, (the scene removed from what was the “first version” of the novel), is only hinted at in the final version. The external narration continues to suggest that, under any other circumstances, Clarissa might well let go of this life, or refuse to live it “to the end, to be walked with serenely; there was in the depths of her heart an awful fear” (203). The possibility of death by her own actions – her flight (defence), driving her from society and from life – draws together the process of self perishing as well as the as the perishing of the mental state linked to loss (in this case, of one’s self):

[e]ven now, quite often if Richard had not been there reading the *Times*, so that she could crouch like a bird and gradually revive, send roaring up that immeasurable delight, rubbing stick to stick, one thing with another, she must have perished. She had escaped. But that young man had killed himself (203).

The sheer domesticity of the scene with Richard acts as a touchstone to her own living; she escapes where she “must have perished” and then the “[b]ut”: “[Septimus] had killed himself” (203). Clarissa recovers herself and survives as a result of Septimus’s death. Clarissa feels the impact of the young man’s suicide emotionally but her first reaction to it is entirely physical:

He had thrown himself from a window. Up had flashed the ground, through him, blundering, bruising, went the rusty spikes. There he lay with a thud, thud, thud in his brain, and then a suffocation of blackness. So she saw it. But why had he done it? (*Dalloway* 201-202).

There is certainly an allusion to Woolf’s fictionalised account of Thoby in Clarissa’s fictionalising of Septimus and both accounts serve to vivify that which is dead. We have noted that Clarissa feels that this young man’s death is “an attempt to communicate” that which cannot be communicated. We refer to death and to the report of those “people feeling the impossibility of reaching the centre which, mystically, evaded them [...]” (202). Clarissa fictionalises Septimus so that she might have some awareness of the mystical evasion that dying presents. Clarissa not only feels it, she is able

⁵¹ It is worth noting that Septimus “served with great distinction in the War” (*Dalloway* 105), he is not, as Dr. Holmes states, “[t]he coward!” he is taken for (164).

to imagine the fall in quite graphic detail; she is able to see the descending darkness, the noise in his brain, and she questions it, “[b]ut why [...]?” There is the understanding of the “indescribable outrage” he has endured and that “(indeed she felt it now), Life is made intolerable [...]” (202). Septimus moves from the impersonalised “it” (the *indifferentia*) of what he has felt to the capitalised “Life,” from a case to the cause of a feeling, in Clarissa’s mind, which is revelatory but which brings with it a trepidatious combination of past and present thoughts. Her feeling of terror that morning, which I discussed above, seems at first to offer the later “overwhelming incapacity” of this life “to be lived to the end” (203). But out of this overwhelming capacity comes the possibility of life. Clarissa, as far as the reader can tell, will live to the end, but she will share the burden of Septimus’s death. Clarissa’s own decision to live is not, therefore, an indictment of Septimus’s suicide but a complicity in it: “[s]omehow it was her disaster – her disgrace” (203). Her outrage, her disgrace, is the final shift from “flight (defence)” (LoE 35) to a decision to fight. This shift is indicative of the microgenetic “forward motion in the arising of the state” and which provides us with the adaptive possibility “to survive and flourish” (LoE 33). In Clarissa’s meditation, Septimus becomes the category – of death which partitions to youth and war, unfairness and madness, but also to bravery and defiance and to Clarissa’s final decision to choose “Life.” From core [“pure”] feeling (MTPT 66) to category, Septimus is a “growing out” into Clarissa’s world (Bradford and Brown 193), making them not doubles, but one whole of co-occurrence. Septimus’s death sets up a microgenetic process which enables varying “exploration[s] of the underpinnings of the original object” (193).

Clarissa’s short time away from the party is accompanied by not only the contemplation of death, but with an accompanying revelation. The concept of death in the novel brings with it a change in Clarissa’s outlook to our human lives but it is a revelation with deep reservations. After all, “[s]he felt glad that he [Septimus] had done it” (202). However, there is the hope that following her “lo[ss] in the process of living, to find it, with a shock of delight, as the sun rose, as the day sank” (203). Woolf’s writing here is solely about “Life”; it is no longer a meditation on death, but a realisation of future possibilities. Clarissa’s moment of recovery may well be derived from “the unseen part of us,” as I have argued, but it is written in the form of a nihilist’s mantra: that “[n]othing could be slow enough; nothing last too long. No pleasure could equal [...]” (202). Her feeling of happiness, “[o]dd, incredible; she had never been so happy,” is due to the realisation of “this having done with the triumphs of youth” and yet may be revived again in Septimus’s defiance and in the “embrace in death” I have been describing (*Dalloway* 202). It has been noted too that “[t]he leaden circles dissolved in the air,” the clanging of bells which foregrounds solidity as “spatial music,” and it is this final image (of lead and air) which prompts Clarissa to “c[o]me in from the

little room” at the very same moment as Peter Walsh, sitting with Sally Seton calls out: “‘But where is Clarissa?’ [...] ‘Where’s the woman gone to?’ he asked. ‘Where’s Clarissa’,” and one feels that the novel might have concluded at this point of revelation with Clarissa Dalloway herself “dissolv[ing] in the air” (204).

Finally, Woolf brings to the fore the process of cognitive self-realisation in microgenesis which is always already a categorial matter, that is, a distribution of “pure feeling” from core self to surface reality; an “intrinsic productive process” of self-preservation (MSCW 42). Clarissa’s development of “feeling” is defined in microgenesis as a “mode of self-completion,” that is, a recurrent and active response to the exteriorising world – Septimus is not felt via a passive reception of external matters but as a process of active transformation from antecedent (primitive) categories as he becomes the micro-temporal process that is encountered again and again. Clarissa’s mode of self-completion is shaped, in the first instance, via the primitive category of fleeing (and defence) as she abandons her party. Her flight is transformed to fight mode as she develops and gains from Septimus’s presence in the “small room” and, along the way, she transfers what she takes to be his “defiance” to her own present state of preservation and completion. I have already suggested that Woolf had an earlier template in her fictionalised account of her already deceased brother, Thoby, who prospers and progresses in her letters to Violet Dickinson. Her “*keeping him alive*” across almost a month – Clarissa successfully exhumes Septimus across a matter of minutes – becomes, in time, a settled account of her brother’s life as “complete” which she transfers to her own completion and preservation of self. (At one point, to recall, Clarissa “feels” Septimus as a present being in the room with her.) I have argued that Woolf very clearly delineates – I suggest her writings can stand as excavations of – the process of microgenesis as “the micro-transition from instinctual drive through successive mental segments to veridical perceptions” (MSCW 39). Woolf’s novels manage to expose the deeply felt antecedent and internal processes to perceptual microgenesis. Exteriorising objects, entities, self and other selves, are “the surface of mind” for the moment of that perception (SP 52); supplementing our needs, how we feel and respond to the world, they are, as Woolf suggests, the “unseen” (*Dalloway* 167) modes of our unfolding, continuous self-preservation and completion.

CHAPTER THREE

Mediating the tension between stable identity and transmutation: Time and the “Transmuting Process” in *To the Lighthouse*.⁵²

By July 1925, Woolf had settled on the shape of the novel she would publish in 1927 as *To the Lighthouse*. In a précis in her diary, she writes “[...] father & mother & child in the garden; the death; the sail to the lighthouse” (D3 36). Woolf hoped to “finish it in two months” but her first concern for the coming text centred on its theme (36). Almost as an *aide memoir*, she writes that “[t]his is going to be fairly short: to have father’s character done complete in it; & mother’s; & St. Ives; & childhood; & all the usual things I try to put in – life, death, &c.” (D3 18). Woolf, however, feared that “this theme” (of family life and death) could descend into sentimentality. But she had a solution to the problem: “[t]he word ‘sentimental’ sticks in my gizzard (I’ll write it out of me in a story [...])” (36).⁵³ In the meantime, Woolf would “let the Lighthouse simmer” (19). Woolf had a second problem to contend with: the challenge of presenting time in the novel:

[i]t might contain all characters boiled down; & childhood; & then this impersonal thing, which I’m dared to do by my friends, the flight of time, & the consequent break of unity in my design (36).

It is a challenge too in Thomas Mann’s novel, *The Magic Mountain*, published in 1924 and translated into English in 1928. In chapter seven, headed “A Stroll by the Shore,” Mann explains the problem of writing time in this way:

[c]an one narrate time – time as such, in and of itself? Most certainly not, what a foolish undertaking that would be. The story would go: “Time Passed, ran on, flowed in a mighty stream,” and on and on in the same vein. No one with any common sense could call that a narrative. It would be the same as if someone took the harebrained notion of holding a single note or chord for hours on end – and called it music (Mann 641).

Woolf is unlikely to have read Mann’s caution, but she would suffer the consequences of such a harebrained notion. Woolf was struck with a bout of depression in 1926 – “a whole nervous break-down in miniature,” she called it (D3 103) – which left her with a great feeling of despair, but tinged with some hope:

I am writing this partly to test my poor bunch of nerves at the back of my neck – will they hold or give again, as they have done so often? – for I’m amphibious still, in bed & out of it; partly to glut my itch (“glut” an “itch”!) for writing. It is the great solace & scourge (D3 40).⁵⁴

⁵² D3 102. Please refer to works cited for further details.

⁵³ Within forty-seven days of this entry, on September 5, 1925, Woolf writes that “[she] has made a quick & flourishing attack on *To the Lighthouse*, all the same – 22 pages straight off in less than a fortnight” (D3 39).

⁵⁴ There is something of the “triune brain” about Woolf’s diary entry: the “brain stem” at the back of the neck, attributed to approach avoidance, drives and instinct, and referred to by MacLean as the “reptilian brain,” and by Woolf as intricately linked to her feeling “amphibious” (Pachalksa and MacQueen 301; MacLean qtd., D3 40).

At the head of her diary entry, Woolf had written “Monday 13th September [1925] perhaps” (it was, in fact, Monday 14th (40)) and the novel remains on hold. By July 1926 little has changed and she records the problem in her diary with a double negative: “[n]o ‘making up’ power yet; no desire to cast scenes in my book” (103). However, on the previous page to her “making up” concerns, she proposes an intriguing dialogue between “[a]rt & [t]hought” and how the past may be written, and altered, in the present:

[w]hat I thought was this: if art is based on thought, what is the transmuting process? I was telling myself the story of our visit to the Hardy’s. & I began to compose it: that is to say to dwell on Mrs Hardy leaning on the table, looking out, apathetically, vaguely; & so would soon bring everything into harmony with that as the dominant theme. But the actual event was different (D3 102).

Woolf underscores her concerns with the process of composition (in mind and in her writing) as a kind of thought experiment. We are to ask ourselves how our memory of the past becomes composed and harmonised at the surface of the present which she names as the “transmuting process” (102). How is one to somehow harmonise and make whole (in the “making up”) that which is past? What part does memory play in what Woolf so famously names in “Sketch of the Past” as “[t]hese separate moments of being” (“Sketch” 83)? There is also the question of stability and verisimilitude contained in Woolf’s “But [...]” (102).

The revival of memory may alter (what was) the original representation. Woolf’s alignment of composition to thought (in relation to the past) may be resolved in *To the Lighthouse* if things are “brought together [as] this and that and then this, and so made out of that [...] something [...] which survived, after all these years complete [...] and it stayed in the mind almost like a work of art” (*Lighthouse* 173).⁵⁵ Woolf seems to question “history [as] an accumulation of events *over time*” which would make the past foundational and something upon which, as Brown suggests, “the present is overlaid” (TWMP 46, emphasis in original). Such an undertaking would assert, according to Brown, that “[t]he facts of history are then eternal and the present could not have been otherwise” (TWMP 45). Alternatively, Woolf’s looking back (in the illustration of Mrs. Hardy as well as her plan for “The Lighthouse”) can be conceived of as an exploration in microgenesis. Woolf is attempting to go deep into the process of mind, that is, as Brown would have it, from “depth [to] surface” (Bradford and Brown 184) and, as Woolf suggests, into “the dark places of psychology” (E4 162, CRI 150).⁵⁶ According to Brown, the cognitive process is itself “a search for

⁵⁵ Brown gives the example of recalling a walk and asks what “other events might have occurred or did not occur” and opens a concurrence with Woolf’s “transmuting process” and “harmony,” whereby “there is a mix of memory and thought, as well as a feeling of some intent and digression in the present” (MSCW 74).

⁵⁶ In an earlier incarnation of “Modern Fiction,” titled “Modern Novels,” Woolf has “[the] dark region of psychology” (E3 35 [1919]).

the (lost) series of configurations that survive abstractly in the present moment, the past is approximated by a retreat through this depth, which corresponds to pastness” (TWMP 46). Woolf’s present composition (the aforementioned diary entry of July 1926) and the “actual event [her meeting with Mrs. Hardy] [are] different” (102). That is to say, there are two versions. Woolf suggests that something persists from the past and is unchanging (“something [...] which survived”) but the coherence of it is based on successive appearances in the present (“leaning,” “looking,” “vaguely” (102)). From the memory of events (say, the autobiographical theme of *To the Lighthouse*) which may “stay[] in the mind almost like a work of art” (*Lighthouse* 173), the world is interpreted – or composed – as “an excavation of the depths of the present, i.e.,” to repeat, “a search for the (lost) series of configurations that survive abstractly in the present moment [...]” (TWMP 46). What we excavate, however, is a past which is approximated in the present; it is something which survives and which may well correspond to this pastness. The continually changing past arises and perishes in “a *memory*” (46; emphasis in original) and that which is revived (and continuously perishing) may well be – as Woolf suggests – “different,” hence her capitalised “But” (D3 102).⁵⁷

I shall argue, therefore, that Woolf’s intention to write time need not be isolated to the middle section of the novel, to “Time Passes.”⁵⁸ Woolf refers to “Time Passes” as “[t]he flight of time,”

⁵⁷ Responding to Woolf’s novel, Vanessa Bell is spooked by what I earlier referred to as verisimilitude (of past to present). In a letter cited by Briggs, Vanessa Bell writes, “you have given a portrait of mother which is more like her to me than anything I could ever have conceived possible. It is almost painful to have her so raised from the dead [...]” (Bell qtd. in Briggs 184). Her sister’s response is to tell Vanessa that she “was so pleased and excited by your letter that I trotted about all day like a puppy with a bone” (L3 379).

⁵⁸ Time is of central concern to the following scholars: Graham Fraser suggests that “[t]he central achievement of Woolf’s writing of this section of the novel [“Time Passes”] is her challenge to the anthropomorphic tradition of literature” which requires Woolf to take up the “technical challenge” (Fraser 126) of writing “[t]his impersonal thing, [...] the flight of time” (Woolf qtd. 126). Fraser situates his 2020 article on “Time Passes” as exemplary of a place where “time and nature cannot be ‘provoked’ nor do they ‘retaliate’ – they merely take their course” (Fraser 122). He suggests that “[a]s Woolf will show, time’s lack of anthropomorphic ego and emotion – and its indifference to human ego and emotion – are far more awesome than any adversarial personification we might project onto it” (122). Stefanie Heine’s 2019 article suggests that Woolf attempted “to write an increasingly voided space” (Heine 124). Writing on *The Waves* in his 2019 article, Paul Stasi suggests that “[a]nthropomorphism [...] cannot simply be wished away, for it is the precise way in which we inhabit the world of expanded attachments in which contemporary ethics seeks to locate us” (Stasi 441). Heine’s essay takes the middle section of *To the Lighthouse* in order to “offer us a way to approach a notion of the Anthropocene beyond the apocalyptic logic, an Anthropocene, that is, determined by forces of unworking rather than a linear teleological path towards destruction” (Heine 128). Heine seeks to explain (amongst other things) Woolf’s use of parenthesis (“brief factual scraps from the parallel scenario of the War [...]”) as “interruption, and not a termination of the temporal proceedings in the abandoned house [...]” (128, emphasis in original). Jean Guiguet is one of the early scholars to identify the theme of time as a “process-of-becoming” across the whole of *To the Lighthouse* (Guiguet 391). A later scholar, Sharon Stockton reads time in *To the Lighthouse* via Einstein’s “Special Theory” so that she might argue that “[the novel] stages a world metamorphosis that articulates the shift toward perspective, and in so doing her text parallels the shifts from Newton to Einstein [...]” (Stockton 104). In this chapter, I refer not to “metamorphosis” but to Woolf’s interest in the “transmuting process” by which we may grasp our own relative cognitive stability when faced with what Ann Harrington refers to as “transmutation and process” (Foreword v). I will come back to Harrington in due course. Later still, Tolliver Brown, focussing on *To the Lighthouse*, suggests that “[t]he difference between Woolf’s viewpoint and that of her father and Einstein makes itself apparent through the contrast between the table as an object of permeability and connectivity versus the table

which may well appear “all eyeless & featureless with nothing to cling to” (D3 76), but the problem of time, as early commentator, Jean Guiguet suggests, will be encountered throughout “the whole structure of the novel” (Guiguet 230). As Woolf suggests, centring the problem on mind, “[a] new problem like that breaks fresh ground in one’s mind; prevents the regular ruts” (D3 36). The question of stable identity through time is a central theme in the novel, suggesting as Hermione Lee points out, citing Woolf, that “we have to possess ourselves [of] the whole” (Woolf qtd. in *Virginia* 413), but such wholeness is compounded by the shift from one moment to the next as transmuting process. This is a process not only central to Woolf’s novel but to microgenetic theory as a whole. Woolf’s question of time as one developed in memory (and its revival) is identified by Ann Harrington’s statement sixty-five years later which suggests that “the microgenetic enterprise has been all about mediating this tension between the imperatives of stable identity and those of transmutation and process” (Harrington, Foreword v). Both authors, Woolf and Harrington, identify the distinct problem of how human perception is a process of micro-temporality. On the one hand, Harrington identifies the “tension” – noted above – between stability and transmutation and microgenetic process and, on the other hand, Woolf’s writing of cognitive process is not only a problem for “[a]rt & [t]hought” but a questioning of “the transmuting process” across time, indeed, times (D3 102).

Earlier, I noted two “new materialist” readings of Woolf, one by Graham Fraser on *To the Lighthouse* and one by Paul Stasi on *The Waves*. I would like to respond to these so that my own intervention into time as a subjective matter can be framed. Fraser approaches *To the Lighthouse*, and more specifically “Time Passes,” through “the time-lapse collapse of the Ramsay family’s abandoned summer home” (117). He employs this method so that he might examine the depiction of “Time the Antagonist, Time the Ruiner” (117). There is, he writes, “good evidence that Woolf herself conceived of her novel in these terms,” citing her fragmenting synopsis from the Holograph of her Skye set novel (commonly considered to be inspired by Godrevy lighthouse, near Hayle on the North Cornwall coast):

Now the question of the ten years. .../ The gradual dissolution of everything / This is to be contrasted with permanence – of what? / Sun, moon & stars. / Hopeless gulfs of misery. / Cruelty. / The War. / Change. Oblivion. Human vitality. Old woman / Cleaning up .../ The devouringness of nature. / But all the time, this passes, accumulates. / Darkness. / The welter of winds & waves” (Woolf qtd. 117).

as an object of independence and separation” (Tolliver Brown 47-48). As noted, Brown’s formulation of microgenetic theory centres on perception which he describes as “the linchpin of microgenetic theory” (MSCW 11). Mr. Ramsay’s table may well be downstairs while Andrew Ramsay is upstairs (say) but as a perceptual microgenetic object, it cannot be perceived (presently, at least) by him which, of course, is not to say the table is now somehow absent. I return to Fraser and Stasi with reference to posthuman and anthropomorphism in due course. Please refer to works cited for further details.

Referring to Caitlin DeSilvey, Fraser suggests that “[i]n offering ‘[a] different kind of knowledge,’ Woolf anticipates the new materialist and nonhuman turn of recent critical theory” (118; DeSilvey qtd.). Fraser goes on to write that “a notion common to each is a sense of the world as a fluid, changing space – that our perception of things as stable and solid is in fact an illusion, generated and amplified by human desire, fear of loss, and the limited perspective of the human timescale” (118).⁵⁹ Fraser presents a world of passing time “through the physical ruination of the house, the beauty of the changes wrought by time in a world without humans” (118).

Alternatively, but with the “possib[ility] to see the new materialism [...] of vitalist thinking,” Paul Stasi states that “[t]he ethics of the Anthropocene demands [...] that we resituate the human within the natural world from which we have tended to separate ourselves” (440). To that end, his reading of *The Waves* engages with “the new materialisms and contemporary strands of vitalist thinking as, in some measure, a response to the dilemma the Anthropocene presents” (440). Stasi’s “vitalist thinking” suggests human thought, while Fraser, following Jane Bennett, takes the “unperceived mutability [of objects] to be a form of nonhuman vitality” (118). On the one hand, Fraser suggests that “Time Passes” “offers[] a vision of ruin [...] that radically challenges the anthropomorphic ideas of art and time [...]” (123) as well as being a good example of Woolf’s anticipation (as noted) of “new materialism and nonhuman turns in critical theory” (118) while, on the other hand, Stasi offers a reading of “posthumanism” in *The Waves* which accepts that “[a]nthropomorphism, like Cartesianism, cannot simply be wished away [...]” (Stasi 441). Stasi asserts that *The Waves* is “th[e] most subjective of works” which “marks Woolf’s sense of the irredeemably anthropocentric way in which subjects inhabit the world” (442). It is here, then, that we may notice what seems to be a dyadic response to the what has been called the “posthumanist” and “nonhumanist” centred new materialism (Stasi 440, Fraser 122).

In the first place, there exists “the isolated, autonomous ethical subject” of “posthumanism” (Stasi 440) and, in the second place (or, perhaps, additionally), there exists “a mobility [...] that displaces any notion of subjectivity and objecthood” (Fraser 123). Fraser’s “ahuman aesthetics” (Fraser 117), in like manner to Martin Heidegger’s own “unavoidable ‘orient[ation] to [...] a [...] human Dasein” (Hofstadter, Introduction xxx, xxix; emphasis in original), introduces an unavoidable anthropomorphism into Woolf’s middle section of *To the Lighthouse*.⁶⁰ Stasi’s reading

⁵⁹ Fraser correctly identifies the divided reception of subjects and their objects as a constant presence in the scholarly reception of Woolf’s works. As long ago as 1979, Hintikka framed Woolf’s split reception thus: “[h]ow can one and the same writer [Woolf] be declared a subjectivist and idealist, and a realist” (“Our Knowledge” 11).

⁶⁰ To be clear, Fraser is referring to “Time Passes” in his article but he also makes reference to Woolf’s “experiment[ation] in radically decentering or deleting the human narrative consciousness in [among writings] “The Lady in the Looking Glass [and] [...] the interludes in *The Waves*” (126).

follows “Rosi Braidotti[’s] [...] ‘*zoe*-centered and hence nonanthropocentric’ [relational ontology]” which “nevertheless, does not deny the anthropologically bound structure of the human” (441; Braidotti qtd.). In her essay, “The Politics of ‘Life Itself’ and New Ways of Dying,” for example, Braidotti registers the “shift away from anthropomorphism” (203). However, by way of inquiry, she asks, “[a]re we not in awe of this piece of flesh called our ‘body,’” before, provocatively perhaps, providing us with an anthropomorphic image of “this aching meat” which goes by the name of “our ‘self’” (208). Fraser’s “ahuman aesthetics” (117) displaces both subject and object and Stasi’s reading of “posthumanism” decentres the human all the while leaving the door open to what he calls Woolf’s “anthropomorphic imagination” (439). On the one hand, the subject is a stranded yet autonomous “ethical subject” (Stasi 440) and, on the other, the subject is a “displace[d] [...] notion” (Fraser 117). The two new materialist readings present us with a vexed definition hovering between a subject who is there and one who is absent.

My immediate point of contact centres on how we come to know the (at times) non-subjective and non-objective “posthuman” if not as somehow always already a subjective and situated human being in microgenesis. This point of friction between subjectivity and time and how these are brought together brings us to Brown and to Woolf and the problem of wholeness and time.

Time and Subjectivity

Brown suggests that the past is always “out of time” and may be felt only “as an echo in memory” (“Time” 224). He suggests also that the past exists in “the reinstatement of present experience” (MN 9). The concept of time, then, is adumbrated via human subjectivity through which “every change is a changed world” (MN 10). In his book on “time”, Brown states that “an object is a virtual image” and that “the image that is the object [say, a tree] ‘reflects’ the real world as a kind of mirror” (TWMP 24). The microgenetic viewpoint states that “perception is an adaptive process that is shaped by the physical world” (24). What Brown means by this – the shaping of an image by the external world – is that “[t]he perspective is a virtual image” of that physical world (23). For instance, Brown states that the process that leads to a veridical object is what counts: “the process *is* the object, i.e., its momentary time-creating set of developing spaces” (25; emphasis in original). Time is central, that is to say, an object, say, a tree, “grows out of the past as a preparation for the next wave of object formation” – what we perceive is only ever a residue of what has come before (24).

Brown’s focus is on subjectivity and time awareness as microgenetic process. That is, how do human beings become aware of time? Microgenetic theory is “a retrospective model [which]

describes how a present state or object came to be what it is” (TWMP 3).⁶¹ Brown suggests that “[t]he mind-dependence of our experience of time and its relation to change in the becoming of the mental state influence the way we understand the past, the present, and the future” (viii). Microgenesis, as Brown puts it, “is firmly set in the present” (3). Of interest, to Brown (as well as to Woolf) is the question of wholeness and how it may be said to relate to time awareness. It has been noted (in the introduction) that microgenetic theory posits ‘a “core-to-surface” (or depth to surface) transit in which developing acts, objects, thoughts and feelings form a unified whole that fractionates into what appear to be separate or modular functions (MSCW 11). The fractionation derived from a unified whole should be understood as “a cascade of specification of parts out of wholes. [...] The whole to part transition is the basis of becoming, and becoming is the image of process in the world” (TWMP ix). In microgenetic theory, “the unity of self is linked to whole-part relations, and these can only be understood if time plays a central role in psychological theory” (ix). Brown suggests that “time is not passing for the attention of the self, the self is not passing through time” by which he means that,

[t]ime in awareness is generated with the awareness. Time is felt in the growth and decay of life but it is elaborated in the growth and decay of the mental state as a by-product of the possibility of memory. It is not so much memory upon which time awareness depends but the events which make memory possible (SP 128).

The question of wholeness is a central aspect to Woolf’s method and, I would argue, of direct importance to her concept of time. Woolf’s concept of time in *To the Lighthouse* is mind-generated and momentary; each moment is caught up in a succession of being and non-being, where all perception is in a process of continual decay as each “slice” (of any given object is replaced again and again until actualisation is complete) (Brown “Time” 217).⁶² All being, then, is derived from a process of becoming, a whole-to-part shift in microgenesis, in which each and every “incomplete revival” of what is perceived is captured in a process of “arising and perishing” (“Time” 215).

According to Randi Koppen, Roger Fry reconsiders the “art-life relationship” by “counter[ing] the established construction of modernism as assuming an opposition between life and art, between body and aesthetic vision” (378). Koppen suggests that “it is possible to read Woolf’s project of aesthetic transmutation of life into art in *To the Lighthouse* in light of a conception of art as at once disembodied and embodied, as a conversion/turn away from life *and as* experientially

⁶¹ In the introduction to the thesis, I noted how phylogenesis was concerned with extended time over aeons, ontogenesis over the years of a life time. Brown suggests that “every organism is in a constant process of becoming that reinstantiates itself in some duration. Phylo-ontogeny is the pattern of reinstantiations *over time*. Microgenesis is the *time-creating* pattern of a single instantiation” (TWMP 3; emphasis in original).

⁶² Brown, Jason. “Time and Process in Neuropsychology.” *Acta Neuropsychologica*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2008, pp. 215-236. Henceforth, ‘Time’ plus page number.

grounded” (378; emphasis in original). My reading argues that Woolf’s questioning of the “transmuting process” from her diary entry of 1926, headed “*Art & Thought*,” and not, in fact, cited by Koppen, refers to “[a]rt & [t]hought” (D3 102) as a question of time and cognition. What is important is how we are conscious and how we think and how “the self is simultaneous with images and objects” (Brown, “Simultaneity” 79). In the microgenetic model of cognition, according to Brown, “[t]he transition from before/after to perspectival time involves consciousness of embedded revivals in the mental state” (79). In a very real sense, as Brown asserts, “[a]n image develops out of memory to externalize as an object [...]” (83). I noted earlier that there seemed a vexed territory in new materialist readings of Woolf which provide both “an ethical subject” (Stasi 440) and the subject as a “displace[d] notion” (Fraser 117). Brown’s formulation of microgenesis is resolutely subject-centred, stating (as he does) that “self-consciousness is a product of subsurface mentation, the terminus of momentary process [...]” (SP 61). Woolf’s question of time is, I argue, both memorial and momentary, as each individual’s past is presently revived in “a series of replacements” in memory and in perception (“Time” 215). I hope to show that *To the Lighthouse* is a novel in which memory always precedes human perception.

Woolf’s question about Mrs. Hardy, “leaning on the table, looking out, apathetically, vaguely” may not, ultimately, be resolved in Woolf’s composition since the transmutation of mind and composition produces something different to that which Woolf calls the “actual event” (D3 102). Brown suggests that “[m]emory is the process through which past objects become actual, i.e., the becoming of objects into (as) the present of the next moment” (TWMP 43). Of course, the contents of memory are approximations of the past and may never be entirely in line with (what Brown names as) “the ‘facts’ of experience which are the illusory vehicles of change” (46). Specifically, the question which is asked by Brown, and described by Woolf in her desire to compose the diurnal machinations of Mrs. Hardy as well as her method in *To the Lighthouse*, centres on the following concern which Brown frames in this way: “[t]he problem is in what sense the past can be said to exist or remain a fact that is forever unchanged”? (42).⁶³ The microgenetic traversal from time to mind is therefore in the recurrence of any given perceived object. Brown provides “the fountain” as a metaphor (Bradford and Brown 183) to express “[t]he microgenesis of an object [a]s a microcosm of its birth, life and death, a surge of the object into actuality out of abstract, timeless potential’ (MN 9). Woolf also presents the image of a fountain as intricately memorial and figurative – the past is a composition in the present. Lily Briscoe, an artist friend of

⁶³ Brown, citing change as “crucial to a theory of past and future,” centres his argumentation against a “fixed past” on two inter-related questions: “if change is deterministic, how would novelty enter a sequence that is fixed to a given point? If the immediate past is fixed, and the present is inevitable, how does change move that state to the present, i.e., where does the newness of the present come from?” (TWMP 47).

the Ramsay family, returns to the Ramsay house at Skye and the transmutation process of past to present is represented in mind and memory. The immediate “mass loomed before her,” in fact, so strong is this feeling that “it protruded” and “she fe[els] it pressing on her eyeballs” (*Lighthouse* 173). As she “dip[s] [her brush] among the blues and ambers” she becomes aware of “losing consciousness of outer things” (174) and “her mind ke[eps] throwing up from its depths, scenes, and names, and sayings, and memories, and ideas, like a fountain spurting over that glaring, hideously difficult white space [...]” (174). The “depth-and-surface” metaphor (Bradford and Brown 184) is foregrounded as Lily at once feels her eyes assailed by the mass and only then for the external world to surface and decay in the continually transmuted flux of names and scenes and memories.

Brown writes, in a chapter titled “Privacy,” that “the problem of the identity of the self through time, is a topic in need of closer study” (TWMP 70). Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* is a novel about the identity of the self through time and composition. As I mentioned earlier, for Brown, time is a microgenetic process of mind and moments in continuous decay and revival which foregrounds the tension between identity and stability and how the past must be re-thought – revived – in the present. The question of stability and time, therefore is a question of stability and transmutation and process. This brings me to Woolf’s novel and to the question of time and transmutation.

Measuring Time and Memory

As Woolf begins her process of writing *To the Lighthouse*, she provides the metaphor of the tree through which leaf and roots are conjoined via a whole-part transition and which may in time be perceived. She feels confident, however, in the method of how her work should proceed, stating that “I think, though, that when I begin it I shall enrich it in all sorts of ways; thicken it; give it branches & roots which I do not perceive now” (D3 36). In Woolf’s essay-story, “The Moment: Summer’s Night,” she appears less than convinced that we perceive changes in the external world at all, suggesting “[t]hen [that] changes, unseen in the day, coming in succession seem to make an order evident” (*The Moment* 4). What is perceived, then, is a growing out of diffusion towards what Brown names as the development from a “single instantiation,” albeit one that is continuously replaced (TWMP 3). Brown puts forward a concurring and highly compatible view to Woolf’s, suggesting that “for a solid to become an event, it must recur over successive durations” (“Simultaneity” 81). Brown asserts that “[e]very past moment is transformed as it propels an object into the present” (TWMP 43) and that without “an implicit memory of antecedents there would be a stroboscopic succession of disconnected selves and worlds” (“Simultaneity” 82). Woolf writes of the possibility of an effect very like this as “[n]ow little sparks, which are not steady, but fitful

as if somebody were doubtful, come across the field” (*The Moment* 4).⁶⁴ Woolf seeks to describe the coverage of the external world through the imposition of light which amplifies and illuminates how “the moment is laced about with these weavings to and fro, these inevitable downsinkings, flights, lamp lightings” and which may, after all, bring clarity of purpose now that “[a]ll doubt is over” (4). Brown posits the progression of objects as a growing (out) into the world by suggesting that in perceptual microgenesis the things perceived are “pieces of personal memory building up and populating an external image of reality [...]” (SP 70). Brown states that “[e]very moment perishes in its replacement” with the self as medium and spectator of these “surface manifestations” (TWMP 43). The anticipating self, as Brown suggests, is “the preliminary object,” “emerg[ing] as a momentary disclosure of the meaning of a life experience”; the self is the “unclear form brimming with possibility, poised between the indistinctness of memories that have not yet risen to the surface and their final destination as objects in the construction of external space” (SP 70). Exteriorising objects are processually configured as “snapshots of varying thickness” which average out over momentary time to make-up particular wholes. All objects, he suggests, “change in relation to the field and the observer’s perspective” (“Simultaneity” 81).

Returning to “The Moment: Summer’s Night,” we may notice how Woolf attempts to draw attention to what she calls “the wider circumference of the moment” (*The Moment* 4). Central to that circumference is “a knot of consciousness” from which grows the division of that which is seen as distinctly human. (4). These humans are no longer dependent on light and darkness and past and present because “[t]hey assist it” (4). Like a photograph in developing solution, the negative image clarifies outward into “a nucleus divided up into four heads, eight legs, eight arms,

⁶⁴ Woolf’s shorter fictions are often meditations on human minds and momentariness: in “Moments of Being: ‘Slater’s Pins Have No Points,’” Woolf provides again the fountain as a metaphor for the recurrence of external objects: a younger woman is thinking about the elder Miss Craye’s loneliness: “[a]ll seemed transparent for a moment to the gaze of Fanny Wilmot, as if looking through Miss Craye, she saw the very fountain of her being spurt up in pure, silver drops” (CSF, 214); in “The Fascination of the Pool,” Woolf writes the microgeny of mind as the surface of external reality: “[b]ut if one sat down among the rushes and watched the pool – pools have some curious fascination, one knows not what – the red and black letters and white paper seemed to lie very thinly on the surface, while beneath went on some profound under-water life like the brooding, ruminating of a mind” (CSF 220); in “The Lady in the Looking-Glass: A Reflection” (from 1929), Woolf (following her writing of “Time Passes”) provides a form of inanimate subjectivity, shifting across epochs: “[...] and the room had its passions and rages and envies and sorrows coming over it and clouding it, like a human being. Nothing stayed the same for two seconds together” (CSF 215). The passage of time itself is not a “human being” but it is “like” one and it is composed by one. As I shall note below, in microgenesis “[a]n object is the minimal cycle of phases that constitutes one epoch” – it is “one complete revolution” until the “entity becomes the being that it is” (for the time of its becoming) (“Time” 221.) In *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf describes humans in succession, aware of distances and selves, and time and place, in the external world: “[d]istance had an extraordinary power; they had been swallowed up in it, she felt, they were gone forever, they had become part of the nature of things” (*Lighthouse* 207). As noted earlier, Woolf and Brown rely on the metaphor of the fountain as well as the tree.

and four separate bodies' (4).⁶⁵ Woolf seeks to uncover the unfolding representation, and her response is to press it into a moment of time, that is, as a thing "shot with the extraordinary arrow which people let fly from their mouths – when they speak" (4). The external world is presented in *To the Lighthouse* as something "remembered in the relations of those lines cutting across, slicing down [...] with its green cave of blues and browns [...], which had tied a knot in her [Lily's] mind" (*Lighthouse* 171). It will be the "odds and ends of time, involuntarily, as she walked along the Brompton Road [...]" which aids the "untying of the knot in imagination" (171). Woolf attempts to respond to the problem of combining the two domains (mind to external world) via a process of shaping that will eventually form in microgenesis as "conceptually recognizable wholes" (MTPT 30). The human objects can be made out in the distance in "The Moment: Summer's Night" as differentiating into legs and arms and heads of recognisable people. Woolf narrates the process as aerial and yet physical:

[a]h, yes, if we could fly, fly, fly. ... Here the body is gripped; and shaken; and the throat stiffens; and the nostrils tingle; and like a rat shaken by a terrier one sneezes; and the whole world is shaken; mountains, snows, meadows; moon; higgledy-piggledy, upside down, little splinters flying; and the head is jerked up, down (*The Moment* 5-6, Woolf's ellipsis).

What seems pertinent in this description, not least the physicality (the "body [...] gripped" (5)) and the potential soaring of perception ("fly, fly, fly" (5)), is that, in microgenetic theory, "understanding is not to be found in the object but in the process of becoming" (TWMP 8). It is the "higgledy-piggledy [...] little splinters" through which "the whole world is shaken," metaphorically, and in a literal sense of a human body being gripped (*The Moment* 5-6). Woolf aligns the changes in the mental state with those in the material world in which the self, as Brown describes it, "exists to serve, sustain, and voice [...] but never to veer from the silent will of nature" (TWMP 13). In Woolf's case, the shock of coming physical violence is hardly natural (or so we might aver) and as the light fades, "no order is perceptible" (*The Moment* 7).⁶⁶

⁶⁵ This process of description is particularly pertinent to the microgenetic process where, according to Brown, "[t]he world of perception is a *negative* image of externality" (TWMP 24; emphasis in original). I return to the image as negative of the physical world in due course.

⁶⁶ Guiguet suggests that "Virginia Woolf's 'moment' has no before, no afterwards: it is, as we are, instantaneously and totally" (391). Guiguet goes on to state that "the 'moments' [of Woolf's characters] constitute neither a separate, nor a true process-of-becoming" (391). In microgenesis, all memories are "dormant possibilities" with the potential of becoming activated (and revived) in the present moment ("Time" 224). Contrary to Guiguet, I suggest that Woolf's being and non-being is directly linked to the becoming of the past into the subject's present potential. For example, Woolf states that "I have already forgotten what Leonard and I talked about at lunch, and at tea; although it was a good day the goodness was embedded in a kind of nondescript cotton wool. This is always so" ("Sketch" 83-84). Woolf seems constantly aware of the passage of time in a subjective present, even where the present cannot be recalled: "[a] great part of everyday is not lived consciously" (84). In microgenesis, according to Brown, "[m]emory is recurrence" and directly linked to perception as a constraining element. Brown describes the term "being" with reference to "a fully-derived mental state that actualizes on completion," that is to say, from becoming (MSCW 77). Being, in this light, is the "indivisible compilation of all phases in its realization" (77).

To the Lighthouse is divided into three parts: part one takes place in mid-September on Skye before the onset of World War I. James Ramsay is hopeful that he might enjoy a trip by boat to the nearby lighthouse. A “dreadful storm” is forecast and the outing is put off (*Lighthouse* 9). Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay argue and his career as a professional philosopher (an outstanding “metaphysician” (43)) is indirectly noted to have stalled – famously, on the alphabetical scale, reaching “Q” but not “R [which] was beyond him” (39). I will return to this below. Part two spans approximately ten years with three family deaths recorded in parentheses; these deaths are not dated. Mrs. Ramsay dies “suddenly” (140), Prue dies in connection with “childbirth” (144), and Andrew is killed by a “shell explod[ing]” in the war (145). Mrs. McNab knocks the house back into shape for part three (147-49). This final part, “The Lighthouse,” sees the return of, among others, Lily Briscoe, Mr. Ramsay and James and Cam, his remaining children. A boat trip is at last arranged and the lighthouse is reached. Lily, an established artist, paints her picture and achieves her “vision” (226).

Woolf’s approach to memory in *To the Lighthouse* is bound up with Mrs. Ramsay’s dictat that all gathered should be “making of the moment something permanent” (*Lighthouse* 176). Lily appears to follow Mrs. Ramsay’s injunction of “Life stand still here” by responding accordingly. She is able to contemplate not only that “[i]n the midst of chaos there was shape” but, furthermore, how “([...] the clouds going and the leaves shaking) w[ere] struck into stability” (176). If life is stabilised perhaps we are better able to construct it at some later date. But it is more than this. These moments of permanence and stability “[are] of the nature of a revelation,” which are emanating from “this eternal passing and flowing” (176). Mrs. Ramsay is dead, but the “revelation” that Mrs. Ramsay is “making of the moment something permanent” is enough for Lily to at least to repeat the process and to “[...] tr[y] to make of the moment something permanent”) albeit in parenthesis and “([...] in another sphere)” (176). Microgenetic theory would suggest that the snapshot images are the instantiations of “[their] momentary history,” which we recall as “before and after” (TWMP 9). The recurrence of objects is crucial to human perception, but it is the recurrence of self in the “subjective present” which gives the impression of passing time (“Time” 222). An object from the past – even the past of a few moments ago – “no longer exists except as an echo in memory” (Brown, “Simultaneity” 90).

The “embedded” picture of her day (at lunch with Leonard, for example) is recalled by Woolf as one of general “goodness” (albeit “nondescript”) (“Sketch” 84) but the various details of the daily chat with her husband at tea are lost which suggests, as Brown states in another context, that forgetting is an inability to hear the “echo in memory,” that is, “forgetting [i]s incomplete revival” (“Simultaneity” 90). Brown suggests this loss of detail is down to daily repetition and that “humans

are more sensitive to difference than sameness [...]”; it is “[t]he unexpected [that] creates novelty [...]” (“Time” 226, 225). Indeed, Woolf’s “non-being,” as she reflects in “Sketch of the Past,” is emphasised by way of a memory of her being dipped into the sea by her father at St. Ives in Cornwall (“Sketch” 84). The memory is not recalled by her, but is read years later in the autobiography of Mrs. Swanwick, a family friend. Woolf happens upon herself in the text and wants to know “[w]hy have I forgotten so many things that must have been, one would have thought, more memorable than what I do remember?” (“Sketch” 83). Woolf has little choice but to accept what “Mrs. Swanwick says she saw [...]” and is, during her own process of composing fictions, “baffled by this same problem; that is, how to describe what I call in my private shorthand – ‘non-being’” (83). Brown states that whatever is recalled – or forgotten – “[i]n all aspects of cognition, only a fraction of potential is realized” (MSCW 70). Not everything from the past becomes actualised in the present. Brown asks whether there is “an undischarged potential for exhaustive recall to determine whether [any given] remembrance is accurate?” Could a hypnotist, he asks, dredge up what feels incomplete, the echoes from the past that we can no longer remember? Memory, however, is a process, “not a mechanism or set of operations by which the past is looked up and remembered” (TWMP 44).

Woolf is struck by the forgetfulness of something so vivid and asks “[w]hy remember the hum of bees in the garden going down to the beach, and forget completely being thrown naked by father into the sea?” (“Sketch” 83). Woolf’s forgotten childhood encounter with her father is represented in *To the Lighthouse* but far from forgetting a vivid memory, the power of the revival is brought into the foreground as James Ramsay’s expedition to the lighthouse is at once postponed and then held in abeyance for ten years. The reader is informed very early in the novel that James is unable to go on the expedition to the lighthouse because, according to his father, “it won’t be fine” (*Lighthouse* 8). James cannot know, as Woolf’s novel commences, that he will have to wait a further ten years before he sets foot on the island upon which the lighthouse is situated. James’s conception of time is immediate, his excitement is palpable, but he has not registered the conditional power of “if it’s fine to-morrow,” and his “extraordinary joy” indicates that after “years and years” the trip to the lighthouse is “within touch” (*Lighthouse* 7). There seems only one thing in the way: the time frame of “a night’s darkness and a day’s sail” (7). James’s understanding of time, however, remains presently undimmed. (James has yet to come up against his father’s prohibition.) His time, however, will be measured through the metaphors of darkness and light, narrated by Woolf as concurrent with joy and sorrow as inseparable matters of felt experience:

Since [James] belonged, even at the age of six, to that great clan which cannot keep this feeling separate from that, but must let future prospects, with their joys and sorrows, cloud what is

actually at hand, since to such people even in earliest childhood any turn in the wheel of sensation has the power to crystallise and transfix the moment upon which its gloom or radiance rests [...] (7).

As far as James is concerned, the present “moment of being” (“Sketch” 83) is all and transfixing but the “power to crystallise” (*Lighthouse* 7) is made up in microgenesis from the continual process of “*drops of experience*” (PAL 596; emphasis in original). To “transfix” is also to strike at something with a lance, but James is unable to “transfix the moment,” that is, by impaling and subduing it. However, before his “brightest hopes are extinguished” (8), he might at least use his scissors to aid him in his belief that he can indeed transfix time:

James Ramsay, sitting on the floor cutting out pictures from the illustrated catalogue of the Army and Navy Stores, endowed the picture of a refrigerator as his mother spoke with heavenly bliss. It was fringed with joy (7).

As the result of his way with a sharp instrument, Mrs. Ramsay presents a picture of her son of the future, “imagin[ing] him all red and ermine on the Bench or directing a stern and momentous enterprise in some crisis of public affairs” (7). James is again described in terms of the passage of time, from transfixing “moments” to directing “momentous” enterprises. As we shall see, James is not the only one in Woolf’s novel who is not only handy with a bladed instrument but described as one.

Mr. Ramsay’s response to the expedition is logical and sensible (a “dreadful storm” is forecast), if a little exaggerated (“ask the Coastguards” (37)). But his attitude to his son and his wife is not (as far as James is concerned) in any way consoling, but verges on the masochistic. Mr. Ramsay, “lean as a knife” and “narrow as the blade of one” (8), seems quite taken with “the pleasure of disillusioning his son and casting ridicule on his wife, who was ten thousand times better in every way than he was (James thought) [...]” (8). It is, however, Charles Tansley who irritates the most with his forecast that “[i]t’s due west” (9), and then, a little later, stating that “[t]here’ll be no landing at the Lighthouse to-morrow” (11). Mr. Ramsay makes a vain attempt to mollify his son but “[h]ating his father, James brushed away the tickling spray with which in a manner peculiar to him, compound of severity and humour, he teased his youngest son’s bare leg” (36). The spray is not spray from the sea, of course, but the object of his father’s joshing as he “tickle[s] James’s leg with a sprig of something [...]” (36). James is not in the least mollified. Mr. Ramsay’s entirely rational response to the coming weather, and the postponement of James’s dream of reaching the lighthouse, is undercut by his harsh response to (what he takes to be) “[t]he extraordinary irrationality of her [Mrs. Ramsay’s] remark” (37). His own rather aggressive remark, “[d]amn you, he said,” is shaped by the narrative intervention which describes him as balancing his own irrational response with a more thoughtful approach. “But what had she said? Simply that it might be fine

tomorrow. So it might” (37). But there is something more to it than this. Mrs. Ramsay’s statement questions what “might” happen tomorrow (37), but she also seems to question “the doomed expedition” (41) of her husband’s entire career as a moral philosopher. To begin with, she argues against her husband (and Charles Tansley) by stating that “the wind often changed” (37). This set-to takes place just before the famous section on Mr. Ramsay’s “splendid mind” (39) with the alphabetic hierarchy of achievement (“Q – R –” (39)) and the “difficulty in running over those letters one by one” (39). But Mrs. Ramsay’s final words on the matter manage to frame an important question with an epistemological bearing, all the while referring to the weather, “[h]ow did he [Mr. Ramsay] know?” she asked” (37). It is this question which receives the expostulation of “[d]amn you” (37). Even with his “lizard’s eye” (41), Mr. Ramsay is forced to ask, “[w]hat comes next?” (39).

Woolf’s “transmuting process” concerns art and thought and memory and how “the actual event” of what passed may be composed (in her works) later (D3 102). But the same thing can be said about the accounts we give of all past events. In a section on relationality and representation, Woolf highlights both “actual events” (D3 102) and what may be taken for the “truth” of what we say and do (*Lighthouse* 45). What disturbs Mrs. Ramsay in this description, then, is the paradox of “their relation” such that Mr. Ramsay is willing to believe “the truth of what she said” (45). Mr. Ramsay himself has already been reported as “incapable of untruth; never tampered with a fact [...]” (8). But what Mrs. Ramsay attempts to do is somewhat different. Mrs. Ramsay is, indeed, impressed with the lectures he gives and the books he writes (“being of the highest importance”), but it is, conversely, “not being able to tell him the truth [...]” that is of concern to her (45). Mrs. Ramsay is not able to say “that his last book was not quite his best book (she gathered that from William Banks) [...]” (45). He believes what she says, but she is unable to tell him what she knows to be true (albeit a truth wrapped up in hearsay). This mismatch of what amounts to the same “actual event[s]” (D3 102), expressed at different times, and duly altered in one way or another, not only is a “burden [...] laid on them [in this case, the children]” but entirely disturbs the meeting of minds (*Lighthouse* 45).

The conclusion that Mrs. Ramsay reaches is that “all this diminished the entire joy, the pure joy, of the two notes sounding together, and let the sound die on her ear now with a dismal flatness” (45). Mr. Ramsay is described (again, knife-like) as the one with “the beak of brass, the arid scimitar of the male,” but he is also edged into time with the light and the darkness of his own reason such that James should,

be aware that from childhood that life is difficult; facts uncompromising; and the passage to that fabled land where our brightest hopes are extinguished, our frail barks founder in darkness (here Mr. Ramsay would straighten his back and narrow his little blue eyes upon the horizon) [...] (8).⁶⁷

James's hopes of a day's expedition will not be the only thing to fail. Mr. Ramsay, on the way to "disturb[ing] the perfect simplicity and good sense of [James's] relations with his mother" (42), "repeated, never taking his eyes from her face, that he was a failure" (43). James, presently,

hated him. He hated him for coming up to them, for stopping and looking down on them; he hated him for interrupting them; he hated him for the exaltation and sublimity of his gestures; [...] but most of all he hated the twang and twitter of his father's emotion [...] (42).

Mr. Ramsay's brightest hopes are lost, his genius seems unassured, even though he is thought (by Charles, at least) to be "the greatest metaphysician of the time" (43). Mr. Ramsay's identity appears to be erratic, and "the time" will not suffice because "he must have more than that. [...] He must be assured that he too lived in the heart of life; was needed; not here only, but all over the world" (43). The fountain was earlier noted with reference to Lily. In "The Window," it is Mrs. Ramsay who is tasked with the ability to "pour erect into the air a rain of energy" which enables or calls for such energies as she has to be "fused into force, burning and illuminating" (42). Mrs. Ramsay's light and force – "pure feeling" (MTPT 66) – of "th[e] fountain and spray of life" (43) is imbued with "delicious fecundity" (43) and put to the work of alleviating "the fatal sterility of the male" (43). As the scene progresses, with James standing "between her knees" (44), Mrs. Ramsay, carrying her own sharp instruments, "flashed her needles" and "[f]lashing her needles," will "assure[] Mr. Ramsay, beyond a shadow of a doubt, by her laugh, her poise, her competence (as a nurse carrying a light across a dark room assures a fractious child), that it was real [...]" (43). The price of this thing she calls "real" is high and Mrs. Ramsay may well "boast[] of her capacity to surround and protect" but "there [i]s scarcely a shell of herself left for her to know herself by [...]" (44).

⁶⁷ Light and darkness is of the essence in a number of scholarly works on Woolf: Sun Yom (1996) suggests that "Woolf's repeated connections of light and dark demonstrate a sensitivity to issues of illumination and penetration in a physical sense as well as in the context of personality and its construction" (149). Woolf's "gentle manifesto," Sun Yom writes (in her work on "the quantum leap") is spoken "through Bernard [in *The Waves*]: 'That is the truth; that is the fact, but beyond it all is darkness and conjecture'" (149). Fleishman, in an early work (1975), links time to "images of day and night" which is "counterpointed by the turning of day into night in the tale of the Fisherman and His Wife [in *To the Lighthouse*]" (*A Critical Reading* 123). In an earlier work from 1969, Fleishman's paper links *To the Lighthouse*'s time frame to McTaggart's C-series: "the succession of real, atemporal events, seen from the misperceptions of time. What passes in the 'Time Passes' section is, then, the concept of time itself" ("Woolf and McTaggart" 731). My section on "Time Passes" will follow in due course. Mark Hussey (1982), suggests that "some scholars have traced a philosophy in Woolf's writings to sources in, for example, Bergson, Moore and – bizarrely – McTaggart" (Hussey i). In a note (in the same work), Hussey refers to Fleishman's 1969 essay (n.10, viii). Tolliver Brown (2009) identifies two tables in *To the Lighthouse* in order to "introduce the debate over objectivity" ("Relativity, Quantum" 48). The first table – Mr. Ramsay's – "exists independently of its observation, whereas Mrs. Ramsay's table is a participatory 'object,' interacting and changing with the force of her consciousness" (48). Please refer to works cited.

Mrs. Ramsay's assurance to her husband, "that it was real; the house was full; the garden blowing" will be contradicted in the "Time Passes" section. Woolf describes the writing of the section as "hav[ing] to give an empty house, no people's characters, the passage of time"; everything, it would seem, that Mr. Ramsay fears (D3 76). It is the section in which Mrs. Ramsay's death is reported:

[Mr. Ramsay stumbling along a passage stretched his arms out one dark morning, but, Mrs. Ramsay having died rather suddenly the night before, he stretched his arms out. They remained empty] (*Lighthouse* 140).

We are reminded, I think, of Mr. Ramsay's indirectly reported advice to his young son, James, at the start of the novel – which I noted earlier – "the passage to that fabled land where our brightest hopes are extinguished, or frail barks founder in darkness [...]" (8). This admonition to his son, that "life is difficult," was immediately ameliorated by Mrs. Ramsay's encouragement, "[b]ut it may be fine – I expect it will be fine [...]" (8). What was considered to be "extraordinary irrationality" at the time becomes realised and perfectly rational ten years later as James steers the boat toward the lighthouse with his sister, Cam, and his father. Mrs. Ramsay's philosophical response to the future, her "so it might," is of such impact that the expedition must eventually be completed – even after her death, her influence on future events is total. In this section, I have attempted to show how time and process are a matter of succession and recurrence at surface level. Woolf shows us how unfolding objects are intrinsically a part of the "subjective present" which provides the impression that objects are changing and that time is passing. Mrs. Ramsay attempts to present the external world (to those gathered around her) as tangible and, to her husband, "that it [the world] was real" (43). Mr. Ramsay, for his part, attempts to communicate to his son – to ameliorate the child as well as the father's own disappointments – that whatever happens now will undergo transmutation in the future. I noted too that a self in microgeny is, according to Brown, an "unclear form" that is "poised between the indistinctness of memories" and the arising and perishing of external objects (SP 70).

I will now introduce what we may refer to as the core of Woolf's "transmuting process" by which "[a]rt and [t]hought" are harmonised and composed from the consciously revived "actual events" of the past. (D3 102). The lighthouse from "The Window" will undergo duplication as a memorial event. However, to go back in time (as Woolf will attempt to do in "The Sketch of the Past") is to return "not as a child, of seven or eight but as a woman now older than [her mother] when she died" ("Sketch" 96). Following the death of his mother, James follows a similar process but from the vantage point of his sixteen-year-old self. We now turn to the final section, "The

Lighthouse.” Just as there may be, at least, two lighthouses, as I shall note in due course, so there may be more than one James Ramsay.

Antecedence and Present Composition

Lily’s earliest effort to create an abstract representation of mother and child was “indicate[d] by the triangular purple shape [...]” (*Lighthouse* 58). In “The Window” section of the novel Lily sets her mind on “becoming once more under the power of that vision which she had seen clearly once and must now grope for among hedges and houses and mothers and children – her picture” (60). The picture is out of balance and the problem of “how to connect this mass on the right hand with that on the left” may be solved by “break[ing] the vacancy in the foreground with an object (James perhaps) so” (60). This would seem to suggest that James appears twice in the picture, once in abstract with his mother, that is, “the triangular purple shape” (58), and once, we know not how, in order to break that vacancy in the canvas. I would argue that this duplication is Woolf’s precise intention.⁶⁸ The purple triangle of James and Mrs. Ramsay may become merely a “purple shadow without irreverence” (59) but there is also the potential of a separated James, this time foregrounded, but it is only ever a parenthetical thought, only a “[...] perhaps) so” (60). It is this potential, of a separated self, which may recall the earlier events. In microgenetic theory,

[t]here is no storehouse of *actual* experience in the affected domain of function that can be matched to ongoing events. There are no copies of perception that can be retrieved from memory, since the ‘retrieval’ of a memory ‘trace’ is its full microgenetic traversal (PAL 593; emphasis in original).

All that can be available in the present moment is that which can be “perceived or revived in the present state” (593). The present self’s memory relies on a revival of the past into the present as “[p]ersonal knowledge and experience form the foundation of the object, infusing it with meaning and relevance” (MSCW 69). What is remembered is only ever a fraction of what has passed. Woolf, I think, conveys to the reader that a second James is alone, he is foregrounded, filling a vacancy, giving balance but, as stated earlier, he is only ever a possibility, appearing in parenthesis as an object, and a possible solution to Lily’s problematic painting: “(James perhaps) so” (*Lighthouse* 60).

⁶⁸ Doyle (1994) provides a reading of *To the Lighthouse* through the lens of Merleau-Ponty, suggesting that Woolf was able to “recognize random inanimate and nonhuman phenomena as alternative grounds of human narrative and temporality” (46). If there is to be anything like “human triumph,” it must come from “the recognition of those objects that stand outside human bodies and endure beyond the temporality of individual humans yet nonetheless inhabit the same orders of temporality and spatiality” (46). I have argued that the material world is the modulator of the subjective generative process, stating too that Woolf describes the objects of perception as – in Brownian terms – “concrete images in the mental space of an observer” (MN 8); in her own terms – as I show below – as the configuration of “concrete shapes” and the multiplicity of representation (ITL 200).

Ten years later, the earlier memory of the lighthouse (the one he saw with his mother at the moment “the Lighthouse [...] had been lit” (68), will become a revival of the lighthouse he now sees:

James looked at the Lighthouse. He could see the white-washed rocks; the tower, stark and straight; he could see that it was barred with black and white; he could see windows in it; he could even see washing spread on the rocks to dry. So that was the Lighthouse, was it? (202).

James taps into the “potential of an underlying concept” so that he may explore its context, imbuing the lighthouse with “the unique emotional resonance that each memory calls up” (PAL 117). The potential is given in the three-times repeated “could” (*Lighthouse* 202). The earlier lighthouse, of course, is not the present one, and may be numerous as each blink of the eye is the potential of an opening onto another lighthouse (according to Brown, “in the becoming of each world” (TWMP 5):

No, the other was also the Lighthouse. For nothing was simply one thing. The other was the Lighthouse too. It was sometimes hardly to be seen across the bay. In the evening one looked up and saw the eye opening and shutting and the light seemed to reach them in that airy sunny garden where they sat (*Lighthouse* 202).

In the first passage above, what James “could see” is descriptive, it is happening (as well as conditional), the colours are there, black and white, the windows are visible, the washing too is there on the presumably “white-washed rocks” (202). The picture of what he is able to see is building up as the boat gets nearer to its destination. He ends with a question, as though seeing something that he had once heard of, or read about, or seen an image of, and reports what he presently perceives as a past event, “[s]o that was the Lighthouse, was it?” Is James’s present self – aboard the boat to Godrevy – a stable event, perceiving a continuously transmuting process? Woolf seems to offer us a past lighthouse, that which “was” and, indeed, “was” again in the repetition. But even then, again and again, it is multiple and recurring: whitewashed, tower-like, stark, straight, barred, now black and white, and sometimes “hardly to be seen” at all (202). I have stated that “[t]he aim of microgenetic analysis is to describe those phases in the revival from past to present that constitute the sum of mind for that moment” (TWMP 4). I have suggested that Woolf’s descriptions are attempts to compose her work with reference to the “transmuting process” (D3 102).

Each configural change and each moment (as James and the party get nearer) “is a form that departs to some extent from its model in the immediate past” thereby effectuating a comparison (by him) of (at least) two times and (at least) two “Lighthouses” – time of L1 (lighthouse lacks full visibility) and time of L2 (lighthouse is pinpointed in perception (“could see”). In microgenesis there is never “an observation of one object that is changing” (TWMP 27). The solidity of any

perceived object is the “constancy [of] the coherence in the track over which the object develops” (27). In the second passage above, beginning “[n]o, the other was also the Lighthouse,” the past tense denotes (to the reader) that the memory of the lighthouse is being re-perceived from the past: “for nothing was simply one thing” (*Lighthouse* 202). He recalls, in this instance (from his childhood), that “it was sometimes hardly to be seen,” at other times, he “saw the eye opening,” and that its light often “seemed to reach” the garden, which he describes as sunny (*Lighthouse* 202). James, in the two passages, describes the lighthouses’ “momentary history, its before and after” which directly “correlates [his] belief mentation with [his] brain process” (TWMP 9). The object perceived is memorial whether the event was ten years ago or ten seconds ago or during the period that feels like now. The perception of “the other [...] Lighthouse” must therefore rely on memory, first and foremost, since the subjective series (in memory, along with sensation (the “extrinsic constraints” (TWMP 11)) precedes the objective series; in fact, the latter is founded on the former. James’s present lighthouse recurs as a residue of the earlier one: the memory in microgeny is a “travelling wave that sweeps from depth (arising) to surface (perishing)” (MN 35). In perceptual microgenesis, all states are fading and must be replaced (if we are to perceive an object) by “near-replicates” – “[e]ach replicate changes slightly from the prior state in the course of its becoming” (35). All time, as Brown suggests, “is in the arising and perishing of moments” (23) and James’s object, the present lighthouse, acts as the connection between the thought (the object in the past) and the present object which is itself recurring. There is, then, a bringing together – “everything into harmony” – of thought with Woolf’s composition (of the past produced in the present) – as, for example, Woolf’s composing of Mrs. Hardy in her diary entry – but the “transmuting process,” as Woolf names it, (Brown’s “mix of memory and thought” (MSCW 74)), produces something new: “the actual event [as Woolf recalls] was different” (D3 102). The past is transformed in the present composition. Past events may be brought into present perception (and much may be forgotten in the process) but, as Brown suggests, “[e]very past moment is transformed as it propels an object into the present” (TWMP 43).

Lily will also produce not only two James’s as she seems to do in her painting, but a second Mrs. Ramsay is visualised from the past to the present. Lily, accompanied by Mr. Carmichael, calls out “Oh Mrs. Ramsay,” but it is done “silently, to that essence which sat by the boat, that abstract one made of her” (194). The calling back silently may remind the reader of the “Time Passes” section, and Mrs. Ramsay’s death, but here, in broad daylight and with Augustus Carmichael, Mrs. Ramsay is “[g]host, air, nothingness, a thing you could play with easily and safely at any time of day or night [...]” (194). Mrs. Ramsay’s stay is fleeting, “[s]uddenly the empty drawing room steps, the frill of the chair inside [...]” (194), but her emergence will lead to Lily’s dual question (which

remains a thought only): “[w]hat does it mean? How do you explain it all?’ she wanted to ask” (194). Lily’s questions remain obscure as “the whole world seemed to have dissolved in this early morning hour into a pool of thought, a deep basin of reality [...]” (194). This “silent” calling appears, then, to be wishful thinking, but Lily will see her old friend again as an infliction from the past:

‘Mrs. Ramsay! Mrs. Ramsay!’ she cried, feeling the old horror come back – to want and want and not to have. Could she inflict that still? And then, quietly, as if she refrained, that too became a part of ordinary experience [...]. Mrs. Ramsay – it was part of her perfect goodness – sat there quite simply, in the chair, flicked her needles to and fro and knitted her reddish-brown stocking, cast her shadow on the step. There she sat (219).

What survives from the past and the significance of the appearance of change in perceptual microgenesis will make up the material for the next section on “Time Passes.”

Finally, Time Passes

The tension and potential “harmony” between “[a]rt and [t]hought” and self and the external world is presented in “Time Passes” (D3 102). This section of the novel was a worry to Woolf and she records this in her diary when she writes that “I am anxious about ‘Time Passes.’ Think the whole thing may be pronounced soft, shallow, insipid, sentimental. Yet, honestly, I don’t much care; want to be left alone to ruminate” (D3 134). I shall argue that Woolf is also concerned about the writing of what appears to change (that “[n]othing [...] could survive [...] the profusion of darkness” (*Lighthouse* 137)) and how what is perceived is a procession of “*near-realities* or partial views of reality” (PAL 579; emphasis in original). Woolf’s process of change in “Time Passes” is constant yet continuous because what is perceived as changing (in human perception) is an external reality of “sensation trim[med] [from] a diversity of objects to those that conform to the external world” (Bradford and Brown 188). If the “changed object,” as Brown suggests, “is a novel object that has actualized in the decay of the old one,” then the perceiver must “fill[] the interval with imaginary change” (TWMP 23). Woolf attempts to write this “imaginary change” in the absence of the perceiver. I suggested earlier that what was required by James Ramsay and at least two lighthouses, for example, was a comparison of objects across multiple times. The change we see in the world is not so much illusory as nearly-real; our perceptions are partial views of what is external to us. In which case, the process of change in microgenesis “results from the replacement of objects, giving the appearance of an ordered series of events” (Bradford and Brown, 197).

Brown explains the significance of change “as a process chunked into appearances” (TWMP 20) but accepts that if there is a perceived change (at least, for the reader) from one entity to the next in, say, Woolf’s “Time Passes,” it is often hard to fathom. Woolf attempts to situate herself

both physically and as a momentary configuration of mind when she describes her process of composition as “[n]ow & again I feel my mind take shape, like a cloud with sun on it, as some idea, plan, or image wells up, but they travel on, over the horizon, like clouds, & I wait peacefully for another form, or nothing” (D3 259). We might read Woolf’s method as a distillation of her “transmuting process,” that is, a bringing forth of a past to present (physical to mental) composition which may come and which may not and which, in any case, “was different” and is continually different (D3 102). To turn, for a moment, to *Jacob’s Room*, where sunlight thrown onto glass obliterates the usual chiaroscuro (which usually would be expected to give depth and perspective). Woolf describes the distortion of light upon “[a] window tinged yellow about two feet across alone combat[ing] the white fields and the black trees” (*Jacob* 85). In fact, the trees were never black, the fields are not white, the effect of the window – the yellow tinge of sunlight – does not give the impression that the trees look black, the fields white; they already are (in Woolf’s description), and it is the light which tampers with this reality, that is, the blackness of trees and the whiteness of fields and the yellow of the glass. Woolf describes (that is, she composes) objects across individual times but, in this case, she leaves out precisely when (and why) the trees were blackened entities and the fields whitened, by stating only that the yellow tinged window combats (and obscures) some earlier perception. This is not changing objects but comparisons over different times – the yellow creates the novel difference – the scene is changed but the physical, external objects remain unchanged on the surface. Brown suggests that “the observer has a perception to change across successive entities (worlds)” but the question of underlying change, he says, citing flow and stability respectively, may be depicted in the terms of “a butterfly on the wing and a stationary rock in the garden [which] are each [...] a mass of raging particles” (MN 11; Whitehead paraphrased). Woolf’s writings are delineations – descriptions and explanations in Brown’s sense, as noted in the introduction to this project – of the self and object, mind and matter, time past and present, as transmuting and processual.

Woolf’s changes in perception (of objects seen, or not seen, through a window tinged with yellow) reveals and identifies a microgenetic moment of what Brown calls, “[t]he light, the shadow, the perspective, [...] everything changes in every change” (MN 11). Woolf’s frame of reference, in the case of what can be seen through Woolf’s yellow tinged window, or at all, comes down to a present that is continuously replaced, that is, as microgenetic theory posits, (to repeat) “[t]he change we see in the world is illusory” (Bradford and Brown 197). The change in every past (and passing) moment is a transformation propelling, in this case, black trees and white fields, into the present moment of perception. The successive moments of the objects have collapsed into what Brown calls (and suggested earlier in a different context) “the thickness of the absolute present,”

that is, an “*absolute* present [which] is not experienced in consciousness” because “time awareness entails a discrepancy between the complete becoming of an object and the incomplete becoming (decay) of past objects revived in the present one” (TWMP 22; emphasis in original). In microgenesis, the change we perceive “as an external relation between objects” is replaced in Brown’s formulation of microgenesis by change that is “intrinsic to the object formation” (PAL 581). The underlying change of an object (unperceived) is genuine; the recurrence that deposits a novel object (arising and perishing trees, lighthouses, fields, and selves) is but the presentation of “*near-realities*” (PAL 579; emphasis in original). Woolf is aware of the illusory nature of human near-realities. At the famous “Boeuf en Daube” dinner party (*Lighthouse* 114), for example, the room is now “shut off by panes of glass” and “far from giving any accurate view of the outside world, rippled it so strangely that here, inside the room, seemed to be order and dry land [...]” (106). Woolf, then, shortly after this absence of the outside world is noted, posits an awareness of this as a process to the guests, stating that “[s]ome change at once went through them all, as if this had really happened, and they were all conscious of making a party together in a hollow, on an island [...]” (106). A “coherence in things is felt, a stability; something, she [Mrs. Ramsay] meant, immune from change, and shines out [...]” (114). This is a perfect example of Woolf’s method of transmuting identities and times; a mixing of memories and thought.

In “Time Passes,” Woolf attempts to impersonalise “the flight of time” such that the change we cannot see – the intrinsic change in an object – may be felt as a momentary awareness. The moment in microgenesis is a world in which “the mind/brain state develops and re-creates each moment out of memorial or experiential data constrained by sensation at multiple phases” (RoM 26). But whatever develops is only then what we make of it. As Brown suggests, a tree remembered may be a specimen, it may be beautiful, a dream, it might have been shade, shelter or firewood, it may constitute one of Woolf’s “sudden shocks” as, for example, her recollection of “the grey-green creases of the bark – it was moonlit night – in a trance of horror” (“Sketch” 84). Brown suggests that the recurring process is developed from “the experiential, memorial and contextual ground out of which the tree and its personal meaning are perceived” (RoM 27). The tree as object perceived (its “thickness”) is what Brown calls a “final particular” but it is one particular thing which may be fractionated into “an implicit category of virtual parts, as well as the recurrences or snapshots buried in its stability or fused into events” (“Simultaneity” 96).

In *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf concerns herself with the passage of time and how it is transmuted via external (amplifying/disinhibiting) constraints which impact upon what Brown calls the “*inner* story” by which he means the “subjectivist account [...] about agents, beliefs, desires, choices, reasons, [and] ends” (TWMP 9; emphasis in original). In “Time Passes,” Woolf attempts to write

a world passing out of the usual distorting prism through which the external world is (in the main) perceived (by human beings). In “Time Passes,” for example, the oceans contain humans on the surface (“the silent apparition of an ashen-coloured ship for instance” (*Lighthouse* 146)) and in the depths; that whatever is down there, and the description suggests human bodies, has left “a purplish stain upon the bland surface of the sea as if something had boiled and bled, invisibly, beneath” (146). Whatever is in the depths is brought to the surface as a residue of some intrinsic change below the water’s surface. This passage of time is at least partly set in war time. The entire time frame of the section is something in the region of ten years (Woolf, in the early stages, writes “seven years passed” (D3 36)).⁶⁹ Woolf captures the rhythm and the passage of time with one of her greatest images, that of the wave, and how the external power of the sea is generated out of human feeling (“their hearts”) and perception (“vision within”), but always with the caveat of “as if”:

[f]or it was as if the waves broke in them; the stars flashed in their hearts; and the trees’ strength, the cliffs’ nobility, the clouds’ majesty were so brought together purposely to assemble the scattered parts of the vision within (Typescript, “Time Passes” 11).

Woolf, in a letter to Vita Sackville West, explains the rhythm, and relational aspect, of her writing method in these terms: “as it breaks and tumbles in the mind, it makes words to fit” (L3 [1926] 247). I noted earlier, referring to Woolf’s “Sketch of the Past,” that her moments of being are intrinsically linked to her earliest years which she describes in these terms:

lying half asleep, half awake, in bed in the nursery at St Ives. It is of hearing the waves breaking one, two, one, two, behind a yellow blind. It is of hearing the blind draw its little acorn across the floor as the wind blew the blind out. It is of lying and hearing this splash and seeing this light, and feeling, it is almost impossible that I should be here; of feeling the purest ecstasy I can conceive (“Sketch” 78-9).

In “Time Passes,” the reader may begin to feel that the passage of time is being sculpted out of an unconscious core in which there is no temporal order at all. It is as though we are reading a percolation of phases (and phrases) that are moving outward into an external world which feels real and true, even recognisable, yet opaque. There is something happening, objects are captured as snapshots of change, occurring and reoccurring, becoming, as we read, but all that unfolds remains unperceived, as though inwardly, within the fabric of the “empty house,” there is a non-existent self-hood parsing and questioning each image into a semblance of near-reality. What the reader is presented with is a sculpting (out of “numerous ‘possibilities’” (Smith “Visual Perception”

⁶⁹ Woolf, all along, describes the whole novel in terms of a movement through time: “[t]hat passage (I conceive the book in 3 parts: 1. at the drawing room window; 2. seven years passed; 3. the voyage;) interests me very much” (D3 36). An undertaking, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, as both “dared to” and “a harebrained notion” (*Magic* 641).

307) and a questioning of the barest needs which may exceed an external reality in which human beings have,

lunged and plunged the darkness or the daylight (for night and day, month and year ran shapelessly together) in idiot games until it seemed as if the universe were battling and tumbling, in brute confusion and wanton lust aimlessly by itself (Typescript, "Time Passes" 14-15).

It is, at times, described as a world of dreaming, but it is a world carved and constantly configured at the surface level, a becoming into being, which is convincing because it is a world that seems to persist even with our eyes closed and even as we, as readers, watch it forming slowly as though (to engage Talis Bachmann's "technical analogue" for perceptual microgenesis) "the negative image within the emulsion layer of the photographic paper becomes developed into the pattern of reflectance gradients on the surface of the paper after it has been immersed into the developer liquid" ("Microgenesis of Perception" 13).⁷⁰

Nothing stirred in the drawing room or in the dining-room or on the staircase. Only through the rusty hinges and swollen sea-moistened woodwork certain airs, detached from the body of the wind (the house was ramshackle after all) crept around corners and ventured indoors. Almost one might imagine them, as they entered the drawing-room questioning and wondering, toying with the flap of hanging wall-paper, asking, would it hang much longer; when would it fall? Then smoothly brushing the walls, they passed on musingly as if asking the red and yellow roses on the wall-paper whether they would fade, and questioning (gently, for there was time at their disposal) the torn letters in the wastepaper basket, the flowers, the books, all of which were now open to

⁷⁰ The question of objects is taken up by Leanna Lostoski who seeks to read *To the Lighthouse* via Jane Bennett's postulation of "*thing power*." Thing-power offers Lostoski "a way to recognize the agency and materiality of nonhuman objects and to interpret Woolf's depictions of vital materialities in the strikingly strange "Time Passes" section" (Lostoski 67; emphasis in original). She suggests that "Woolf breaks from the long philosophical tradition of viewing humans exclusively as subjects and relegating all other materialities as objects to redefine being in her more inclusive turn towards nonhuman" (67). Lostoski points out (in her essay) that David Sherman "notes that the narration [of "Time Passes"] 'warps time, creating subjectivity that voices itself not-in-the-present-tense, non-synchronously, as time passing or even surpassing the subject'" (Sherman qtd. 67). She suggests that Sherman identifies the narrator of "Time Passes" as a "means of bridging the gap between the subjective [...] and the other, the nonhuman" (67). Sherman himself (2007) sets out – via Levinas's ethical philosophy – to argue that "Woolf helps us understand the dissolution of the 'I am' as an ethical response to another's death, a way of mourning performed by the modern subject" (Sherman 162). The other, then, is human. For example, from *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas states that "I see this countenance before me nude and bare. He is present in the flesh" (Levinas 13). (This is what Sherman is getting at, I think, not lively matter, but the abnegation (or, for Sherman, dissolution) of self as an ethical response to death of the other. "Time Passing," in Sherman's essay, is about the process of mourning others.) Heine (2019), again focussing exclusively on "Time Passes," argues that the deaths in parenthesis may "represent an *interruption*, and not a termination of the temporal proceedings in the abandoned house" (Heine 128; emphasis in original). Woolf's parentheses – in which, for example, [Prue Ramsay died that summer [...]] (*Lighthouse* 144) – "may offer us a way to approach a notion of the Anthropocene beyond the apocalyptic logic, an Anthropocene, that is, determined by forces of [Blanchotian] unworking rather than a linear teleological path towards destruction" (Heine 128). Banfield (2003) suggests that "[t]he experience of time for both [Bertrand] Russell and [G.E.] Moore [...] consists of a succession of distinct, noninterpenetrating units, directly apprehended one at a time [...]" (Banfield 480). Brown suggests, as I have already noted, that to perceive in unitary fashion would lead to a stroboscopic view of the external world: "[o]rder and continuity would then depend on the overlap of recurrences" ("Time", 223). For an assessment of "Woolf's photography," Maggie Humm states that "Woolf wrote about photography" from the age of fifteen (219). Among other things, Woolf, according to Humm, "used photographs to entice Vita Sackville-West" (225). Vita was asked to visit so that she could "look at my [Woolf's] great aunt's photographs of Tennyson [...]" (Woolf qtd. at 225). Please refer to works cited.

them and asking, Were they allies? Were they enemies? How long would they endure? (*Lighthouse* 138).

It is “as if” it is happening before, during, and all around us, inhabiting the space of our reading world, but the process is, nonetheless (and at all times), a knowing “*as-if*” (PAL 599, emphasis in original), a conscious fiction, entirely aware of its own illusion. For instance, it might be that there are “airs, detached from the body of the wind” which give the impression of movement and the framing of apparent change. The airs are part responsible for the superficial alterations of the house, frame by frame, phase by phase, “wondering, toying” and then “asking” (*Lighthouse* 138). Only then, passing on, “as if asking,” to the next phase of change, musing (as they go) on the wherewithal of the natural world. That the flowers on the wall-paper might, as they must in the garden, eventually fade (a going over) as a continuity of the natural world from outside in, from the external physical world to a world of artifice inside represented in coloured, bleached and peeling paper. And then to “questioning” again, but gently so: of what might be the content lost in the letters of scattered words left in the waste-paper basket and, as the paragraph ends, more questioning. What is the value of that which was left behind, the torn and shredded words among them which may be sculpted to some particular form: “[w]ere they allies? Were they enemies?” (*Lighthouse* 138). What remains is the seemingly actualised forms, generated in the arising and perishing, in the decay of objects, the novelty of which provides merely the impression of change and which brings us to Woolf’s final question of the paragraph, “[h]ow long would they endure?” (138).

In the summer of 1925 Woolf’s intention for *To the Lighthouse* was to make some attempt to “split up emotions more completely” (D3 38) and by the late winter of the following year, she was commenting upon the notion of “[h]ow many phases one goes through between the soup & the sweet!” (D3 63). Woolf describes *The Waves* (then titled “the Moths”), as a building-up of a selection of early figures. At this same time, and somewhat crucially, she states that “[t]he unreal world must be round this – the phantom waves”; it is an idea which she hopes to sound throughout the novel: “[c]ould one not get the waves to be heard all through?” (D3 236 [23 June 1929]). It is a question which might as readily have been asked of *To the Lighthouse*, a novel which had prompted Woolf in 1925 to write to Sackville West in a somewhat imploringly, if not quite a desperate, fashion: “I wish you could live in my brain for a week. It is washed with the most violent waves of emotion” (L3 245 VSW [1st March 1926]). Returning to *To the Lighthouse*, and “Time Passes,” the “wakeful [and] the hopeful” are at once located “walking the beach” (144) in the hope of finding “on the beach an answer” (*Lighthouse* 146). The search will be in vain and all external intrusions serve only to “stay[] their pacing” (146). Woolf’s “bland surface of the sea” as a scene

of death (coming up from the depths) is but an “intrusion” into life, yet one which is matched with what is so “difficult blandly to overlook” (146). By which she means, I would say, that the “most sublime reflections” are the ones “[which] lead to the most comfortable conclusions” (146). Woolf’s juxtaposition of what seems bland as well as banal, a simple surface, say, or intrusion into life, disguises the fact that the external world goes deeper, that it is, in microgenesis, part of a process whereby objects may grow outwards and “their unfolding [is] from depth (past) to surface (now)” (TWMP 34). The sea (for example, for Rachel Vinrace, in *Melambrosia*, as well as for the walkers on the beach in *To The Lighthouse*) exemplifies a “subjective unfolding,” with perception caught up in a “multi-modal adequacy” of succeeding phases, seemingly separate, but intrinsically linked to time (PAL 582). The reader will be led toward the end of this most stunningly accomplished section to an inextricable question: “[d]id she [Nature] complete what he [humanity] began?” (146). The one’s “equal complacency” observes, “and acquiesced in his torture,” just as the other “one walked by the sea” to “marvel how beauty outside mirrored beauty within” (146). Perception is shaped by the external and physical world; it is, according to Brown, “the real world as a kind of mirror” (TWMP 24). Woolf finds illusions in all aspects of daily life, in things which appear solid and stable, “or very shifting” (D3 218), but which are perhaps better understood, according to Brown, as the development of a subjective “historical process in which objects are generated from past to present” and depth to surface (TWMP 34).

I have noted that Woolf’s merging (and often indistinguishable) moments may be understood as a reflection on what can be known (epistemologically) and under what circumstances any one of us may register our very own being (or part) in the process (ontologically). In the two domains (that is, to repeat, a private world of mental states and an independent physical world), what is particularly important to note is that the microgenetic position (consonant with Woolf’s own texts) asserts that it is being itself (as earlier noted) that is in a process of becoming – the emphasis, therefore, is a turn to object formation as an interfusion between mind-dependent objectivity and our experience of time. Woolf may have been called upon, that is, dared to write the “flight of time” as an impersonal matter in “Time Passes,” but time across the novel, as I have demonstrated, is centred on “the mind-dependence of our experience of time and its relation to change in the becoming of the mental state [...]” (TWMP viii). Woolf very clearly sets out her claim: what is unknowable seems to be the criteria of reality. That is not to say that the being of another is in the mind of the beholder (a radical idealism), but that the existence of that other may illuminate, not only the origins of perception (evolution of “pure feeling” (MTPT 66)), but how we represent (or indeed model ourselves) on that other self. As I have demonstrated, Woolf’s novel addresses the

tension between the stability of one's identity and the recurring, unfolding process of time which she calls "the transmuting process."

CHAPTER FOUR

“Life comes; life goes; we make life”: Perceptual Microgenesis and Object-Formation in *The Waves*.

Lytton Strachey’s “one criticism” of *The Voyage Out* was expressed in a letter to Virginia Woolf in the winter of 1916. He wrote that he was “doubtful” “about the conception of it as a whole” (Woolf and Strachey 56). However, Woolf was surely delighted by Strachey’s estimation that there was “[s]omething Tolstoyan” in her first novel, as well as “what people call ‘brilliance’” (55). In her own letter by return, she referred to her friend’s concerns regarding “the failure of conception,” as she herself viewed it. In her letter of 28th February 1916, she went on to write,

[w]hat I wanted to do was to give the feeling of a vast tumult of life, as various and disorderly as possible, which should be cut short for a moment by the death [of Rachell], and go on again – and the whole was to have a sort of pattern, and be somehow controlled. The difficulty was to keep any sort of coherence [...] (57).

Woolf’s concern about the wholeness of conception is a concern, however, which recurs throughout the writing of her novels. In “Byron and Mr Briggs,” Woolf’s typescript to “the introductory chapter to a proposed book, ‘Reading,’” she writes the following:

To make a whole – [it is] that ~~is what~~ [which] we have in common. Our reading is always urged on by ~~that~~ instinct, [to do that], [complete what we read,] which is, for some reason, one of the most universal and profound [of our instincts] (E3, App. II, 482).⁷¹

Making whole from what appears to be in a process of change is key to Woolf’s method:

[T](here) ~~must be~~ [is] something disagreeable to the mind in allowing any [an] impression [...] [of any force] to remain isolated. It must ~~be~~ completed by others; [...] one must, for one’s own comfort, have a whole in one’s mind [...] (483).

She worries about the potentially disjointed nature of her work, the “litter of fragments so far” (D3 287) (which she wishes to avoid in her next novel, *The Waves*); that “fragments are unendurable” (from “Byron and Mr Briggs”) (E3 483); and from her earliest writing (from 1908): that “some kind of whole” must be “made of shivering fragments [...]” (from *A Passionate Apprentice* (393)). Hermione Lee suggests that Woolf’s method of “making whole” is not “just an interesting process” for Woolf, it is “an urgent personal necessity” (*Virginia* 413). Lee underlines the “personal necessity” of Woolf’s process of writing by suggesting that “this [her method of “making whole”] is like the way she makes sense of the ‘shocks’ she receives in life by explaining them [...]” (413). Centring the following chapter on Brown’s elaboration of how objects unfold

⁷¹ “Byron and Mr Briggs” (E3, App. II, 473: [square brackets] are additions and revisions.

as stabilising wholes in perceptual microgenesis, I will address the cognitive process of two of Woolf's soliloquists in *The Waves*, Rhoda and Bernard.

In the first section, I focus on Bernard who, although prone to "becom[ing] featureless" (*Waves* 172), manages, nonetheless, to revive his "identity" sufficiently long enough to "become robust" (201). His "oscillations and vibrations" lead him not into despair (as they will for Rhoda) but to an "aware[ness] of our ephemeral passage" (85). By focussing in the main on the character of Rhoda in section two, I will explore Rhoda's cognitive process of object formation, the effects of which impact upon how she sculpts external objects to devastating effect, leaving her with "no end in view" (*Waves* 97). I argue that Rhoda's unfolding mental process throughout the novel might be better understood as, in Jason Brown's words, the "symptoms of an incomplete resolution of the dialectic of self and other, in other words, signs of moral distress" (PAL 236). What is meant by "incomplete resolution" and how the term relates to Brown's metaphor of "sculpting" will come later. For now, I shall start my investigation into object formation and microgeny by providing a summation of *The Waves* as text and as the novel which was so central to Woolf's own thoughts on fiction and her own method for writing.

The Waves was a turning point for Woolf and its completion brought with it relief and elation. In a diary entry of 16th November 1931, she states that "The Waves is my first work in my own style!" and she reminds herself that it has taken her "a long toil to reach this beginning" (D4 53). In a sentence which stages herself in a string of first-person deliveries ("I," "I," "I"), she writes, "if I live," as she puts it, "I mean I think I am about to embody, at last, the exact shapes my brain holds" (53). Woolf, however, following the excitement for the future of her writing, feels that it is, in some quarters, "dubbed a failure," and she imagines that "Roger [Fry] & Lytton [Strachey] [...] are both hostile towards me, because of The Waves" (53). In her novel, Woolf gathers her six soliloquists (Bernard, Jinny, Louis, Neville, Rhoda, and Susan) into what appears to be a progressively repeatable world through which the speakers themselves may be progressively repeatable selves in continual decay and renewal (MSCW 15).⁷² The novel alternates passages of italicised prose with sections of the main text through which the six characters of the novel communicate. The italicised interludes cover the passage of a single day (beginning with "*the sun had not yet risen*" and culminating (eventually) as "[*the waves broke on the shore*"]) as well as the changing seasons from spring to winter (and the course of life): spring, which opens the novel, for example,

⁷² It is worth repeating here that the term "decay" is the progression of an actualised object as it passes away, leaving behind (potentially) another arising (only to perish again). The "term 'decay' supposes" in microgeny "a static trace that degrades, not deficient revival" (MTPT 40). The "growing out" into the mental state, as already noted (in the introduction to this thesis (Bradford and Brown 193)), "specifies conscious mentality out of tacit experience" – i.e., from long term memory of the past to short term memory into a present (MTPT 40).

corresponds to the seven children at school and play (“‘I hear a sound,’ said Rhoda, ‘cheep, chirp; cheep, chirp; going up and down’” (*Waves* 5)), with winter’s end corresponding to Bernard’s final “sum[ming] up” of what has come before (183). Woolf’s soliloquists are conceived by her (in the holograph version of the novel) as entities being born on the page “[l]ike one wave succeeding another [...]” (Woolf qtd. in Briggs 243) in formation: “[n]ow [...] we all rise; we all stand up” (*Waves* 18). The seventh companion (not a soliloquist), Percival, is spoken of, referred to, but he is never heard and remains an unresolved entity.⁷³ The occurrence of his death is reported by all six from at the half-way point in the novel and leads to what amounts to an eleven-page group-eulogy expressed through the voices of Neville, Rhoda, and Bernard (section five, the death of Percival 114-124). The novel concludes as Bernard, before his own death, presents the reader with a “sum[ming] up” of much of what has passed in the novel (*Waves* 183). Woolf’s writing process may have been initiated with chaotic method (her “lunatic’s dream” (D3 275)) but her process of “shaping & composing” (from “the Lighthouse” on (62)) frequently adapts to a final form of “this ‘it,’” and then she can “feel quite at rest” (D3 63). As she suggests in her diary entry of December 1929, “I write variations of every sentence [in *The Waves*]; compromises; bad shots; possibilities; [...] I press to my centre. I don’t care if it is all scratched out. And there is something there” (D3 275).

In 1929 Woolf writes of her method, situating it beyond, and somehow above, all hope of a solid foundation, in the following case, a physical table stands in as her object of choice: “[i]s there some falsity, of method, somewhere? Something tricky? – so that the interesting things aren’t firmly based? I am in an odd state [...] & there’s no quite solid table on which to put it” (D3 264). As I suggested above, there is a sense that the six voices are connected *ab ovo* but it is their disconnected insights, their memorial revivals, which connect them as beings in a state of constantly emerging minds. Woolf’s soliloquies seem not of six voices sitting around a table talking and drinking, eating, perhaps there is some smoking, but of one voice echoing out of the present envelope of the page which attempts to contain them but, as Woolf herself knows, there is “no quite solid table on which to put [them]”; all she can do is “set [her] people against time & the sea” (D3 264). Woolf’s attempt to disengage the authorial involvement is delineated in her fractionating of six minds and the words they are given to speak in the present tense (and reported in the past, “said Neville,” “said Rhoda” (*Waves* 22, 23)). They are, as Susan Dick suggests, “self-aware and self-declaring,” which is so, but she is also right when she states that “the present tense focusses

⁷³ In fact, Percival is given one word. In the early scenes of the novel, Neville suggests that those gathered should “let Bernard begin. Let him burble on, telling us stories, while we lie recumbent” (27). Percival has other ideas, “[Bernard] said ‘Look!’ but Percival says ‘No’” (28). That negation, along with the knowledge that “he is always the first to detect insincerity,” is his only uttered word in the novel (28).

our attention, like that of the speakers, on the present moment” – albeit, as noted, out of the past “said” of the speakers (Dick 38). The present moment is one in which objects in the external world are delimited and stabilised via a process of continuous becoming. What is taken to be change, then, is not something that is happening to the object but must be sought in “the process through which the whole object comes into being” (MSCW 142). It is this coming into being which Woolf produces on the page via the presence of six speakers and, of course, via her own shaping and composing of the words we are reading.

In the following section, “Bernard’s Opposite,” I will highlight how objects unfold in microgeny – that is, “[from] a ‘core to surface’ transit in which developing acts, objects, thoughts and feelings form a unified whole that fractionates into what appear to be separate modular functions” (MSCW 11). In his work on “premotor systems,” Gary Goldberg suggests that “symptoms” associated with conditions of the brain may be “viewed as revelations of normal process” which are not “adequately constrained so as to reduce the likelihood of error” (Goldberg 35). The question of what is meant by “revelations of normal process” by way of symptomatic “error” is a point of interest throughout the forthcoming chapter (Goldberg 35). It is as well to say from the outset that Brown’s formulation asserts that “the pattern of dissolution of the normal system determines the symptoms of pathological behavior” (MBC ix). In other words, “errors in performance,” as they are often felt to be, are not errors at all, “rather [they] are clues to the nature of normal performance at deeper levels, which in a healthy brain are submerged beneath and subsumed by the surface [...]” (Pachalska, “Reflections” 116). I will return to “so-called normal human beings” in due course (Smith, “Visual Perception” 307).

Bernard’s Opposite

Bernard states in his summing up that he had “changed and changed” while the “tree alone resisted our eternal flux” (*Waves* 192). Yet, the “[...] preten[ce] that life is a solid substance” is demonstrated when he states that even the “willow tree” is susceptible to what is taken to be surface change:

[i]ts shower of falling branches, its creased and crooked bark had the effect of what remains outside our illusions yet cannot stay them, is changed by them for the moment, yet shows through stable, still, and with a sternness our lives lack (193).

One’s feeling of selfhood may well “change[] and change[]” (192), as Bernard asserts, but the tree’s resistance represents the dynamic stability of an unfolding mental process. The self may be felt to change while the tree appears resistant and stable and not, as it is referred to by A. N. Whitehead (and cited by Brown), “a mass of raging particles” (MTPT 15; Whitehead qtd.) – all the while, we

must accept, that that is precisely what it is. That which underlies both self and object “is” a mass of raging particles and what surfaces, according to Brown, is “[a] constellation of moments that replicates itself with some consistency [and] is perceived as an object” (MN 30). The more consistent, the less change, the less consistent, the greater the change. For microgenesis, change is the replacement by a *near* replicate” (MN 30; emphasis in original); “the process of replacement [...] describe[s] the change in the replicate” (MN 30). Indeed, in microgenesis, the example of “a willow tree” (*Waves* 193) is perceived as a “continual replacement” of “overlapping waves” (MTPT 7); or, as Woolf frames it, as “somehow successive & continuous” (D3 218). The genesis of the tree to cognition – to elucidate with Brown’s image for perceptible objects – “[is] like [a] wave[] in the ocean that [is] carved out and frozen” (MTPT 98). Brown’s own “wave” metaphor is again consolidated when he asserts that “[a]n object is a local density in a four-dimensional world, like a wave in an ocean,” but what, he asks, is a “wave [that] lasts a long time”? (SP 34). Brown concludes that “[a]n object that changes quickly is a process. A process that changes slowly is an object” – a slow moving wave (one frozen) would then be a solid object (34).

In microgenetic cognition, each antecedent part (phylo-onto-genetically) makes the whole we perceive at surface level of actualisation (micro-genetically). The perceptual adaptation to the external world may be said to shift from Bernard’s sense of his own being as one emanating from an objective “a private being” to the later acceptance that “[s]o the being grows rings” (*Waves* 201). I am suggesting that the microgenetic process of cognition produces a well-defined representation for Bernard, which (as we shall see) is not the case in Rhoda’s inability to “make one moment merge into the next” (97). The result of this is that the former’s – Bernard’s – “identity becomes robust” while Rhoda’s perception is (again and again) angular and undifferentiated (201). Woolf’s own observation of this internal cognition is given in a diary entry of March 1929 in which she implores herself to fight it, writing that “[a]ll the time I shall attack this angular shape in my mind” (D3 219). She might have been referring to Rhoda when she suggests in the same entry that “[she] think[s] the Moths (if that is what I shall call it) will be very sharp cornered” (219). I will return to Rhoda’s angularity in the following section.

Bernard’s apparently vivifying microgeny is by no means guaranteed, however. For example, the “ring” phrase is repeated again as Bernard sums up (section nine), but this time his identity is less sure-footed as parts of what he perceives falls away and lack stability, “[t]he being grows rings, like a tree. Like a tree, leaves fall” (217). This later realisation of transience arrives soon after Bernard’s report that Rhoda “had killed herself” and is laced with an attempt to reach out and to hold her physically: “[w]ait,’ I said, putting my arm in imagination [...] through her arm” (216). John Hulcoop suggests that Woolf is foregrounding “personality and defiance” (470) as well as

what unfolds when, according to Woolf, “effort, effort, dominates [...], and defiance” (D3 339). Percival (“the sun hero” (Briggs 254)) may have earlier served as the potential object through which a process of individuation could be progressed but Rhoda’s defiant heroism is, in large part, constructed via Bernard’s recollection of his friend in the latter part of the novel. Rhoda serves as an object through which we might interpret Bernard’s own individuating cognition. This separation of individualities reveals the conditions in which we may underscore microgenesis as developing “a diffuse percept through progressive differentiation [...] to a distinct configuration” (Hanlon xiv). I will return to this process of progression in due course.

By the time the reader learns of Rhoda’s death, Rhoda has already jumped; she is dead, but can her expression of suicide be understood as defiant in the way it was felt to be for, say, Septimus Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway*? Bernard, as Clarissa did for Septimus, is made to feel loss as physical presence: “I see far away, quivering like a gold thread, the pillar Rhoda saw, and feel the rush of the wind of her flight when she leapt” (*Waves* 222). Clarissa too feels “an embrace in death” (*Dalloway* 202). Just before Rhoda’s suicide is reported, Bernard describes his friend, as he did Percival, in counterpoint to himself. He refers to her “as opposite to [him]self the figure of Rhoda [...]” (216). Bernard names Percival too as “[h]is opposite,” but we might also read this assessment in the light of Bernard’s later contemplation of his long-dead friend that “[h]e would have done justice. He would have protected. About the age of forty he would have shocked the authorities” (187). The shocking of the authorities is an ambiguous reflection on his friend which might have brought a repetition of Percival’s only reported word in the entire novel, the earlier noted, “No” (28). It is Neville who reports Percival’s only word which he speaks because he detects “an extravagance in his [Bernard’s] phrase, as if he said ‘Look!’ but Percival says ‘No’” (27-28). Gabrielle McIntire suggests that Bernard’s summing up is given “from the point of view of an author-god” (34) which, as the reader knows from the early stages of the novel, is a far cry from Percival’s rejection of “the ‘monologic authorial consciousness’ [...] that Bernard finds so seductive through the novel” (39-40; Bakhtin qtd.). Bernard’s wholeness is suggested in his ability to be embodied by words, stating, convincingly, that “I am wrapped round with phrases [...]; I glow,” and so he can be clearly seen; unlike Rhoda, Bernard is “lit up, I am glowing” (*Waves* 166).

It may well be, as it was for Septimus or, rather, in Clarissa’s “embrace” of Septimus’s distanced body in time and place, that there is, in Woolf’s writing, a declaration in favour of defiance for the death that one has taken into one’s own hands. Following Percival’s reported death (“he is dead” (114)), Bernard views the “lines and colours [in the National Gallery]” and is “almost persuade[d] that [he] too can be heroic [...]” (118). One wonders if Bernard’s heroic stance at the novel’s end is not presented as a sudden realisation of the defiance he attributes to both Rhoda and to Percival.

Both friends have fallen, one from his mottled, “flea-bitten horse” (102, 114) and one, as far as we can gather, from some high precipice. His attitude to Percival’s death at section nine may be the point at which death may be greeted not with fear but with sympathy:

I saw the first morning he would never see – the sparrows were like toys dangled from a string by a child. To see things without attachment, from the outside, and to realise their beauty in itself – how strange! And then the sense that a burden has been removed; pretence and make-believe and unreality are gone, and lightness has come with a kind of transparency, making oneself invisible and things seen through as one walks – how strange (203).

The sparrows are not menacing, as they were for Septimus, but merely “like toys” hanging from a tree. There is an underside to the image Woolf presents. According to David Bradshaw, living sparrows (“despised outcasts”) were sold in London parks attached to strings for children to play with (41, 47). The distress for these creatures must have been appalling and Woolf, according to Bradshaw, would have been aware of the miserable practice. Septimus is harried by Greek speaking sparrows in Regent’s Park as was, according to Quentin Bell, Woolf herself: “she lay in bed, listening to the birds singing in Greek [...]” (*Dalloway* 26, Bell I, 90). Yet Bernard’s process of cognising the world is shared with Septimus who, suffering from a psychic disturbance, “has the insight of a continuous transition from mind to world” (Bradford and Brown 202). This “insight” is written in *The Waves* as the precursor of Bernard’s attempt to sum up “without a self” (*Waves* 219). Bernard’s sense of being is described via his own invisibility (without self) and from a position where his “without attachment” may bring an external world of wholeness to him as it is “in itself”: as somehow light and transparent, and, of course, as something strange. For a moment, the “perpetual illusion” is held (somehow) in abeyance (*Waves* 209) while this view of the world may grant him plaudits, that “I [Bernard] [...] was the hero [...],” but this way of perceiving (and being) serves only to foreground the crucial caveat: “whose name I now forget” (192).

Such a precarious position may seem to offer significance to Bernard but only if he can perceive – and write – without a self. However, he presents only the decay of the present moment: he forgets. Bernard attempts to put “[t]he trees [...] in order,” that is, “with a sudden phrase [he may] retrieve[] them from formlessness with words,” but the retrieval of a negated self, along with what that self may perceive objectively, is doomed to the contemplation of (what we just named, following Woolf) “our perpetual illusion” (209) which presents only the appearance of stability and yet it is “now apparent” (209). Woolf shapes and composes her text but the “[s]haping [in cognition] by [that which is external to human perception] induces confrontation and curtailment of possibility as a ground of struggle or resignation” (MSCW 126; see below at page 148, “shaping & composing” (D3 63), and “capturing the moment whole” (D3 209)). In microgenesis, all form, and what human beings perceive to exist in the external world, “is a recurrence of like instances,

while recurrence itself gives the object the impression of stability” (134). At the farewell dinner party for Percival which initiates his Indian career, Bernard, who feels “many-sided,” captures each of his friends via a series of perceptual descriptors:

I see Louis, stone-carved, sculpturesque; Neville, scissor-cutting, exact; Susan with eyes like lumps of crystal; Jinny dancing like a flame, febrile, hot, over dry earth; and Rhoda the nymph of the fountain always wet (*Waves* 87).

The “natural coiner of words” attempts to capture each of them as they sit around the dinner table, but his phrases struggle to fix his friends in place and his perception is rendered momentary and ephemeral: “[t]hese are fantastic pictures – these are figments, these visions of friends in absence, grotesque, dropsical, vanishing at the first touch of the toe of a real boot” (87). Bernard’s realisation of his surroundings, his power to “describe every chair, table, luncheon here copiously, freely,” has the effect of making his “mind hum[] hither and thither with its veil of words for everything” (88). He asks the profound and perhaps ironic question (“what am I?”) before expressing a thought which turns on his own epistemological viewpoint: “[t]o speak of knowledge is futile” (88). The search for knowledge may be futile (for he “know[s] not”) but the ontological aspect of his seeking may perhaps offer some relief, which Rhoda lacks: “I am Bernard myself” (88). There is, at least for Bernard, some stability of self even while “[t]here is no stability in this world” (88).

Bernard seems keen to comprehend the external world’s progressive specification as something more than a context upon which to orientate himself. In Brown’s terms, in microgeny, things are more than “a virtual construction of a manifold of perspectives dependent upon a circle of relations” (SP 103). Bernard attempts to address human perception as an unfolding process of object-formation which is derived from “continual flux” (27) and which suggests that, according to Woolf via Bernard, “[w]e are forever mixing ourselves with unknown quantities. What is to come? I know not” (*Waves* 88). Bernard will arrive at the question of “who am I?” in his summing up, as he asks, referring to his friends, “[a]m I all of them? Am I one and distinct? I do not know” (*Waves* 222). Again, Woolf introduces both an ontological and epistemological element by presenting the reader with her own conflicted reasoning which centres on the problem of what one knows – “I do not know” – and what or who one is – “[a]m I all of them?” (22). But who is really asking these questions? Is it Woolf herself? The microgenesis of external objects in “continual flux” (SP 27) suggests that whatever exceeds the external object must be sculpted to featural detail. I am coming to “sculpting,” but by way of a preliminary we can say that (in perceptual process) out of the “numerous ‘possibilities’” (of what might be perceived) the objects we see are “mental images” which are modelling “physical events”; the objects are not the physical events themselves (Brown, “Time” 218). Brown states that “[o]bject and space are the outcome of

sculpting and externalization of phases underlying image-formation” (218). Numerous possibilities – for example, perceiving a kerb as a kerb and not a cliff – “fall into the background in favor of the one possibility that coincides” with our perceiving selves as well as “a normative conception” of what I am looking at (307) – I step off a kerb onto the road (safely) and not off a cliff into the ocean, having perceived it as a kerb (say).

In Rhoda’s case, the reader is given an early warning that the solidity of her world is fleeting as “[e]ven the sight of her [teacher: Miss Lambert] vanishing down the corridor blows it to atoms. It is not solid [...]” (*Waves* 41).⁷⁴ As Rhoda sits in her room (or visits the bathroom), she is troubled by the possibility of change and the interconnection to solidity. As an internal process, she is made so forcefully aware that “[t]here is some check in the flow of [her] being; a deep stream presses on some obstacle; it jerks; it tugs; some knot in the centre resists” (41). The deep stream of cognition flowing outward comes to press on whatever object is external to her but she is constrained by the knot which resists and from which she must escape: “this [...] pain, this [...] anguish”: “I faint, I fail” (41). Her conscious world of perception passes into the oblivion of fainting and failing. Rhoda’s soliloquy at the farewell dinner is reported, as ever, as “said” but it feels to be unfolding at a great distance from the events of social intercourse. Rhoda’s inner speech is communicated but it is not heard (or responded to) by the other six – now that Percival has arrived at the restaurant. That there is no constructed plain and logical story is presented in the moments following Percival’s arrival. Reading the text, we notice that those gathered simply deliver “what is in [their] minds” via a fractionating sequence of speeches (93). Louis, perhaps clarifying the situation, states that “[f]rom those close-furled balls of string we draw now every filament [...] remembering when we meet” (93). But who’s doing the remembering and so forming the words on the pages we are reading and which we take to be Rhoda, Susan, Jinny, Neville, Bernard and Louis (Percival is silent)?

The reader, of course, knows that we are reading the words that Woolf writes but, as J. W. Graham notes, citing Woolf’s working-notes from the Holograph text: “I am the seer. I am the force that arranges. I am the thing in which all this exists. Certainly without me it would perish. I can give it order. I perceive what is bound to happen” (Woolf qtd. in “Point of View” 204). Graham suggests that Woolf may well “perceive[] what is bound to happen; but she does not make it happen” (204). The reason he gives for this is two-fold and interconnected. Firstly, “[Woolf] is

⁷⁴ The teachers are later recalled by Jinny as “[a]nd Miss Lambert, Miss Cutting and Miss Bard,” said Jinny, “monumental ladies, white-ruffed, stone-coloured, enigmatic, with amethyst rings moving like virginal tapers, dim glow-worms over the pages of French, geography and arithmetic, presided; and there were maps, green-baize boards, and rows of shoes on a shelf” (*Waves* 94).

not making up a story” because, secondly, “she is telling one [i.e., a story] that has existed from the beginning of time” (204). I think that Woolf is directly linking the process of perception to the words she is writing on the page: “[f]or there is nothing to lay hold of. I am made and remade continually. Different people draw different words from me” (*Waves* 100). Bernard may accept his limitations, that “[he] shall never succeed [...] in making the perfect phrase,” but it seems to be Woolf herself who takes over his speech, divulging her own process of fleeting observation and perception along the way – “[...] I shall have contributed more to the passing moment than any of you; I shall go into more rooms, more different rooms, than any of you” (101). It is Woolf’s seemingly “not sufficiently differentiated” soliloquies (Fleishman 157) which arrive in large part in the first-person and which, each time, “draw[s] different words from [her],” that is, Woolf herself (*Waves* 100). But it might also be the case that, as Louis states, “[a]ll are merged in one turning wheel of a single sound” (101). These sounds are immediately, and momentarily, made material and they are objectified to “wheels, bells, the cries of drunkards” and they “[a]ll [are] separate” and distinct (101). However, any such division is fleeting and before long they are “churned” – sculpted – “into one sound, steel blue, circular” (101). The process on the page reads as the dynamic antecedent activity of continuously fractionating minds. It does feel as though Woolf is excavating deep into the microgenies of her soliloquists’ “hidden depths” (“The Tunnel” E3 11) as well as into her own cognitive process. Before discussing Rhoda’s cognitive process in microgenesis, I will introduce Brown’s metaphor of “sculpting” (e.g., “Time” 218, Bradford and Brown 189, Pachalska et al. “Towards a Process” 240) and how this term responds to what he names as “incomplete resolution” (PAL 236).

Brown’s metaphor of “sculpting” is a critical feature of what Brown names as “the sustained specification of wholes into parts, guided initially by the internal constraints of habit, value, belief and the immediately prior state, then by the external constraints of sensation (sculpting) on distal segments” (Brown and Tomaszewski 15, note 13). According to Hanlon, “the adaptive nature of microgenesis is based on the properties of dissonance, incongruity, and conflict, which guide the formative process toward the completion of its course” (xii). In their discussion of perceptual microgenesis as symptomatic, Brown and Pachalska suggest that:

the percept does not emerge from the accumulation of bits of sensory data organized in second-pass processing into wholes, but rather from the articulation of [whole] figures into details (“Symptom” 4).

The flow of perceptive cognition often assumes that “one sees a nose, two eyes, a mouth” (and so on) and we conclude from this that we are looking at a face. But, in microgenesis, there is a “progressive zeroing-in on the target [...]” and so what really happens is that “one first sees a face,

which enables one to see the nose, the eyes” and so on (4). MacQueen concurs, describing microgenesis as an alternative view to the idea of assembling bits of data “rather like a police artist working with the victim of a crime, sketching the nose, eyes, hair [...]” (Foreword x). He goes on to write that “[t]he microgenetic theory of perception challenges this familiar model of perception at its very foundation” (x):

[t]he process of perception actually begins with wholes [...] that are processed from category to member, whole to part, shape to detail; the processors of specific visual details located in the occipital cortex are in fact the end-point, not the starting point, for the process of object formation (x).

Brown’s microgenetic theory of cognition may be distinguished from “associative and constructivist” models of mental states where the perceiving subject “build[s] up an object by addition of elements” (MSCW 4). Naturally, a process of “accumulating” – “as an addition to physical nature” – stands in direct opposition to a process of “sculpting” whereby what is “unfit” – among the numerous possibilities – is eliminated (PAL 224, MCP 40).

Microgeny, conversely, reveals an object via “elimination of whatever is extraneous or irrelevant”: that is, by way of a “sculpting model” through which the surfacing object is constrained to actualised form (MCP 40). As an evolutionary process, if “[f]itness [i]s the goal of speciation” then “definiteness [i]s the goal of microgenesis” (40). Brown suggests that “the recurrence of intra-psychic states” (on an outward trajectory to surface level) will undergo a process of “[e]xtra-psychic elimination” to actualised form, that is, to the representation of object constancy, i.e., to Bachmann’s “full-blown stabilized state” (“Microgenesis of Perception” 12). In this way, Brown states, the sculpting model “explains thought in terms of variation and selection, or abundance and elimination, the failure of unfit exemplars to survive and reproduce” (MCP 40). In hallucination, for example, “the final sensory sculpting is not applied [...] to the outside world,” that is, at surface level (Bradford and Brown 200). From this, we can suggest that a symptom (say, visual hallucination) reflects a “coming to the fore of earlier stages in their microgeny” (Hanlon xv). The surface representation, as it were, has not fully developed; symptoms, therefore, are indicators of an “incomplete resolution” (PAL 236). Microgenetic theory may be distinguished from passive reception of externally sighted objects. That is, microgenesis is “an emergent process from [hidden] depth to surface” (Hanlon xii). I return now to Bernard to conclude this section.

Bernard’s merging of self with unknown external quantities is felt as a destabilising process – and elusive, “[f]or there is nothing to lay hold of” (*Waves* 100) – which requires a continuous vigilance when faced with ephemeral objects as well as the transition from one’s character to the ongoing transitional act: “I am made and remade continually. Different people draw different

words from me” (100). Bernard’s cognitive process succeeds in stabilising the dynamic of the microgenetic process. Bernard’s actions are perceived – “I often succeed with the dexterity of my tongue” (100) – in a similar way to the objects he creates out of what is before him at dinner (which each configures in his or her own way (each one a petal). The following quotations are suggestive of Bernard’s ability to impose structure on the dynamic of cognitive process:

There is a red carnation in that vase. A single flower as we sat here waiting, but now a seven-sided flower, many-petalled, red, puce, purple-shaded, stiff with silver-tinted leaves – a whole flower which every eye brings its own contribution (95).

I see the low, long shore; I see the tortuous lanes of stamped mud that lead in and out among ramshackle pagodas; I see the gilt and crenellated buildings which have an air of fragility and decay as if they were temporarily run up buildings in some Oriental exhibition (102).

The latter revivals (from “I see the low, long shore”) are incomplete and fractional and largely imaginary. They fail and fail again because they are caught up in one’s own present time, impacting on a sense of futility of future endeavour. The problem of what might be termed the creative decay of all external objects is something that is fragile and is described by Woolf as a “temporary[] [...] exhibition” (102). Bernard’s effort in sculpting the external world to actual surface objectivity is finally a futile one since “[o]ver all broods a sense of the uselessness of human exertion” (102). Bernard’s attempt at objectifying his outer world, however, is presently perceived – “I see the gilt” – and he begins to become fascinated with a seven-sided flower (adding Percival) which he merges with the seven sitting around a table, each one, the flower and the group, making one. Bernard’s sculpting of the carnation from singular object to the “but now” of seven petals is stabilised again, and circumscribed, to a “whole flower” whereas Rhoda’s process of object formation (as we shall see) falters and remains undifferentiated at surface level. Rhoda’s “see[n] [...] shapes” are perceived with great difficulty and she struggles to pin-point the precise object of interest: “I see a shape, white, but not of stone, moving perhaps alive” (104). Rhoda perceives a singular “column”, becoming wave-like, “now a fountain falling” (104), but whatever the word, column or fountain or stone, “[i]t makes no sign” and yet it is expansive and disorientating, “[b]ehind it roars the sea” (104). Whatever the word is, the shape she may sculpt it to (as she sits at table with friends), “[i]t is beyond our reach” (104). This brings me to section two and to Rhoda’s dynamic instability with particular reference to her progressive unfolding of external objects.

Rhoda’s Dynamic Instability

In what follows, I will focus on Rhoda’s traversal across the pages of the novel in which she will delimit and define the subsurface representations of the external world which threaten to swallow her whole. Earlier, I noted the adaptive nature of microgenetic theory with reference to Brown’s

metaphor of “sculpting” (“Time” 218). It might be, though, according to John Cegalis, that Juris Draguns asks the central question: “[w]hat is the adaptive significance of microgenesis?” (Draguns qtd. in Cegalis, “From Prototheory” 127). As Cegalis explains, “a meaningful answer to this question assumes that microgenesis actually occurs in the natural course of human experience, that the phenomenon is not simply an artifact of the methods to study it” (127). It is necessary, therefore, in responding to Draguns’ question, to look at how human beings cope in the wider world, that is, how they adapt to their everyday lives. In order to do this, I should like to articulate (via Woolf’s novelistic universe in *The Waves*) what happens when the search activity that might lead to orientation and the overcoming of ambiguities suffers instead a “derailment of the process” prior to completion (Schweiger et al. 335). I should like to present a reading of Woolf’s *The Waves* which seeks not “impressions” *per se* but the microgenetic process by which perceptual microgenesis can be interpreted as the premature transformation of what was earlier referred to as “dynamic perceptual unfolding and differentiation” to surface actualisation (of perceived object) (Bachmann, “Microgenesis of Perception” 16). The earlier noted notion of “incomplete resolution” (and, therefore, lacking wholeness and definiteness) suggests a level of attenuation and conflict in the process which (in general) begins in diffuse meaning and culminates in discrete objects (PAL 236).

I shall argue that Woolf’s novel operates as an exploration of the microgenetic process which might well err (that is, the cognitive process) in reaching what we referred to earlier as “the full-blown stabilized state” (Bachmann, “Microgenesis of Perception” 12); a state which is determined by the degree to which exteriorization is achieved and, indeed, the time it takes to do this. That is to say, the direction of microgenesis is governed by an “emergent process from depth to surface” and derailment of the process might reveal “submerged levels, which are normally transformed in cognitive formation” (Hanlon xii). What is perceived in perceptual microgenesis “is determined by the level achieved as the normal process unfolds” (xii). That is to say, that Rhoda’s – let us call them symptoms – “represent a premature exposure of preliminary levels in the microstructure of cognition that are normally transformed” (Hanlon xvi). Visual objects are recognised by her but they are diffuse and presently undifferentiated. We must remember that Rhoda is sitting with her closest friends at Percival’s farewell dinner party; she is written nonetheless as continuously conflicted by the process of object formation. The effects of such an early transformation process clearly impacts on her own perceived embodiment which is in turn transitional to her visual perception:

I am afraid of the shock of sensation that leaps upon me, because I cannot deal with it as [the others] do – I cannot make one moment merge in the next. To me they are all violent, all separate;

and if I fall under the shock of the leap of the moment you will be on me, tearing me to pieces. I have no end in view. I do not know how to run minute to minute and hour to hour, solving them by some natural force until they make the whole and indivisible mass you call life (97-98).

Rhoda is made aware that “one thing melts into another” but the process of cognition is conflictual and requires effort – at least as far as her own perception is concerned – and she is instantly aware of her difference as well as her inability to successfully “make one moment merge into the next” (97). Sculpting the external world for Rhoda is not only effortful but utterly debilitating as object formation is felt to be “all violent” and immensely harmful: “if I fall under the shock of the leap of the moment you will be on me, tearing me to pieces” (97). One can’t help hearing Septimus Warren Smith in her words, his final words in *Mrs. Dalloway*: “‘I’ll give it to you!’ he cried, and flung himself, violently down [...]” (*Dalloway* 164). Woolf’s descriptions of Rhoda’s perceptive unfolding to surface objectivity suggest that Rhoda’s process to (what we have been calling) the “full-blown stabilized state” remains undeveloped and undifferentiated content (Bachmann, “Microgenesis of Perception” 12). Cegalis, referring to discrete changes within stages of microgenesis, states that “[c]hanges in the sense of subjective control over perception can be described as proceeding from alienation [...] to percepts identified with a sense of belonging to the self, that is, non-dissociated and self-controlled” (“From Prototheory” 111).

At this point, we might ask to what extent can we map the genesis of Rhoda’s misperceptions in the novel? So far, I have attempted to pinpoint the threatening cues which are indicative of a “derailment of the process” prior to stabilisation of her external world (Schweiger et al. 335). I am suggesting, therefore, that Rhoda’s descriptions are suggestive of the shortening (prematurely “coming-to-the-fore”) of earlier stages in her microgenetic process (Hanlon xv). Bachmann describes microgenesis as an “exploratory search activity” which is continually striving for “expedient interpretation of stimulation” (“Microgenesis of Perception” 16). However, such an activity need not be conflated with diligently seeking microgenesis within the pages of Woolf’s novel, *The Waves*, but should be understood as an ongoing cognitive process in which the “stimulus driven format” is replaced by one which is essentially an exploring of and striving for “the organismic-environmental [...] interpretation of stimulation” (16). To offer an example: my process of writing these words (on a computer) seeks not for stimulus from Woolf’s novel solely as an external source but as a striving and exploring of the text which develops into an unfolding interpretation of stimulus derived from an internal source – that is to say, my very own internality. The process in microgenesis is (as discussed in the introduction) derived from an “inside-out” source of development as opposed to a strictly outside-in development of constraints. Rhoda fears the “shock of sensation” as her “mind [in microgeny] is modeled to an image of the real by

sensation” (PAL 34) but she feels that she is unable to process the external world to an “end in view” (*Waves* 97).

Rhoda’s inability to stabilise the “end in view” of surface perception is not one shared by the others. Jinny, for example, describes her own features in negative terms: her “lips are too wide, [...] I show my gums too much when I laugh.” As far as Jinny is concerned, Susan has a head “which poets will love” and “Rhoda’s face, mooning, vacant, is completed, like those white petals she used to swim in her bowl” (30). Shortly after Jinny’s description, Rhoda, viewing her “face [...] in the looking-glass,” begins to feel that she is “not here. I have no face” (31). To Rhoda “other people have faces” but, to other people, Rhoda’s face is as complete as a white flower (31). There is also the view, held by Louis, that he does not “fear [Rhoda] as [he] fear[s] the others” for the simple reason that “she has no body as the others have” (15). This is not to deny her body as such but to perhaps delimit it as one which differs from the other soliloquists. Rhoda’s body is after all one with which he has been intimate: they have been lovers (155). Rhoda leaves Louis for this very reason: “I left Louis; I feared embraces” (157). This may be so, but Louis follows Jinny’s description of Rhoda as a floating white flower by making her a creature of the air: “[h]er shoulder-blades meet across her back like the wings of a small butterfly” (15). Rhoda is perceived as poised and ethereal but that is not how she represents herself. Rhoda’s perception is discontinuous, “all separate,” and (as noted earlier) potentially violent, “tearing me to pieces,” as well as out of time, “how to run [...] hour to hour [...]” There is a deep concern for the diminishment of self as well as her distress that the external blocks of matter are not perceived as “a whole and indivisible mass [of] life” (97-98).

Rhoda’s cognitive process is inseparably embedded in her shaping of objects to surface actualisation but it is the premature emergence of the microgenetic process which leaves her vulnerable and alienated. Rhoda centres her observation on a negation of what there is, “[b]ut it is not you, it is not you, it is not you [...]” and we feel that she is calling out to her friends around the dinner table. The sentence runs on to “[...] not Percival, Susan, Jinny, Neville or Louis” (104). Interestingly, she does not negate Bernard. Rhoda is fearful that her own process is failing (“I cannot make the moment merge,” “one moment does not lead to another,” “I have no end in view” (97)). Her external world is continuously de-structured and she is led to a pattern of dissolution and to her own final, devastating (and repeated) conclusion: “[a]nd I have no face” (98; also, 23 “no face,” 30 “my face,” 31, 91 and 98 “no face”). That Rhoda feels unable to merge one moment with the next, concomitant with the loss of the whole, is an indication of her derailment in microgenesis through which “the world does not survive [the] erosion of the self, nor does the self survive a loss of its objects” (PAL 230). Rhoda “reach[es] [her] object” but it is momentary,

“for a second”, and microgenetic: it is, as Brown states, “arising and perishing” (MN 19-20) and it is “trial and make-believe” (*Waves* 104). If “one moment does not lead to another” (*Waves* 97) – another object which is developing or decaying – then Rhoda’s self will not survive the loss of her objects – for no self, as far as Brown is concerned, could ever survive such a complete lack of perceptual awareness. Brown suggests that the precarious nature of the process (from potential to actual object formation) is one in which “the character and personality of the subject are at stake in every thought, gesture and object” (PAL 230).

As the death of Percival is announced (“[h]e is dead” (*Waves* 114, 116)), Rhoda’s thoughts continue to be shaped with images of triangles and square blocks and one may read upon the page itself what Woolf must mean by her “shaping & composing” (D3 63) from “this angular shape in my [Woolf’s] mind” which, as noted above, “I [Woolf] shall attack” (D3 219). For example, there is the angularity of “the seemliness of herded yew trees making black pyramids,” “look at the red walls and courtyards,” “there is a gardener with a wheelbarrow,” and “here is a hall where one pays money,” then the “beetle-shaped men come with their violins [...]; down come their bows,” as well as the shapes of w’s and v’s in “hair waved,” “waddling to the sea,” “hoping for a wave,” and “leaning from her window in Venice” (*Waves* 122-123). It is at this point in the narrative that her words begin to fragment from the metaphoric “[l]ike’ and ‘like’ and ‘like’” to the attempt to grasp not only the likeness of what she perceives but yet something more. In what may be the central question of Woolf’s novel, Rhoda asks, “– but what is the thing that lies beneath the semblance of the thing?” There is the repetition of “thing” – the one at depth (beneath) and the one actualised (at surface) – and the question of semblance is directly linked by Woolf via Rhoda, not only to the relations with other things (or, indeed, other selves), but to the object’s own formation in microgenesis. The question of semblance will lead Rhoda, once again, to speak of lodgement but this time it is given as the possibility of some transcendence, it is “a perfect dwelling-place”:

[n]ow that lightning has gashed the tree and the flowering branch has fallen and Percival, by his death, has made me this gift, let me see the thing. There is a square; there is an oblong. The players take the square and place it upon the oblong. They place it very accurately; they make a perfect dwelling-place. Very little is left outside. The structure is now visible; what is inchoate is here stated; we are not so various or so mean; we have made oblongs and stood them upon squares. This is our triumph; this is our consolation (123).

Rhoda is there, before the players, in the music hall: Erin Greer asserts that “the ‘dwelling-place’ serves for Rhoda as an alternative to describing the music conceptually, through language” (Greer 10; Woolf qtd.). Tamer Katz states that “[t]he squares and oblongs are hardly transcendent; small and inert, they are manipulated by the players like building blocks – a manipulation which seems to require a great deal of material effort” (Katz 240). There is certainly an attempt to put sound

into shape in the just mentioned passage from *The Waves*. Greer suggests, for example, that a transcendental aesthetic is one which “communicates its pleasures ‘without the mediation of a concept’,” suggesting that Rhoda “seems to believe that some part of the aesthetic experience cannot be linguistically – conceptually – expressed” (Greer 10; Kant qtd.). It seems to me that Rhoda’s shaping is entirely conceptually driven, extending beyond the music hall and out into the streets where she is (she feels herself to be) barged in the street yet benignly so: “I am not injured, I am not outraged by the collision” (*Waves* 123). Rhoda’s description of colliding is not, I think, drawn from her being “flung upon this woman, upon this man,” but the collision of the two things – from depth to surface, internally and externally, formed. She repeats, immediately after “collision,” “[a] square stands upon an oblong.” The paragraph ends with the refrain, “[t]he structure is visible. We have made a dwelling-place” (123).

We can locate in Rhoda’s “dwelling place” a positive distinction from those Edwardians of “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown” who have merely “given us a house in the hope that we may be able to deduce the human beings who live there” (*Captain’s* 112). In *The Waves*, it is the “players” that make it perfect; it is “*our* triumph,” it is “*our* consolation” (*Waves* 123; my emphasis). Woolf’s method begins “by throwing away the method that was in use at the moment” so that she might find the right and reliable process of composition (*Captain’s* 113). Do Rhoda’s oblongs in *The Waves* represent buildings and are the triangles the instruments which chime at intervals? Is the stage the oblong that “we have made” and then “stood them [the people on stage?] upon squares” (*Waves* 123)? The buildings might be oblongs and squares and it is possible that one of these serves as the shape from which Rhoda will (in time) jump to her death. The refrain of “wander no more, I say; this is the end” heralds the repetition (and due alteration) of “[t]he oblong has been set upon the square; the spiral is on top” (*Waves* 123). The spinning out of colours is present too in Woolf’s short essay, “Walter Sickert” (noted in *The Voyage Out* chapter) in which she notes how “[o]n first entering a picture gallery [...] [c]olours went spirally through my body lighting up a flare as if a rocket fell through the night and lit up greens and browns, grass and trees,” and then the mysterious end, “and there in the grass a white bird” (*Captain’s* “Sickert” 189). The earlier mentioned section in *The Waves* (120-124) is Rhoda’s longest soliloquy and she speaks it to the end of the section. Her defiance returns and her efforts are, I think, heroic in their passion and rectitude: “I will fling myself fearlessly into trams, into omnibuses. As we lurch down Regent’s Street, and I am flung upon this woman, upon this man, I am not injured, I am not outraged by the collision” (124). Rhoda’s ongoing perception of objects and of her actions as she walks or is, for example, flung, as well as what makes up her character (by Woolf, of course, but by her own conception of self as spoken by her as well as narratively) is intricately linked to the developing

microgenetic formation to “actualized object,” that is, to the visible perceptual structure which is juxtaposed against some form of habitable structure (124).

At the reunion dinner at Hampton Court, Rhoda shapes her external world to some precarious solidity. There is a microgenesis in perception which forms “the side of a cup like a mountain” and the voices of her friends “sound like trees creaking in a forest” (171). Rhoda’s awareness is at once robust, at least to her. However, the process of object formation is ongoing as she attempts to recognise “[t]hat [this] is the circumference that I try to grasp as we sit together” (171). Throughout her career, Woolf is adamant that the “shaping & composing” (D3 63) of her novels be put to the aim of capturing “the moment whole” (D3 209). In an early draft of *Between the Acts*, the novel published after her death in 1941, Woolf’s description is inescapably microgenetic: she seems to probe the tension between stable perceptual microgenesis and the arising and perishing of external objects:

[b]ut who observed the dining room? Who noted the silence, the emptiness? ... This presence certainly requires a name, for without a name what can exist? ... Certainly it’s difficult, to find a name for that which is a room, yet the room is empty; for that which perceives pictures knife and fork, also men and women; and describes them; and not only perceives but partakes of [the]m, and has access to the mind in its darkness. And further goes from mind to mind and surface to surface, and from body to body, creating what is not mind or body, not surface or depths, but a common element in which the perishable is preserved, and the separate become one (Woolf qtd. in Richter 138).

The quote is from *Pointz Hall*, and Woolf continues to ask, as she had throughout her career, from *The Voyage Out* via *Jacob’s Room* and *Mrs. Dalloway* to “Time Passes” in *To the Lighthouse* and in *The Waves*, just what can be known in the absence of human beings. Who or what – not yet named but not nameless – is perceived as “this or that” and how is reality constructed and perceived? It is then named as the “common element” – perhaps a core self (“the mind in its darkness”) – through which awareness is given – “that which perceives pictures” – “from mind to mind” and “from body to body” and which may perish only to arise again (as potential to further actualisations: “the perishable is preserved”): that is, the “separate become one” (Woolf qtd. in Richter 138).

Woolf suggests that one (any one of us) may indeed be “remade continually” (*Waves* 100), but the present is constantly in a process of arising and perishing. Rhoda is greatly assailed by her perception of what she takes to be substantial, in large part because she is unconvinced that she can reach out and touch the external world. Her struggle to stabilise what feels to be a recurrence of her own featureless character is at odds with her attempt to create, out of the objective world of others, one stable self:

[c]oming up from the station, refusing to accept the shadow of trees and the pillar-boxes, I perceived, from your coats and umbrellas, even at a distance, how you stand embedded in a

substance made of repeated moments run together; are committed, have an attitude, with children, authority, fame, love, society; where I have nothing. I have no face (171).

Rhoda's is a wholeness fractured in the presence of many as she struggles to perceive what is at once "embedded" and continuous ("repeated moments run together") (171). They "are committed" (which feels stranded after the semi-colon) refers to moments, the companions who are "embedded in a substance," in life and the lives of children or fame or love, but may also refer to her institutional fears, of being committed (under the "dominion" of the likes of a Dr William Bradshaw (*Dallaway* 110)), and, as it was for Septimus, the committing of suicide. Rhoda's death is near (*Waves* 216) and she will not be "retrieved [...] from formlessness with words" (207) which, in the end, are crucial to Bernard's understanding.

As he will suggest in his summary of the novel: "I [Bernard] made a phrase – a poem about a wood-pigeon – a single phrase, for a hole had been knocked in my mind, one of those sudden transparencies through which one sees everything" (185). The wholeness – which Rhoda struggles to reach – and the sudden clarity (which Bernard reaches) is clear to see in the "single," "hole," "mind," "one," and, once again, "one" (185). We are reminded, as I will highlight below, of Woolf's injunction, centring her method on the inceptive "whole in one's mind" ("Byron and Mr Briggs" E3, App II, 483). Woolf seems perfectly aware that one may "stand embedded in a substance made of repeated moments run together" and yet we may fail in our need or intention toward object stabilisation. A tenet in microgeny may indeed state that, in general, "[t]he solidity of an object like a tree owes to the repeatability of its recurrence" (PAL 55), but Woolf's novel demonstrates that there is no guarantee that any one's character may be constructed long enough to be recognised as a part of the external world: "I find myself failing, fluttering, descending and perching upon some curious gargoyle [...]" (*Waves* 217). Rhoda's disintegration and descent is indicative of the failure to stabilise her dynamic process of cognition, her definition of selfhood becomes entirely unrecognisable, and she becomes a separated being. It might be that nobody is left at the end and Bernard too must die: "[t]he scene beneath me withered. It was like the eclipse when the sun went out" (218). Jane Goldman names this as the novel's "famous eclipse simile" (*Modernism* 198), "it was like," and we may regard Rhoda's (earlier mentioned) fracturing metaphor as a series of broken similes: "'[l]ike' and 'like' and 'like'" – but what is the thing [...]" and what is it like? (*Waves* 123).

Two have died along the way, Rhoda and Percival, and Bernard's subjective awareness diminishes as the novel ends, coming out of "[p]ast time, past history we went. For me this lasts but one second" (213). Like Rhoda before him, Bernard becomes wave in the process of arising and perishing and it is here that his, and Rhoda's, heroism is located. Like Rhoda before him, and indeed, like Percival, he "will fling [him]self, unvanquished and unyielding [...]" (228) and the

continuous flow of this arising is written as a future possibility of some later transformation and decay. Rhoda appears unable to stabilise the dynamic process of cognition which continuously transforms to an unrecognisable separated being. Her process in microgenesis may have undergone continuous derailments but she is defiant and indeed heroic to the end. Woolf via Rhoda makes palpable Brown's claim that "[f]or conflict to play a constructive role in the psychic life, it must be a topic for reflection and re-enactment" (PAL 236). *The Waves* suggests a microgenetic perishing of Rhoda's worldly objects with the promise of some hope of resistance to "our eternal flux" (*Waves* 192). As the novel ends, Bernard recognises "the eternal renewal" that comes from "the incessant rise and fall and rise again" (228). Earlier, Rhoda offers up an admission – "[b]ut I am not composed enough" (80) – as she draws attention to the process of her own self-formation which fails to wholly stabilise and differentiate. She is present as "the wave breaks" and the continuous flow of her arising and perishing – "I am to be cast up and down [...] like a cork on a rough sea" (80) – is written as the future possibility of a world where that which is perishing somehow survives

As we have seen in the previous chapters on *The Voyage Out*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, and *To the Lighthouse*, the theory of microgenesis emphasises the cognitive sequence over time and that the interpretation of later stages – often at surface level of actualisation or, for example, at the limbic level – must be considered in the light of earlier ones. I have suggested that these antecedent phases are described by Woolf as the "hidden depths" in her review essay, "The Tunnel" (E3 11); as well as "the dark places of psychology" in "Modern Fiction" (E4 162). Centring the chapter on Brown's elaboration of how objects unfold as stabilising wholes in perceptual microgenesis, I addressed the cognitive process of two of Woolf's soliloquists in *The Waves*, Rhoda and Bernard. It was argued that Woolf's method of "making whole," as Lee names it (*Virginia* 413), is central to method of writing her fictions with "a whole in one's mind" ("Byron and Mr Briggs" E3, App II, 483). Preferring "some kind of whole," I suggested that Woolf's fictions describe how cognition progresses from diffuse percept and is progressively differentiated to the externally viewed object at surface level. I argued that Woolf's writings are suggestive of a microgeny where self and objects are emerging "out of continual flux," as Brown states (SP 27) and "our eternal flux," according to Woolf (*Waves* 192). I stated that Rhoda's cognitive process in microgeny may be described as a truncation of mental process by which object formation remains undifferentiated content, lacking therefore the wholeness of the "full blown stabilised state" (Bachmann, "Microgenesis of Perception" 12). Rhoda's cognitive process in the novel indicates a struggle to "sculpt" and therefore to eliminate the extraneous and irrelevant from her representations at surface level of perception (MCP 40). I suggested that Bernard, although described as aware of the difficulty of being "made and remade

continually” (*Waves* 100), ultimately reaches a stabilised sense of self and robustness. Rhoda’s “see[n] [...] shapes,” however, transform but, as far as she can tell, they “make no sign” (104). I put forward a view that that her perceptual struggles were indicators of a process of “premature exposure of preliminary levels in the microstructure of cognition that are normally transformed” (Hanlon xvi). According to Brown (and early percept-geneticists, for example, Gudmund Smith (“Visual Perception” 307)), we might rehabilitate the term “normal process” by stating that all patterns of disruption or dissolution are “of the normal system,” thereby avoiding such terms as “deficit” and “abnormal” and accepting that “the pathological” is a “clue – actually a key – to an understanding of normal function,” period (MBC ix).

Conclusion

Woolf's textual representations of the transition between selves in relation to the unfolding external world have determined the trajectory of the analysis and the areas of exploration in this study; the significant points of confluence between the flow of cognitive microgenesis and Woolf's own descriptive powers have been a source of continuous and determinative preoccupation throughout the work. Crucially, I have introduced Brown's formulation of microgenetic theory into Woolf studies for the first time by demonstrating, *inter alia*, a variety of ways in which her writings elucidate "consciousness as an emergent property of a process of differentiating unified experience into individuated object/events" in the external world (Schweiger et al. 328). I have argued throughout that Woolf's writings are exploratory of the "invisible presences" of perceptual process ("Sketch" 92), and that she attempts to describe and so reveal "the momentary histories" of her characters as "a continuous wave-like transition" from self to object as a continuous process in microgenesis (PAL 223). The mediating process may remain obscure – the "hidden depths," as we have been naming them, after Woolf – but the antecedent phases are themselves "the explanatory constructs of any temporarily limited process of organization given in th[e] all-embracing construction the qualities of which we find in the life history of the individual" (Smith, "Visual Perception" 310). As Brown notes, "[t]he organism's evolutionary history translates to patterns that deposit its social history, as memory and language [...] [thereby] replac[ing] instinct and genes as the vehicles that transmit the past into the present" (PAL 213).

I suggested, for example, in the first chapter on *The Voyage Out*, that Woolf writes Rachel Vinrace's "supreme power" as the specification of potential (and chance) that leads her to the "final actuality [a]s a *micro-adaptation* that successively narrows down an implicit range of options" (PAL 213; emphasis in original). That is, (as we have been saying) toward, and out of, the "numerous 'possibilities'" presented in the external, aspectual world (Smith "Virtual Perception" 307). To that end, I centralised the process of microgenesis as a recapitulation of phylo-onto-genetic levels, naming this process, per Brown, as "a type of instantaneous evolution" (LM 5). The question of perspective and scale were, of course, important to my chapter on *The Voyage Out*, but Woolf goes further than this by instilling Rachel Vinrace with the said "supreme power," but also by providing her with the "microscopic eye" of past ages (*Voyage* 119, *Captain's* "Sickert" 190). Rachel, holding her "one hand" up so that she might thereby "obscuring the whole" of the external world (*Voyage* 118), replaces the overwhelming phyletic structure of Monte Rosa and is thereby endowed, if only momentarily, with Terence's view of humans "making," and unmaking micro-worlds out of "perpetual uncertainty" (*Voyage* 116). Woolf's descriptions of what seem to be symptoms of perceptual microgenesis are not particular to specifically derailed process but to all

who perceive and feel in the world – that is, symptoms are “revelations of normal process” (Goldberg 35). This is an important aspect of the theory of microgenesis from its presentation in the early twentieth-century. My contention is that what we can take to be the microgenetic progressions that Woolf describes in her works are indicative of perception as a development of complex object configurations in the external world. That said, it was crucial to demonstrate how the phenomenon of microgenesis occurs not only in “the derailment of the process” (Schweiger et al. 335), in Septimus, for example, but in the unfolding phases to surface consciousness that any one of us might experience at any time, that is, in revelations “not adequately constrained” (Goldberg 35) (as Woolf’s writings demonstrate again and again).

Antecedent Phases

I earlier noted antecedent phases in cognition (as “momentary histories” (PAL 223)) and how these might be posed as “explanatory constructs” (Smith, “Visual Perception” 310). This brings me to return to the question of the “limbic system” as an antecedent stage of cognition. I have attempted to demonstrate the intrinsic link between our everyday perception and the perception in microgenesis (that is, the actual “unfolding” to surface actuality that is not directly accessible). The “phases” as I have described Brown’s formulation of cognition, are, as Pachalska and MacQueen’s chapter on Brown’s microgenetic revolution suggest, “rhythmically generated out of a “core” in the anatomically deepest and phylogenetically oldest parts of the central nervous system,” eventually progressing to what we perceive at surface level of actualisation (300). The “limbic stage” was centralised in my first chapter on *The Voyage Out* so that I could demonstrate what is meant by “internal process,” that is, how “[t]he past is *re-presented* in the present” (MN 7). I argued, for example, that Woolf’s Rachel Vinrace-centred descriptions in the latter parts of *The Voyage Out* emphasised the limbic stage in cognition as a progression from core self to the space of feverish (typhoidal) hallucination which is occurring outside the body but, according to Brown, “also contains the body, as in a fluid medium” (MBC 86). As previously mentioned, the “limbic level” is a phase of consciousness which, according to MacQueen, “does not sleep when we are awake: in other words, dream (limbic) consciousness is subsumed in, not replaced by, waking consciousness” (“Identity, Autobiography” 215).

Finally, “limbic time” is understood to be “the floating, recurrent time of dream consciousness,” which may be at once disorientating as, Pachalska and MacQueen suggest, “[t]hings happen, but they have already happened, and will happen again, perhaps differently, perhaps the same,” that is to say, to a very large extent, “[e]verything is blended into everything else, identities shift and flow, images fade in and out” (303). I demonstrated that Brown’s view

(that “the phases in brain process through which successive mind/brain states arise and perish over the duration of the psychological present, measured in milliseconds” (300)) was encapsulated in Woolf’s fictions. Rachel Vinrace’s death scenes in the novel were the first indication to me of the cognitive process as a matter of conflict and conservation of mind and matter, that is, as the experience of “a degree of effort after meaning through [cognitive] search” (Froehlich, “Microgenesis and Information” 27). This brings me to the conflictual aspect of perceptual microgenesis.

Transformation and Conflict

In this thesis I have addressed an important question in microgenesis as well as in Woolf’s writings: what happens if (or when) the cognitive process is interrupted or, to use the parlance of Brown and Schweiger, amongst others: what happens if the process suffers a “derailment of the process” (Schweiger et al. 335)? What is the result of human cognition when it is unable to reach the final definition, that is, the surface destination of an external object undergoes a “premature exposure”? In other words, the perception of the external willow tree, say, suffers a curtailment? The process of conflict was present in my chapter on *Mrs. Dalloway*, as touched on earlier. I have argued in this conclusion and noted throughout that in the various ways outlined in each chapter, Woolf’s works seem to be exploratory of a process in microgeny. Of interest is Woolf’s suggestion that her “method” in *Mrs. Dalloway* was taken to be “a deliberate offspring of a method” (“Introduction to *Mrs Dalloway*” E4 549). What she actually suggests is this: that in order to consider the presence of the “hidden depths” (as I have been asserting, according to her essay, “The Tunnel”) she would reverse the process in *Mrs Dalloway*, starting at surface actualisation of the pages and then working backwards. She writes that “[o]ne such statement has been made sufficiently often about *Mrs Dalloway* to be worth perhaps a word of contradiction. The book, it was said, was the deliberate offspring of a method” (549). Woolf goes on to express that “in the present case it was necessary to write the book first and to invent a theory afterwards” (550). The reader, she suggests, “is concerned only with the effect of the book as a whole on his [or her] mind” (550). That is to say, in Brownian terms, that by means of going back from surface to depth, the reader might “better judge” (“as a whole”) the microgenesis of the process from words to mind (550). Of this, she suggests, she or “he is eventually an infallible judge” (550).

Woolf brings to the fore the process of cognitive self-realisation in microgenesis which is always already a categorial matter, that is, a distribution of “pure feeling” from core self to surface reality; an “intrinsic productive process” of self-preservation (MSCW 42). The “fundamental operation in microgenesis,” as I have stressed throughout, per Brown, “is a category [to] member

transformation” where the “premature specification” of the process [of categorisation] may result in the “variations of symptom expression” (39). I argued, then, that Clarissa’s production of “feeling” was a “mode of self-completion,” a recurrent and active process – Septimus is not felt via a passive reception of external matters but as a process of active transformation from antecedent categories as he becomes the microtemporal process that is encountered again and again. Clarissa’s “mode[] of self-completion” (LoE 109) is shaped, in the first instance, via the primitive category of fleeing (and defence) as she abandons her party. Her flight is then transformed to fight mode as she develops and gains from Septimus’s presence (his “embrace” (*Dalloway* 202)) in the “small room” (201) and, along the way, she transfers what she takes to be his “defiance” (202) to her own present state of preservation and completion.

In my chapter on *The Waves*, Rhoda, unlike Septimus in *Mrs. Dalloway*, appears to be describing her cognitive perceptual microgenesis almost surreptitiously, that is to say, silently. It was very clear that Septimus was written to show outwardly his erratic behaviour of appearing not to be Septimus himself (“who wasn’t Septimus any longer” (*Dalloway* 71) to others. He disturbs or interests those around him, which include his wife, Rezia, and his physicians, Holmes and Bradshaw, the latter of whom, to recall, “never spoke of ‘madness’; he called it not having a sense of proportion” (106). Rhoda’s descriptions (and indirect discourse) often come in company, while she is eating at a farewell dinner or, later, at the reunion dinner, but they seem to be held within an internal vacuum. Moreover, unlike Septimus’s suicide, Rhoda’s fall from a building occurs off-line, if you will, and is not described in the manner of Septimus’s fall from his apartment window which Clarissa dramatically envisions in all its inglorious impalement: “she saw it” (*Dalloway* 202). This chapter attempted to get at the kernel of the theory by which “[t]he final procedure of a comparative developmental psychology [in microgenesis] ‘is ... to derive developmental laws generally applicable to mental life as a whole’” (Ewert, “Microgenesis as a Model” 53; Werner qtd.; Ewert’s ellipsis). I therefore attempted to represent the ways in which the process of microgenesis could occur not only in “the derailment of the process” but, additionally, in other real-life situations as well (Schweiger et al. 335). The “degree of effort after meaning” which I noted earlier (Froehlich, “Microgenesis as Functional” 27, Cegalis, “From Prototheory” 125), is common to all cognition but, as I said, per Brown and Hanlon, the possibility of *premature* transformation is symptomatic of derailment of cognitive process.⁷⁵ It was suggested that Woolf presents the microgenesis of

⁷⁵ Under certain experimental conditions, for example, “using geometric designs [and] record[ing] perceptual alterations as stimuli were gradually moved from the extreme periphery of the visual field in toward a central fixation point,” it was found that “in th[e] [...] pre-configuration phase the [subject] has constructed a tentative, highly labile Gestalt which is more undifferentiated internally, more regular, and more simple in form and content than is the final form which is to follow it. The construction of this initial, flux-like pre-Gestalt is said to be accompanied by decidedly

“incomplete resolution” in the case of Rhoda, and we are able to follow her trajectory across the novel as she struggles to pinpoint precisely external objects of interest: “I see a shape, white, but not of stone, moving, perhaps alive” but whatever the object she seeks to differentiate, “column” or “fountain” or “stone,” “[i]t makes no sign” (*Waves* 104). I suggested that Rhoda’s attempts to “attack the angular shapes in [her] mind” lead to her eventual suicide. Brown suggests that the “neuronal architecture” undergoes subtle changes which he describes as a “configural wave that passes over phases in the mind/brain state – synapse, membrane, neurotransmitter – [which] occur in every thought, reminiscence and perception” (MTPT 41). What Brown names “[t]he dynamic in stability” in perceptual microgenesis is produced as a result of “near-replication” which conceals what would otherwise be cognitive flux. For the most part, that is, referring to human perception in the main, we are unable to perceive the flux – the diffuse, early figure – which is progressively stabilising to the object constancy of the perceived object at surface level. The constancy of time is linked to what is shaped at the surface of actualisation as well as the change we think we perceive as the process unfolds.

The complexity of Jason Brown’s theory has been noted in this work; it has been noted too by his colleagues and commentators: “[a]s a paradigm [microgenetic theory] is considered alien by the mainstream” (Levick, “Commentary” 106); “Jason Brown’s English prose style is not easy to read even for a native speaker of English. For someone such as myself [Maria Pachalska], the task is truly formidable [...]” (“Microgenetic Revolution” 113); “Brown’s erudition can be daunting [...]” (Weber and Weekes 29), to name but three comments on his writings. I have suggested and demonstrated throughout this work that perceptual microgeny is both a matter of “momentary histories” (PAL 223) and a “type of instantaneous evolution” (LM 5). With reference to what Brown names as “subsurface events,” he puts forward the view that “[a]n individual is the product of his past, structurally, culturally, and, one can say, cognitively as well” (5). It is in the expression of the “hidden depths” (E3 11 “The Tunnel”) that, according to Brown, “[t]he past is continuously active as the present is elaborated” (5). Brown’s following sentence is clear, however: “[t]his is not a simple concept to grasp” (5).

Across four thematic chapters, (as earlier noted) I have attempted, therefore, to describe the ways in which Woolf makes Brown’s formulation of microgenetic theory directly available to the reader of her fictions. I have demonstrated that Woolf is able to provide descriptions of cognitive transformation of early processing stages in her writings on derailment of the process. In addition

unpleasant feeling of tension and unrest which later subside when a final, stable configuration is achieved” (Flavell and Draguns 199).

to this, I have suggested that Woolf attempts to locate the transition of cognitive process caught up in a mode of “self-completion” and co-dependence with the objects and others in the external world. Furthermore, I have demonstrated the ways in which consciousness unfolds in the microgeny of moments from core self to surface reality (via, for instance, the limbic state of cognition to cortical time). I have suggested that Brown’s formulation of microgenesis, across his numerous texts and papers, provides an important point of reference to Woolf’s own approach and accounts of the mind/brain process in her fictions and other non-fiction writings. I have suggested that Woolf’s writings share a startling similitude with the process of microgenesis and I have emphasised the various confluences and associations throughout this work. I would like to say a few words about the broader effects of Brown’s microgenesis as a “new paradigm” which “makes it not only possible, but necessary to look at the world in a new way” (“Microgenetic Revolution” 112).

I have suggested throughout this thesis that Woolf’s fictions – based on *The Voyage Out*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *The Waves*, but not confined to those novels – provide descriptions (the data, as it were) which may be re-interpreted in the light of microgenesis. It is my view that microgenetic theory⁷⁶ should not be confined to philosophy in the broader sense of the word nor should it be confined to the study of the dynamically changing nature of symptoms in brain damage; it should not, for that matter, be confined to Woolf studies. I believe that there are numerous applications for microgenetic theory to be framed, as Pachalska asserts, as a “meta-theory capable of generating productive research and thinking across the entire spectrum of science and learning” (“Microgenetic Revolution” 118). For example, in a microgeny-inflected literary criticism, Marcel Proust’s *Remembrance of Things Past* may stand as exemplary among others:

I imagined, like everyone else, that the brains of other people were lifeless and submissive receptacles with no power of specific reaction to anything that might be introduced into them [...] (Proust 86).

Proust sets up – almost by way of a thought experiment – those who think brains are receptacles (him and “everyone else”) and those whose brains are receptacles (all “other people”). That is, for example, my brain is a receptacle for all others but it is not a receptacle for me. Does Proust, then, think that brains are receptacles or does he not? We have noted throughout that this is the question about which all cognitive models circulate. To be sure, (as we have noted), Proust is talking about the brains of “other people,” but at the same time “everyone else” is (at least “imagined” to be) in cahoots with the vital question of whether human brains are the takers-in of external, objective

⁷⁶ To repeat: microgenetic theory “is an account of phases in brain process through which successive mind/brain states arise and perish over the duration of the psychological present, measured in milliseconds” (Pachalska and MacQueen 300).

information – or, perhaps, not. A microgenetic reading would probe the idea that other people’s brains are receptive to introduced material while (somehow) suggesting that “everyone else” is (again, somehow) immune to such receptivity.⁷⁷

Exemplary too, from the nineteenth century, is the work of Gerard Manley Hopkins. M. H. Abrams registers Hopkins’s “stressed uniqueness of inscape” in his poetry (Abrams 1580). Manley Hopkins has a complex understanding of our cognitive processes. We may see how he questions the very process of “Selves” in “As Kingfishers Catch Fire” (1587). Through the emphasis on selving, which “goes itself” (as though in transit), we may begin to feel ourselves stranded from the process: “*myself* it speaks and spells, / Crying *What I do is me: for that I came*” (1587; emphasis in original). In his poem set in the dead of night, the concern is with perceptual microgenesis and what can be perceived. In “I Wake and Feel the Fell of Dark, Not Day,” the spectator (or is he or she asleep?) is quite unable to see in the dark of night. Limbic time and cortical time seem crossed, or merging, and sight is set in the past, “saw, ways you went!” as well as into the future, as he or she awaits the coming light: “in yet longer light’s delay” (1588). The one who waits seems perfectly unsure of their very existence in the moment. The self in the final stanza, like a rising agent, albeit one whose taste deceives, “Selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours,” and the “fell of dark” remains, “not day” but a part of something else (1588). But then, still in darkness, he or she can “see / The lost are like this, and their scourges to be / As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse” (1589). One feels that “[a]s I am mine” may be read as “[a]s I am mind,” and then the “sweating selves” proliferate, transforming in each instantaneous evolution. The speaker is lost indeed in the darkness of what it is “to be” (1589). These two abridged examples – sketches – of readings in microgenesis may serve to exemplify my hope that the theory may be applied to other works of literature in the future.

Finally, to Time

As discussed in brief above, and given in the name of the theory, “microgenesis,” the question of time is fundamental to its formulation. As Bruce MacQueen states in his foreword to Jason Brown’s latest work, “microgenetic theory is not [...] a theory of genetics, nor is it primarily

⁷⁷ Scholarship on Woolf and Proust includes early work by Hafley who suggests that, like Proust, Woolf felt that to “to immobilize, to classify human beings [...] is [...] a great error” (Hafley 68). A more recent example is found in Yuko Rojas’s article on “Proustian reminiscence” in Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*. Rojas argues that Deleuze’s suggestion that Proust is a “Platonist” has traction because “Proust describes his ability to discover within himself the essences of long-forgotten experiences” which may be said to “contrast a superficial and fleeting consciousness with a deeper one having access to more profound truths” (Rojas 465, note 4). Rojas suggests that Lily Briscoe is able to “release herself from the past [...] through a creative process analogous to Proustian ‘reminiscence,’ which Woolf depicts as overcoming the space between past and present” (454). I have argued that even the present moment is a matter of memory, that is, “the full weight of the personal past is channelled into everyday objects, which recede back over the past to impact the next round of object-formation” (MTPT 36).

concerned with microscopic phenomena” – the term, “microgenesis,” from “*Aktualgenese*” is concerned with “the genesis of the present moment” (vii). It was not so much that Woolf’s conception of time was found all the way through *To the Lighthouse*, as I attempted to demonstrate, but that time is of the essence (in phylo-onto-micro-genesis) throughout all her writings. (In the case of the thesis, across four of the novels which make up this thesis: *The Voyage Out*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *The Waves*.) In many ways, the conclusion of the chapter on *To the Lighthouse* is the conclusion of the thesis, that is to say, the centrality of what I touched on above: Woolf’s “transmuting process” (D3 102). I suggested that both identify the distinct problem of how human perception is a process (indeed, a problem) of micro-temporality. Our shaping by otherness is encapsulated by Woolf’s “moments of being” in relation to what she describes as “non-being” (“Sketch” 84). These “moments of being” are continually becoming again, decaying to what becomes of “non-being” in the “arising and perishing” of microgenetic moments, unfolding across successive phases of realisation (MN 26). The microgenetic tension is a continual presence in her novels as I have demonstrated in this thesis, but her conclusion – when she mused on the transformations through which thought becomes art – from her diary of July 1926 is worthy of repeating: “the actual event was different” (D2 102). The perishing, as Brown writes, “always provides a basis for another arising” (MN 27) but what we remember must be revived and actualised again in the present. As I have demonstrated in this thesis, Anne Harrington’s identification of the tension between the dynamic stability of one’s identity and that of recurring process becomes the unfolding question in Woolf’s “transmuting process.” To write “[a]rt & [t]hought” as a “transmuting process” (D3 102) is Woolf’s attempt to express the tension between mind and brain, past and present, physical and psychic, stability and flux, into the “momentary histories” of her extraordinary writings (PAL 223). It is the continual questioning of the “arising and perishing” in microgenesis that Woolf emphasises so well on the pages of her novels, as well as revealing them in the true spirit of our all too human microgeny.

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