



# Dislocations of the Walking Body : James Joyce's Ulysses and Virginia Woolf's Mrs Dalloway

Victoria Lévêque

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Victoria Lévêque

## DISLOCATIONS OF THE WALKING BODY

James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*

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Soutenue le 12 décembre 2020

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## Résumé

### **Dislocations et déplacements du corps dans l'*Ulysse* de James Joyce et le *Mrs Dalloway* de Virginia Woolf**

Cette thèse compare les représentations du corps dans l'*Ulysse* de James Joyce et le *Mrs Dalloway* de Virginia Woolf. Elle prend la figure du promeneur urbain comme point de départ pour envisager le corps dans ses déplacements au sens large: les déplacements dans la ville remettent en question un certain nombre de délimitations. Elles élaborent en parallèle un dépassement des limites constitutives du lieu, de l'identité individuelle, ainsi que de la frontière entre chair, texte et image. Comprise à la fois comme un déplacement, une délocalisation, ou une défiguration, la dislocation du corps est envisagée dans ces deux oeuvres comme une béance entre le corps phénoménologique de la conscience incarnée, perçu comme le site d'une expérience sensorielle, et la figure du corps, image tantôt réifiée, tantôt disloquée par l'écriture. Cette étude prend en compte une tension entre incarnation et désincarnation qui se retrouve dans les deux oeuvres, tout en faisant leur différence. Elle se propose ainsi d'ouvrir de nouvelles pistes pour comparer ces deux géants littéraires, notamment en ce qui concerne la mise en rapport du corps phénoménologique au texte et à l'image. Située au croisement des théories de la « chose », du nouveau matérialisme, d'approches phénoménologiques de la corporalité et de l'espace, ainsi que de théories esthétiques et culturelles délimitant l'image du corps dans l'œuvre d'art, cette thèse réévalue les résonances entre ces œuvres majeures en distinguant entre les images du corps et la représentation du sensible dans sa relation à l'espace de la ville et à l'espace diégétique pour éclairer la manière dont ces deux dimensions de la corporalité interagissent.

*Mots clés: James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, littérature moderniste, phénoménologie, corps, espace urbain, conscience incarnée, flâneur, image du corps, poétique*

## Abstract

### **Dislocations of the walking body in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway***

This thesis compares representations of the body in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*. It takes the walking body in the city as a starting point for considering the many dislocations of the body, positing that both authors' depictions of wandering in the city allow them to test the conceptual boundaries of place, individual identity, as well as the limits between flesh, text and image. The thesis asks how Joyce's and Woolf's city novels portray the body through dislocations, which express all at once the displacements, transitionings and disfigurements of the body and convey a tension between embodiment and disembodiment in ways specific to each author. It argues that both works examine the overlap between the phenomenological body of embodied consciousness as the site of perceptive experience, and figures of the body which articulate the image of the body, its object dimension, and its reconfigurations into writing. It suggests that the triangulation of phenomenological conceptions of the body, figures of the body and textual poetics allow for fruitful comparisons of these canonical authors beyond the pale of modernism. Drawing upon the intersecting fields of thing theory, phenomenological conceptions of narrative, embodiment and space, as well as cultural and aesthetic theories delimiting the imaging of the body in the work of art it aims to reevaluate the connections between *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* by distinguishing between images of the body and the portrayal of the sensible in relation to space and narrative, while taking into account how these distinct dimensions interact within the works.

*Keywords: James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, modernist literature, phenomenology, body, city space, embodied consciousness, flâneur, body image, poetics*

*For Bilal and Lana*

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## A note on editions

All references to James Joyce's *Ulysses* are to the Oxford World's Classics facsimile of the 1922 edition of *Ulysses*. I use the abbreviation *U* to refer to *Ulysses* throughout. (*Ulysses: the 1922 text*, ed. Jeri Johnson. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2008)

References to Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* are to the Oxford World's Classics edition. I use the abbreviation *MD* to refer to *Mrs Dalloway* throughout. (*Mrs Dalloway*, ed. David Bradshaw. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2009.)

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# Introduction

## DISLOCATIONS OF THE WALKING BODY IN JAMES JOYCE'S *ULYSSES* AND VIRGINIA WOOLF'S *MRS. DALLOWAY*

### *Woolf/Joyce: A Pair of Opposites?*

Virginia Woolf and James Joyce are known to sit together in critical works on modernism like an iconic pair in an unhappy relationship. In Jean-Michel Rabaté's overview of Joyce's critical reception in France, for instance, Joyce and Woolf figure among the select few writers featured by the international, avant-garde review *Tel Quel* in the late 1960s and 70s. In Rabaté's explanation, the review's selective list illustrates how heterogeneous the early-twentieth-century art scene was. It also shows how much the notion of experimentalism, central to Modernism, has posited a broad connection between Joyce and Woolf, which may seem artificial: "the systematic trope of *Tel Quel* was **the forceful yoking** of writers noted for their formal experiments or unorthodox and innovative writing."<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere, Rabaté takes Joyce's and Woolf's experimentalism – particularly with genres – as a defining characteristic of their modernisms, noting that "despite the fact that many modernist writers have taken poetry as a model, the most remarkable aesthetic results can be found in the kind of poetic prose that was the hallmark of Proust, Joyce and Woolf's writing."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Michel Rabaté. "The Joyce of French Theory." In *A Companion to James Joyce*. ed. Richard Brown. Malden: Blackwell Publishing. 2008, pp. 254-269, p. 11. (my emphasis)

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Michel Rabaté. "Una lingua straniata. Gli stili del modernismo." In *Il romanzo I*. p. 749. Qtd in Raffaello Rossi. "Ontologies du sujet. Proust, Joyce et Kafka, narrateurs modernistes." In *Littératures*. Paris: Université Paris-Est, 2016. <https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-01710764>. (my translation)

Because both authors have become such canonical modernist icons, it is tempting to approach them as such, although such comparisons encourage broad parallels which, despite having anthological value, may leave the intricacies of the Joyce/Woolf dialogue unexplored. For example, Joyce appears alongside Woolf in anthologies such as Lawrence Rainey's *Modernism, An Anthology* (2005), and at least twice in *The Cambridge Companion to the Twentieth-century English Novel*, despite his Englishness being questionable. Christopher Ames has drawn a comparison between Woolf's *Between the Acts* and Joyce's "Oxen of the Sun" aiming to show how both texts illustrate "The Modernist Canon Narrative".<sup>3</sup> Deborah Parsons' *Theorists of the Modern Novel* examines Joyce's, Richardson's and Woolf's roles in developing the modernist aesthetic in the novel. As Rabaté has underlined, even more direct comparisons between Joyce and Woolf tend to focus on their formal experimentalism. In "The Art of English Fiction in the Twentieth Century," Dorothy J. Hale names Joyce's *Ulysses* and Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* as examples of Percy Lubbock's vision of the XXth-century novel as a site for formal innovation, with an "immense variety" of "unheard-of experiments to be made."<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps today's literary criticism faces the opposite problem. In hindsight, the categories of "avant-garde" or "modernism" with their paraphernalia of formal innovations are broad enough for such connections not to risk seeming contrived, and this has had several effects, one of which has been the need to shift focus onto peripheral and marginal modernist figures beyond the canon to revise and revive the term as a conceptual territory. It has also, I would argue, been a defining feature of comparative work on canonical authors and of the Joyce/Woolf relation in particular, which calls for new comparisons.

This study articulates theory and textual analysis to explore how specific interconnections between these two major twentieth-century authors can be hypothesized. It aims to establish a dialogue

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<sup>3</sup> Christopher Ames. "The Modernist Canon Narrative: Woolf's *Between the Acts* and Joyce's "Oxen of the Sun"." In *Twentieth Century Literature*, Vol. 37. No. 4 (Winter, 1991), pp. 390-404.

<sup>4</sup> Dorothy J. Hale. "The Art of English Fiction in the Twentieth Century." In the *Cambridge Companion to the Twentieth-Century English Novel*, ed. Robert L. Caserio. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2009. pp. 10 -22.

between their representations of the body to test to what extent they are truly opposed and to what extent they may also be informed by (mis)perceptions, by analyzing two works which share formal resemblances: *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses*.<sup>5</sup> What sort of dialogue can be established between these two works, which feature prominent depictions of embodied city life, beyond the pale of Modernism?

A recent collection of essays, entitled *Parallaxes: Virginia Woolf Meets James Joyce*, edited by Sara Sullam and Marco Canani, formalizes this characteristic of the Joyce/Woolf connection through the metaphor of parallax. The volume aims to address the relative scarcity of comparative works seeking to draw connections between Woolf and Joyce. As Sullam underlines, within the history of literary criticism, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf have a history. Indeed, she finds that presuppositions surround and precede comparisons of Joyce's and Woolf's work, noting that "Joyceans and Woolfeans quite often look upon each other with a suspicion bordering contempt." The editors of *Parallax* chalk some of this history down to "a received idea of Joyce's misogyny," to which might be added a received idea of Woolf's snobbery and prudishness, fueled by her self-professed frustration with Joyce's "obscurity".<sup>6</sup>

The title of the collection underlines a paradox: these canonical authors run parallactic but also parallel courses through literary criticism. Their trajectories run close but rarely meet and criticism's view of them has at times been prone to distortions. When and where does Virginia Woolf meet James Joyce? A pointblank answer would be: in her reading of *Ulysses* in *The Little Review*, in the words and reactions of the eminent literary friends who encouraged her to read Joyce's blue book – such as T.S. Eliot or Katherine Mansfield. Indeed, Joyce and Woolf's "history" of antagonism seems to stem from

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<sup>5</sup> Wyndham Lewis presents *Mrs. Dalloway* as a pale and inferior copy of *Ulysses* in "Virginia Woolf : "Mind" and "Matter" on the Plane of a Literary Controversy": "there is none of the realistic vigour of Mr. Joyce, though often the incidents in the local "masterpieces" are exact and puerile copies of the scenes in his Dublin drama (cf. the Viceroy's progress through Dublin in *Ulysses* with the Queen's progress through London in *Mrs. Dalloway* – the latter is a sort of undergraduate imitation of the former, winding up with a smoke-writing in the sky, a pathetic "crib" of the fire work display and the rocket that is the culmination of Mr. Bloom's beach-ecstasy)." For further discussions of thematic and narrative parallels between *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* see Suzette Henke, Maria Dibattista, Avrom Fleishman and Elizabeth Abel.

<sup>6</sup> Marco Canani & Sara Sullam (eds.). *Parallaxes, Virginia Woolf Meets James Joyce*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 2014. p. 8.

Woolf's reaction to *Ulysses* which, according to Suzette Henke and James A.W. Heffernan, some scholars still rely on "to prove [Woolf's] animosity toward Joyce," leaving aside the ambivalence of her reaction to Joyce.<sup>7</sup>

This is not a biographical study, but it is interesting as a preliminary remark to note some of the more ambiguous and admiring reactions which Woolf recorded while reading Joyce's *Ulysses*, if only because they present a lesser-known and more ambivalent view of what is generally thought to be Woolf's opinion of Joyce, and because they occur in the years before completing *Mrs. Dalloway*. Drawing upon Heffernan's detailed account of Woolf's comments on Joyce, one is reminded of some of the more intriguing complexities of Woolf's reading of *Ulysses*. One might note her curiosity and admiration; her complimenting "the undoubted occasional beauty of his phrases"; her competitive stance, her confession of being "bewildered, befogged"; her insight into his endeavor "to be more psychological – get more things into fiction." Perhaps most telling is her frustration at both Joyce's "desire to shock" and at Eliot's praise of Joyce, exacerbating her self-expressed fear that "what I'm doing is probably being better done by Mr. Joyce."<sup>8</sup>

Comparative studies of Joyce's and Woolf's work have mostly focused on the interconnections between their innovative forms of writing and linguistic experimentations, their modernism, their representations of selfhood and consciousness, or the structural parallels between *Ulysses* and *Mrs. Dalloway* from a geneticist's perspective.<sup>9</sup> In many of these studies, these literary giants are

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<sup>7</sup>Suzette Henke. "Virginia Woolf Reads James Joyce: The *Ulysses* Notebook." In *James Joyce: The Centennial Symposium*, ed. Morris Beja et al. pp. 39-42. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 1986. p. 5.

<sup>8</sup>Qtd in James A. W. Heffernan. "Tracking a Reader: What did Virginia Woolf really think of *Ulysses*?" In *Parallaxes*, eds. Marco Canani and Sara Sullam. pp. 2-24. *Op cit.* Virginia Woolf. *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Anne Olivier Bell. 5 vols. Vols. 2-5 assisted by Andrew Mc Neillie. London: The Hogarth Press. 1977-84. Vol. 2.

<sup>9</sup>See for example Teresa Prudente. "Woolf and/vs. Joyce: New Perspectives for a Dynamic Comparison." In *Weaving New Perspectives Together: Some Reflections on Literary Studies*, eds. Maria Alonso Alonso, Jeannette Bello Mota et al. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 2012. pp. 96-119. Morris Beja. *Epiphany in the Modern Novel*. Seattle: University of Washington Press. 1971. Maud Ellmann. *The Nets of Modernism: Henry James, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and Sigmund Freud*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2010. Daniel Ferrer. *Virginia Woolf and the Madness of Language*. London and New York: Routledge. 1990. Finn Fordham. *I Do, I Undo, I Redo: The Textual Genesis of Modernist Selves in Hopkins, Yeats, Conrad, Forster, Joyce, and Woolf*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2010. Suzette Henke. "Virginia Woolf reads James Joyce: the *Ulysses* notebook." In *James Joyce: the Centennial Symposium*, ed. Morris Beja et al. pp. 39-43. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 1986.

approached as running parallel courses in the constellation that is modernism. While more particular points of contention between Joyce and Woolf criticism focus on their portrayal of the body and materiality – particularly in Anglo-Saxon criticism thanks to the emergence of the field of gender studies for instance – to my knowledge, few comparative studies of Joyce’s and Woolf’s work deal directly with their representations of the body on a larger scale.<sup>10</sup> As a result, this study is also a response to a lingering yet outdated binary opposition which would view Joyce as the writer of the body *par excellence* and Woolf’s fictions as inhabited by a disembodied narrative voice. Before addressing the more specific hypotheses which have led me to examine representations of the body in *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway*, it seems to me necessary to address the perceptions which inform critical views of what might constitute Joyce’s and Woolf’s versions of the body, particularly in relation to that most ambiguous of benchmarks for successfully rendering materiality: the “Real”.

### ***Joyce, Woolf and the “Real” Body***

From early on I have wondered what to make of the idea, persistent among some critics, that Woolf, by comparison to Joyce, rejected the body. One consideration to take into account is how biographical elements have provided fodder for this particular opinion of Woolf – the most notorious example being some well-known quips expressing her dislike of Joyce’s indecency in a letter to Lytton Strachey. At times, it is Woolf’s work and *Mrs Dalloway* in particular which have served as a convenient foil to further insist upon the wealth of Joyce’s engagement with the material realities of the body in *Ulysses*.

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<sup>10</sup> See Teresa Prudente. “‘The Daily Bread of Experience’: The Transfiguration of Materiality in Joyce’s and Woolf’s writing.” In *Journal of the English Association*, Vol. 60, No. 229 (Summer 2011), pp. 142-158.

Underlying this reasoning is a pervasive idea that Joyce's rendering of the body is "fuller" and more "real" than Woolf's.<sup>11</sup> For example, Sean Latham presents Joyce's "insistence not simply on the description of consciousness itself, but upon the importance of the real physical world" as a defining feature of Joyce's modernism – defining precisely because it "distinguishes Joyce's practice from that of Woolf."<sup>12</sup> The comparison more specifically targets *Mrs. Dalloway* as Latham notes that:

by the end of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, for example, we know the title character intimately, but the physical world she inhabits remains distant, hazy, and imprecise. At no point in her narrative does Clarissa Dalloway burp, scratch herself, or make a run to the toilet. Consciousness, in other words, remains diffuse and essentially Cartesian in its isolation from the experiences of the body.<sup>13</sup>

Of course, it is true that in *Mrs. Dalloway* Woolf focuses on the intricacies of sensations, emotions and affects rather than on bodily acts, body parts or functions. However, I wonder if for all that one can rightly infer that her portrayal of consciousness is "essentially Cartesian" or even "isola[ted] from the experiences of the body." Certainly, this requires overlooking a considerable amount of research into the resonances between Woolf's portrayal of embodiment and other philosophers such as Aristotle or phenomenologists such as Merleau-Ponty. Wouldn't this suggest that "sensations, emotions and affects" are the property of a mind distinct from the body rather than, as it seems to me is apparent in *Mrs. Dalloway*, manifestations of the receding boundaries of the body in the work of art? Doesn't Woolf's character Lily Briscoe give us a clue to this distinction in *To the Lighthouse* when she asks the question: "how could one express in words these emotions of the body? express that emptiness there?"

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<sup>11</sup> This idea also features in Wyndham Lewis's attack on *Mrs. Dalloway*, which he claims has none of Joyce's "realism."

<sup>12</sup> Sean Latham. "Joyce's Modernism." In *The National Library of Ireland Joyce Studies 2004*, eds. Luca Crispi and Catherine Fahy. n° 17. p.12.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* p. 14.

Woolf's choice of the word "emptiness" to qualify the portrayal of the body is telling, especially considering that "fullness" typically qualifies Joyce's portrayal of the body. Is the representation of the body less "physical", less central to the portrayal of space, time, experience, narrative, language in *Mrs Dalloway* or is it that the methods are fundamentally different, and should be taken into account in articulating the differences in both authors' conceptions of the body? Furthermore, what do we understand to be the "real physical world" in a fictional work? As Richard Brown notes in his introduction to one of the most comprehensive, recent studies of the body in Joyce's *Ulysses, Joyce, "Penelope" and the Body*, "the discussion of the body hinges upon and returns to the very origin of the discourses of the arts as forms of *mimesis*."<sup>14</sup> The body has cristallized debates around the mimetic or anti-mimetic dimensions of Joycean and Woolfean "realism" and this is one of the fundamental ways in which physicality and textuality are woven together in these two novels.

In any case, Latham is voicing a conviction which runs through a portion of Joyce criticism and condenses an elusive idea that Joyce's and Woolf's portrayals of the body are fundamentally opposed, which has never been categorically formalized but which rather systematically undercuts comparisons between the two authors. A more particular example is the typecast which befalls Clarissa, a character who explicitly serves as a foil for Molly who:

unlike the prim Clarissa Dalloway [...] whose only apparent connection to her body lies in her terror of "her heart, affected, they said, by influenza," [...] appears to possess a fully functioning, fully human body. Not only does she begin to menstruate while sitting on the chamber pot, she also meditates on the size of Blazes Boylan's penis, his affinity for somewhat rough sex, and her own romantic encounters with previous lovers.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Richard Brown (ed). *Joyce, "Penelope" and the Body*. Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi. 2006. p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 15.

This comparison posits Joyce's rendition of the body – particularly in *Ulysses* – as the “real” body, a notion which persists despite critics' awareness of the constructedness of the “Real” and Joyce's departure from Flaubertian realism after *Portrait*.

Joyce's longstanding position as the writer of the body has been consolidated by critics over decades, working through evolving views of the author's relationship to the “real” and evolving conceptions of “materiality”, body and mind. In the 1970s in *Seminar 23*, Lacan drew a connection between the physicality of Joyce's writing and his portrayal of the embodied subject, describing Joyce's writing as a manifestation of the “Real”. For Richard Ellmann, Joyce emphasized the daily realities of the body in contrast to the abstractions of the mind. In “James Joyce and the body” (1982) E.L. Epstein argued that the body plays a pivotal epistemological role in our apprehension of the “real” by providing “novelty for the mind”: “when Bloom wonders about the texture of his own body and the color of his own flesh (*U* 182.375), he is engaged in a voyage of discovery, the discovery of the last novelty of all.”<sup>16</sup>

For all that, *Ulysses* in no way presents a uniform depiction of embodied experience. In fact, one could argue that throughout the book naturalist depictions – if they were naturalist to begin with – progressively give way to experimenting with the materiality of language and to an increasingly ostentatious metatextual dimension. As Michael Levenson points out in “Modernisms” (2009), with the increased awareness of the discursive strategies of Joyce's fiction came the awareness of how the naturalist dimension of Joyce's representation of the body is qualified by his use of irony, which “take[s] up attitudes and tones toward the givenness of fictional reality.”<sup>17</sup>

Since *Ulysses* condenses so many opposites within its gargantuan scope, phenomenologically-minded studies at times adopt a cultural materialist viewpoint which leaves aside chapters in which the

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<sup>16</sup> E. L. Epstein. “James Joyce and the Body.” In *A Starchamber Quiry: A James Joyce Centennial Volume, 1882-1982*, ed. E.L. Epstein. New York & London: Methuen. 1982. pp. 73-106. p. 83.

<sup>17</sup> Michael Levenson. “Modernisms.” In *James Joyce in Context*, ed. John McCourt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2009. pp. 262-74. p. 266.



representation of embodied experience gives way to textual playfulness. For instance, Cheryl Herr's phenomenologically-grounded essay "Being in Joyce's World" focuses on the initial chapters to bring *Ulysses'* concern with materiality and embodiment to the fore, showing how Joyce's portrayal of the body-in-world attests to "the power and fascination of everyday life" in his works.<sup>18</sup> The body is seen as eliciting the significance of "social practices" and revealing characters' engagement with the material world and its cultural influences. Likewise, critics continue to debate the extent of Molly's materiality/textuality and the hypersexual dimension of chapters such as "Penelope" or "Sirens" is qualified by a certain linguistic extravagance, as if the hypersexuality of these episodes were bracketed by their hypertextuality.

Although Katherine Mullin also acknowledges this 'realness' to a degree, when she writes that "many readers of *Ulysses* feel that they know Leopold Bloom more fully than any other character in fiction" thanks to "the novel's somatic explicitness", she addresses this as one of the main discrepancies of *Ulysses*, which is the split between Joyce's focus on portraying the body and his focus on embodying language. Mullin argues that more than being "central to his modernist experimentation with the form of the traditional realist novel" the Joycean body seeks to elicit "a complex and modulating relationship between bodies and texts."<sup>19</sup> Examining Joyce's focus on the body in *Ulysses* means coming to terms with the progressive slippage of this focus from body to language, a dialectic which I will argue is equally central to *Mrs. Dalloway*.

As Elaine Wood points out in her work on "Embodied Female Voices" in Woolf, Yeats, Joyce and Beckett, the "somatic turn" in literary criticism and cultural studies articulates on the one hand those who view the body as a representation, in Roger Cooter's terms a "representationalist cultural history of the body that essentialized or naturalized language" – exemplified here by the discursive

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<sup>18</sup> Cheryl Herr. "Being in Joyce's World." in *James Joyce in Context*, ed. John McCourt. *op. cit.* pp. 163-72. p. 164.

<sup>19</sup> Katherine Mullin. "Joyce's Bodies." In *James Joyce. Visions and Revisions: Irish Writers in Their Time*. Ed. Sean Latham. Dublin: Irish Academic Press. 2010. p. 171.

focus of Michael Levenson's "Modernisms" – and those who acknowledge the body's centrality to "the historical ontology of the biological present."<sup>20</sup> In "The Turn of the Body: History and Politics of the Corporeal" Roger Cooter emphasizes the role of lived experience in "presentationalism", linking it to phenomenological approaches such as Merleau-Ponty's, Lefèbvre's or de Certeau's, when he claims that the central question is "how to make the lived experience of the past a part of the living present, or how to put the experiential sense of presence into history writing."<sup>21</sup>

Conversely to Joyce, as Harold Bloom's 2015 collection of essays on Virginia Woolf, which he labels biocritiques, illustrates, a substantial portion of the literature on Woolf's work tends to present her relation to the body as problematic and to frame this problem as pertaining to her womanhood.<sup>22</sup> For instance, in "Virginia Woolf and the Problem of the Body" George Ella Lyon argues that Woolf's position as a female artist pushes her to "rise above [her body]" and "define herself as *subject*": "if we see Woolf as a woman defined as object struggling to become and to remain *subject* (as she herself describes in "Professions for Women," Dm, p. 235-242), the portent of her characters' struggles becomes clearer."<sup>23</sup> In *Word of Mouth* (1996) Patricia Moran contends that Woolf's work exhibits both a creative act of resistance to "patriarchal devaluations of femininity" and on the other hand "symptomatic self-presentations, infused with revulsion for the female body's materiality."<sup>24</sup>

The issue with such statements is not necessarily that they are incorrect, but rather that "the body" is treated as a uniform entity in Woolf's fiction when it is reduced to a negative. I stake the claim, for instance, that in *Mrs. Dalloway* the expression of physicality is equally central to a creative

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<sup>20</sup> Elaine Wood. "Embodied Female Voices: Sexuality and Artistry in Woolf, Yeats, Joyce and Beckett." Accessed online 09/26/2020: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/158311249.pdf>. p. 9.

<sup>21</sup> Cooter points to the following works as examples of "representationalist" approaches to the body: Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. New York: Routledge. 1993. Elisabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: To-ward a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1994. Dalia Judovitz, *The Culture of the Body: Genealogies of Modernity*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. 2001. p. 399.

<sup>22</sup> Harold Bloom (ed). *Virginia Woolf*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers. 2005.

<sup>23</sup> George Ella Lyon. "Virginia Woolf and the Problem of the Body." In *Virginia Woolf*, ed. Harold Bloom. *op. cit.* pp. 95-108. pp. 95-96.

<sup>24</sup> Patricia Moran. *Word of Mouth, Body Language in Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf*. Charlottesville & London: The University Press of Virginia. 1996. p. 3.

process which is presented as exquisite and rewarding. On the contrary, this study aims to acknowledge the stratification of portrayals of embodiment in *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* and their authors' complex conceptions of the body's place in the work of art. For example, "the body" may designate images of the body as well as the narration of perceptive experience as well as the individuating rhythms of the body in relation to artistic creation and Woolf's work in no way provides a uniform response to these distinct dimensions of the representation of the body. This study engages with the idea that Woolf's relation to the body is "problematic", in the sense of negatively-charged, by examining Woolf's rejection of images of the body, for example, in relation to the prominent role granted to salutary sensations and body-based experiences such as ecstasy in the process of artistic creation.

Earlier critics claimed that Virginia Woolf's fiction was expressive of an "inward" turn at the expense of depictions of outward realities. An early example of such criticism is Eric Auerbach's *Mimesis* which makes the case that Woolf's rendition of external reality is unsubstantiated in comparison to that of inner life. As John Mepham notes in *Virginia Woolf* (1991), the critical consensus according to which Woolf's work is primarily concerned with interiority continues to exist.<sup>25</sup> In *Virginia Woolf and the Real World*, although Alex Zwerdling emphasizes Woolf's representation of historical and social realities, he argues that this shift concerns the later part of her work, agreeing in sum that *Mrs Dalloway*, for instance, is expressive of interiority.<sup>26</sup>

More recent work, by Melba Cuddy-Keane or Rebecca Walkowitz among others, exemplifies how such a view has been revised today in the view of recognizing the political, historical and even democratic impact of Woolf's fiction. Feminist studies in the wake of Rachel Bowlby's analysis of the female figure of the *flâneur* and Jane Goldman's analysis of visual politics in particular have played a crucial role in emphasizing the subversive qualities of Woolf's fiction and how they reflect her

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<sup>25</sup> John Mepham. *Virginia Woolf: A Literary Life*. Hampshire & London: Macmillan Press Ltd. 1991.

<sup>26</sup> Alex Zwerdling. *Virginia Woolf and the Real World*. Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press. 1986.

attentiveness to social and political realities.<sup>27</sup> Cultural materialist studies have also underlined how Woolf's work engages with the object world, contests anthropocentrism in its interest for animal and non-human areas of experience, and shows a keen interest in the material conditions for the production of the work of art.<sup>28</sup>

All in all, there is a clear discrepancy between opinions that Woolf's fiction is disincarnate, ethereal or even somatophobic and a rich body of recent research which tends to connect previous work on the wealth of perceptions in her fiction to the portrayal of emotions, affect, intersubjectivity and the representation of the body. Among earlier ontological studies, Doris Enright-Clark Shoukri investigated what she calls "an almost uniform thematic concern with the nature of being" in Woolf's works and argued that this ontological concern can be found in the work of the French avant-garde author Marguerite Duras. The volume, however, presented Woolf's representation of the body as part of a "search for identity through identification" arguing that Woolf's characters "seek to establish their individuality by laying stress upon their differences."<sup>29</sup> One might see here the impulse to interpret the "emptiness" which Woolf transcribes, the body's disconnection from the process of identification, as a "search for identity" which hints at there being a lack of material to consolidate character and the desire to sublimate this lack by interpreting it as the expression of a desire for identity. This study argues that Woolf's representation of the body strives to defeat classical notions of identity entirely.

Deborah Gaensbauer also makes an ontological comparison between Woolf and Duras, arguing that both authors posit "affective emptiness" as a central component of the "feminine experience". Here female embodiment is presented as a "stolen" and "fabricated" existence:

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<sup>27</sup> See Jane Goldman's seminal study on this question. Jane Goldman. *The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf: Modernism, Post-Impressionism, and the Politics of the Visual*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2009.

<sup>28</sup> See Douglas Mao, *Solid Objects. Modernism and the Test of Production*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1998. Catherine Bernard and Christine Reynier. *Things in Virginia Woolf's Works. Etudes Britanniques Contemporaines*. Montpellier: Presses Universitaires de la Méditerranée. 1999. Derek Ryan. *Virginia Woolf and the Materiality of Theory*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 2013.

<sup>29</sup> Doris Enright-Clark Shoukri. "The Nature of Being in Woolf and Duras." In *Contemporary Literature*. Vol. 12, No. 3 (Summer, 1971). pp. 317-328. p. 318.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, the narrative perspective is that of an assembly of viewers peering at each other in hopes of co-opting a fuller existence. Only Septimus Smith genuinely looks inward, but he is insane, a victim of shell shock who is unable to derive from the outside world even a voyeur's satisfaction. For Clarissa Dalloway, to experience herself directly is to experience nothing of significance...<sup>30</sup>

In this analysis of voyeurism in Woolf's fiction, Gaensbauer takes as an example the depiction of Septimus's death as imagined by Clarissa Dalloway toward the end of the novel. She notes that "Mrs. Dalloway pilfers experience as another might spoons from one of her parties" through "her vivid imagination" which "allows her to view, and thus to experience [Septimus's death] as her own."<sup>31</sup> Views of a ghost-like, disincarnate Clarissa, pursuing a vicarious existence, proliferate in critical texts and do not quite line up with the ambivalent way in which the ontological question is treated within the novel, which concludes with the affirmation of the character's presence: "for there she was".

Clarissa is presented as complicit in the sort of voyeuristic appropriation which watching entails in the patriarchal society which Gaensbauer depicts. However, the description, with its kinetic dimension, its "bruising", and the almost tactile sonority of the "thud, thud, thud in his brain", is far from suggesting that this is a "scene" which Clarissa apprehends primarily by sight rather than by an empathetic transferal of multiple sensory experiences from the dead man's body to her own. Clarissa's claim that "so she saw it" could encourage us to think otherwise, but one might also note her appraisal of the aftermath of the scene, in which sight is qualified by darkness. It is to "see sink and disappear here a man, there a woman, in this profound darkness" like the searchlight which grazes the hedges in the dark, which is a complex metaphor found throughout *Mrs. Dalloway*. This seeing is not disembodied, not a seeing through sight, but a metaphor in itself for the interconnection of bodies

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<sup>30</sup> Deborah Gaensbauer. "Trespassing and Voyeurism in the Novels of Virginia Woolf and Marguerite Duras." In *Comparative Literature Studies*. Vol. 24, n°2 (1987). pp. 197-201. p. 195.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 195-96.

enabled by a sensual apprehensiveness – an interconnection which calls into question the concept of identity itself.

Late-twentieth-century and early twenty-first-century criticism has amplified the connection between Woolf's philosophy of the body, ontology and the perceptive phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, for instance, highlighting how the author's portrayal of female embodiment in particular tests the boundaries between subject and object. One of the arguments which this study revolves around is that if there is a somatophobic element to Woolf's portrayal of the body, it concerns the visible body, and if there is an element of disembodiment it is to the extent that Woolf is as wary of images of the body as she is of the epistemological value of facts. Body images are recurrently negatively charged and static, whereas presence is experienced through bodily sensations as a dislocation which may be exhilarating, empowering and fluid.

In her study of perceptive phenomenology in Woolf's and Sarraute's writing, Naomi Toth underlines that Woolf values indetermination, seeking to capture through representation the halo of uncertainty which characterizes life. It is such indistinction which fosters the mystery which in turn pushes the artist to write. For Toth, phenomenology allows us to see Woolf's work in other terms than those of Platonic dualism because with phenomenology the world of appearances is no longer considered as a screen separating the perceiver from reality but rather as the core of existence. Toth explains that for Merleau-Ponty, this hazy evanescent connection between the subject and the world allows a "third dimension" to emerge which is that of the sensible and of "feeling" ("sentir").<sup>32</sup>

This project draws upon the intersecting fields of thing theory such as conceptualized by Bill Brown and phenomenological conceptions of narrative, embodiment and space theorized by Merleau-Ponty, Lefèbvre, de Certeau, Jean-Luc Nancy or new materialists such as Elizabeth Grosz, as well as cultural and aesthetic theories delimiting the imaging of the body in the work of art. It aims to

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<sup>32</sup> Naomi Toth. *L'Écriture vive, Woolf, Sarraute, une autre phénoménologie de la perception*. Paris: Classiques Garnier. 2016. pp. 24-25.

reevaluate the connections between Joyce's and Woolf's portrayals of the body by positing dislocation as the operative mode for articulating embodiment in both *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* and by distinguishing between images of the body – which are employed differently in both works – and the portrayal of the sensible in relation to space and narrative, while taking into account how these distinct dimensions interact within the works.

### ***Ex-centricities of the Body***

Despite their differences, the representations of the body in *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* can both be envisioned as responses to corporeal and formal restraints hampering artistic production, through interwoven physical and textual renditions of spatiality. This dissertation is indebted to a wealth of Joyce and Woolf scholarship devoted to space and its many stratifications whether phenomenological, psycho-geographic, socio-cultural, materialist, post-colonial, metaphorical or textual.<sup>33</sup> Part of this project considers how the sexual and somatic explicitness of Joyce's *Ulysses* responds to a view of Dublin as a restrictive place which limits both physical and artistic expression and partially resonates with the condition of the female artist. This study explores how in their representations of the body Joyce and Woolf respond in different ways to the pressures exerted on the body as well as on artistic

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<sup>33</sup> See Peter Barta. *Bely, Joyce and Döblin: Peripatetics in the City Novel*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida. 1996. David Spurr. "Colonial spaces in Joyce's Dublin." In *James Joyce Quarterly*, vol. 37, 1-2. 1999-2000. pp. 23-42. Derek Attridge and Marjorie Howes. *Semicolonial Joyce*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2000. Michael Begnal (ed). *Joyce and the City: the Significance of Place*. Syracuse New York: Syracuse University Press. 2002. Jon Hegglund. "Ulysses and the rhetoric of cartography." In *Twentieth Century Literature*. Vol 49:2. 2003. pp. 164-182. Andrew Thacker. "Toppling masonry and textual space: Nelson's pillar and spatial politics in *Ulysses*." In *Irish Studies Review* 8:2. 2000. pp. 195-203. Eric Bulson. "Topics and Geographies." In Jean-Michel Rabaté (ed). *James Joyce Studies*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. 2004. pp. 52-72. Michael A. Seidel. *Epic Geography: James Joyce's Ulysses*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 2016. Valérie Bénéjam, John Bishop (eds). *Making Space in the Works of James Joyce*. London: Routledge. 2018. For studies of space in Woolf's fiction see Claude Delmas. "'Things' and 'Mental Spaces' in *Mrs. Dalloway*." In *Etudes Anglaises*. Vol. 57:2. 2004. pp. 146-157. Anna Snaith and Michael H. Whitworth (eds). *Locating Woolf: The Politics of Space and Place*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2007. Andelys Wood. "Walking the Web in the Lost London of *Mrs. Dalloway*." In *Mosaic*. Vol. 36.2. (June 2003). pp. 19-32. Candis E. Bond. "Remapping Female Subjectivity in *Mrs. Dalloway*: Scenic Memory and Woolf's "Bye-Street" Aesthetic." In *Woolf Studies Annual*. Vol. 23. 2017.

creation by colonial imperialism. In *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Ireland*, Anthony Bradley and Maryann Gialanella Valiulis stake the claim that “to colonize is to feminize”.<sup>34</sup> In this sense, Joyce’s Irishness adds an essential context to his representations of the body and to his depiction of the female body in particular.

In 1988 Bonnie Kime Scott remarked that “feminist criticism, which spent its first decades focusing largely upon nineteenth-century women’s literature, is now moving concertedly into the modernist era, and touching more than ever upon Joyce” (...). According to Scott, the issue of cultural centrality is equally that of centering the female body and female subjectivity without assimilating its subversive potential into the mainstream. For Scott, Joyce took part in “a form of compensatory feminist criticism” by depicting “under-represented areas and perspectives of women’s lives” and more broadly by subverting the traditions which uphold patriarchal systems.<sup>35</sup>

Major feminist studies of Joyce which develop this line of thought include Scott’s *Joyce and Feminism* (1984), Suzette Henke and Elaine Unkeless’s volume *Women in Joyce* and collections of essays such as *New Alliances in Joyce Studies*. The question of the representation of the female body in Joyce’s *Ulysses* nonetheless remains a divisive one. In “The Baby in the Bathwater: Joyce, Gilbert, and Feminist Criticism” Keith Booker exemplifies some of these divisions in his critique of another critic’s, Sandra Gilbert’s, appraisal of Joyce’s *Ulysses*. Although Booker contends that “Joyce lacks the specific feminist consciousness of, say, Virginia Woolf” he sees Joyce as an ally in the dismantling of patriarchal traditions and authority. Booker recognizes that “while a problematization of received notions of proper gender roles does inhere in Joyce’s work, it does so primarily as a by-product of his radical treatment of more generalized concerns, such as the traditional Western models of the unified

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<sup>34</sup> Anthony Bradley and Maryann Gialanella Valiulis (eds). *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Ireland*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. 1997.

<sup>35</sup> Bonnie Kime Scott. “Character, Joyce, and Feminist Critical Approaches.” In *James Joyce: The Augmented Ninth*. Bernard Benstock (ed). Syracuse: Syracuse University Press. 1988. p. 162.



subject and of writing as representation” (pp. 446-47).<sup>36</sup> However, he disagrees with Sandra Gilbert’s argument that *Ulysses* exhibits Joyce’s “anxiety over the threat of female writers” and is complicit in maintaining traditional male dominance. His discussion exemplifies the two intertwining strands which generally constitute feminist discussions of Joyce.

Booker further links Joyce’s subversion of patriarchal systems to a struggle against cultural centrality, by building upon work by Cheryl Herr, who has demonstrated how Joyce interacts with cultural influences: “by powerfully calling into question such fundamental traditional notions as the very nature of the self, Joyce’s fiction acts to subvert any number of patriarchal assumptions upon which gender separations have been historically based.” In 1997 Jolanta Wawrzycka and Marlena Corcoran released a series of new approaches entitled *Gender in Joyce* which highlight the performative dimension of the gendered body in Joyce’s work. More recently (2001), Vicki Mahaffey underlines how Joyce’s *Ulysses* exposes the constructedness of gender roles.<sup>37</sup>

The quandaries of dispossession, dehumanization and artistic production, which one finds throughout *Ulysses*, may resonate with aspects of Woolf’s portrayal of embodied experience from the viewpoints of an ageing woman and a shell-shocked veteran. Elaine Wood argues that male Irish authors “are uniquely positioned in a tradition of colonized subjects who are aware of the embodied nature of historical oppression.” Due to “their experiences as colonized subjects” they are more likely to be able “to identify with and to see women in relation to real experiences rather than as emblems.”<sup>38</sup> In this sense, the question of feminism in relation to Joyce and Woolf is equally complicated by Woolf’s Englishness.

The question of the body is inevitably tied up with artistic freedom, cultural centrality and the conundrum of physical and aesthetic expression. Although the ways in which this issue manifests itself

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<sup>36</sup> Keith Booker. “The Baby in the Bathwater: Joyce, Gilbert, and Feminist Criticism.” In *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*. Vol. 32, n°3. Artistic Tensions: Tradition, Society, Memory and Gender (Fall 1990). pp. 446-67. p. 453.

<sup>37</sup> Vicki Mahaffey. “*Ulysses* and the End of Gender.” In *European Joyce Studies*. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 2001. pp. 137-162.

<sup>38</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 4.

in *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* are unique to each author and context, I suggest that there is a common struggle with cultural centrality which is addressed through the representation of the body as a centralizing narrative trope rendered ex-centric through its dislocations.

This is more obvious when taking Joyce's body of work as a whole, in the evolution of Joyce's representation of the body. For instance, Katherine Mullin notes how the short stories in *Dubliners* "delineate Dublin as a place of inevitable corporeal restraint" and "are also insistent on mapping that restraint onto the reading imagination."<sup>39</sup> In discussing Joyce's explicitness, Oliver St. John Gogarty emphasizes the link between bodily, ideological and artistic freedom in Joyce's aesthetics:

The body, even its 'sexual department', is to be hauled up and displayed as an antidote to the disingenuousness of his contemporaries. Through representing the body and its concerns openly and without obfuscation, Joyce vows that his writing will transcend and rebuke the intellectual and aesthetic dishonesty of his literary rivals.<sup>40</sup>

Further on, Katherine Mullin argues that in *Ulysses* this "preoccupation with flaunting the body" runs parallel to "the revelation of the dark places of the mind", as in "Circe" in which Joyce's somatic explicitness enables the author to push back the limits between fiction and drama. In a sense, the centrality of the body in Joyce's *Ulysses* attests to Joyce's desire for ex-centricity and I will argue that this desire similarly motivates *Mrs Dalloway* as an artistic production. As John Nash argues in "Genre, place and value: Joyce's reception", Joyce was concerned with not being a 'man of letters', "disliking its implications of a pompous and amateurish attitude" and of "the sort of cultural centrality that Joyce could never – and never wanted to – presume."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 174.

<sup>40</sup> Qtd in Katherine Mullin. *Ibid.* p. 172.

<sup>41</sup> John Nash. "Genre, place and value: Joyce's reception, 1904-1941." In *James Joyce in Context*, ed. John McCourt. *op. cit.* pp. 41-51. p. 41.

Such a comparison could cause us to reconsider certain implications of Joyce's and Woolf's representations of the body. Joyce's portrayal of Molly is indeed remarkably progressive in its rendering of female sexuality, its awareness of gender roles and subversion of them, and in its presentation of organic manifestations of the body such as menstruation as quotidian and mundane. And yet, is overt expression and enjoyment of the female body's sexuality, sexual appeal, and sexual functions a prerequisite to possessing a "fully human body", especially when this is the product of a male artist's creativity? Or is this one conception or possible rendering of a person's relationship to their body and other bodies?

Is it that a certain degree of somatophobia present in *Mrs Dalloway* obscures the novel's portrayal of the body as the site where individuals do connect, disconnect and intertwine in the flow of perceptions which make up a collective commemoration? Or is this distinction overlooking the simple and obvious fact that Woolf's writing of bodily matters such as sexuality is covert, suggestive, coded, secretive, while Joyce's, however mysterious and complex, is nonetheless resolutely ostentatious?<sup>42</sup> One of the main tenets of this dissertation will be to show that the body is not necessarily or at least not solely portrayed to build, solidify or particularize personal identity but on the contrary to destabilize its borders, break it down, and by so doing to offer an ex-centered center for marginal experiences.

Perhaps we will need to find another route to examine the workings of the body than its more explicit exhibitions to understand how *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* both recognize the necessity for an oblique approach to representing the body as a center for the margin of experience, to touch upon its receding limits. Touching is not exhibiting. As Jean-Luc Nancy inquires in *Corpus*, the question is

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<sup>42</sup> In *Virginia Woolf*, Clare Hanson sees this as part of the woman-centredness of Woolf's work, which is not exclusive to Woolf but is also a mark of contemporary female authors. "It could be argued, however, that Woolf does 'write the body' in and through her fiction, continually suggesting new, shadowy 'somethings' about the body, about female experience. Given the crucial role which fantasy plays in our relation to sexuality and the body, it would be mistaken, I think to read Woolf's texts as 'spinster' texts, as some earlier critics have done. Perhaps, too, there is something in the originality of Woolf's writing about 'the passions' – its woman-centredness, or its attempt to evoke a 'feminine economy' – which has made for some misinterpretation. Woolf does, of course, write about sexuality in a coded way, as did other female modernist writers such as Mansfield or Djuna Barnes." Clare Hanson. *Virginia Woolf*. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd. 1994. p. 12.

“how, then, are we to touch upon the body, rather than signify it or make it signify?” For Nancy, “touching upon the body, touching the body, touching – happens in writing all the time [...] along the border, at the limit, the tip, the furthest edge of writing nothing but that happens.” For Nancy, writing is an excentring of bodies, a sending out of one body to another, through what he terms “exscription”.<sup>43</sup>

What I suggest, for instance, is to consider Joyce’s “somatic explicitness” and bodily exhibitions as an exacerbation of zones of contact which dramatize the body’s borders or dislocations – which is to say its openness. Then, to consider how, by contrast, Woolf’s supposed indistinction or vagueness can be recognized as an attempt to ex-center the body by expanding those margins of embodied experience which are the present, the place and the sense of owning an individual body constitutive of an individual identity.

By emphasizing dislocations of the body, the point is to bring the limit into focus, to center onto the intersections of bodies, of body parts, of apparently distinct senses, to exacerbate the border until the artificial or even nonsensical dimension of such segmentations becomes apparent.

Nancy writes:

the body isn’t cast out but completely at the limit, at an extreme, outward edge that nothing closes up. I would say: the ring of circumcision is broken, the only thing left is an in-finite line, the tracing of writing, which is itself excribed, to be followed, infinitely broken, distributed among the multitude of bodies, a line of separation imparted to all its sites – tangential points, touches, intersections, dislocations.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy. *Corpus*. (trans.) Richard A. Rand. New York: Fordham University Press. 2008.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* p. 11. “[...] sa mise hors-texte comme le plus propre mouvement de son texte : le texte même abandonné, laissé sur sa limite. Ce n’est plus une « chute », ça n’a plus ni haut, ni bas, le corps n’est pas déchu, mais tout en limite, en bord externe, extrême, et que rien ne referme. Je dirais : l’anneau des circoncisions est rompu, il n’y a plus qu’une ligne in-finie, le trait de l’écriture elle-même excrete, à suivre infiniment brisé, partagé à travers la multitude des corps, ligne de partage avec tous ses lieux : points de tangence, touches, intersections, dislocations.”

At the same time, the ex-centred body is central, like an opening or “open space” through which “here” and “there”, “inside” and “outside”, “same” and “other”, and thought and sensation transit through various dislocations. In this sense, Nancy is more radical in overcoming dualism than Merleau-Ponty for, like Merleau-Ponty, he posits that the body is a “body-place” although he radicalizes this idea by no longer distinguishing between body and place, as being-in-world still does, but for Nancy the body “doesn’t have an outside or an inside”: “it is a skin, variously folded, refolded, unfolded, multiplied, invaginated, exogastrulated, orificed, evasive, invaded, stretched, relaxed, excited, distressed, tied, untied.”<sup>45</sup>

In “Woolf and/vs. Joyce: New Perspectives for a Dynamic Comparison” Teresa Prudente points to varying broader implications for the authors’ differing representations of embodiment. For Prudente, dichotomist views of Woolf and Joyce may obscure their common interest in “polyphonic narration [which] simultaneously unveils the unavoidable fictionality of [the representation of consciousness].” Convergences between Joyce and Woolf are to be found by considering their methods and “a positive emphasis on differences, not so much in their respective achievements [...] but rather in their intentions” which elicit “dissimilar (but possibly complementary) notions of self-distancing and impersonality in writing.”<sup>46</sup>

Feminist works in particular have interpreted Woolf’s frustration with *Ulysses* as part of her rejection of a gendered (and more particularly male-centered) conception of writing and of creativity, Prudente notes. She also reminds us that Woolf’s main issue with Joyce is what she had called the “egotism” and “self-centred” nature of his writing. In Prudente’s view, Woolf sought the erasure of the self in her writing in the aim of transcending individual human consciousness “in favour of forms

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* p. 15. “Le corps-lieu n’est ni plein, ni vie, il n’a ni dehors, ni dedans, pas plus qu’il n’a ni parties, ni totalité, ni fonctions, ni finalité. Aphalle et acéphale dans tous les sens, si l’on peut dire. Mais c’est une peau diversement pliée, repliée, dépliée, multipliée, invaginée, exogastrulée, orificée, évasive, invasive, tendue, relâchée, excitée, sidérée, liée, déliée.”

<sup>46</sup> Teresa Prudente. “Woolf and/vs. Joyce: New Perspectives for a Dynamic Comparison.” In *Weaving New Perspectives Together: Some Reflections on Literary Studies*, eds. Maria Alonso Alonso, Jeannette Bello Mota et al. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012. pp. 95-119. p. 103.

of representation which focus on those states of transfiguration of reality unveiling the universal aspects of the mind.”<sup>47</sup> For Woolf these states required a “becoming-imperceptible” and language “to become disinfected, purified of the accidents of the living body.”<sup>48</sup>

These reflections open up intriguing questions as to how the representation of the body in *Mrs Dalloway* functions, not with the aim of eliminating materiality but with the aim of transcending the particularity of the body and its individuating function through the materiality of the body. By contrast, *Ulysses* is overwhelmingly concerned with particularity, including the particularities of individual bodies, which translate into the embodied quality of language. This dislocative multi-directionality is encompassed by the act of walking, which centers the production of narrative and creativity in the dislocations of body while allowing for “an exit from the conventional linearity of narration, with innovative focus on forms of representation which do not superimpose coherence to the unpredictable dynamics of human thoughts.”<sup>49</sup>

### ***Walking and the Dislocative Center***

*Mrs. Dalloway* and *Ulysses* are wandering, dislocative texts featuring wandering dislocated bodies. They center on walking in the city, articulating through the walking body a number of dislocations, among which spatial, temporal, physical, or narrative. In *Wanderlust*, Rebecca Solnit draws an explicit connection between this mode of experiencing space and *Ulysses* and *Mrs. Dalloway* with their disjunctive and anti-linear modes of narration, writing that “this kind of unstructured, associative thinking is the kind most often connected to walking, and it suggests walking as not an analytical but an improvisational act.” Solnit sees this as a premise to Rousseau’s conception that

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* p. 114.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* p. 113.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* p. 101.

walking is inherently linked to meditation, digression, association and other meanderings of thought, writing that the “*Rêveries* are one of the first portraits of this relationship between thinking and walking”.<sup>50</sup>

In critical discourses dealing with 20<sup>th</sup>-century literature, walking is often more urban than Rousseau’s meanderings. Yet in the context of increased mechanization and turn-of-the-century urbanization it can likewise be considered as an expression of freedom, which is linked to its physical nature. When Michel de Certeau writes that “to walk is to lack a place” it is in the context of a radical reappraisal of the role of walking in the production and apprehension of the spaces of the city. In *Performance, Transport and Mobility: Making Passage*, F. Wilkie notes the overwhelming focus on walking as a choice and therefore a privileged travel mode in critical theory: “for the most part, Romantic poets, landscape artists, Situationists, ramblers, cultural geographers and *flâneurs* walk because they want to, not because they have to.”<sup>51</sup> For Wilkie, this transpires in the “pervasive critical apparatus” created by Walter Benjamin, Guy Debord and Michel de Certeau, who profoundly influenced our conception of walking as an urban practice and its impact upon our sense of space. Each of these thinkers framed walking as a manifestation of the power dynamics which determine the individual’s relationship to city space, and the urban walker’s ability to resist and subvert the meanings of his/her environment.

For Elizabeth Grosz in “Feminism, Materialism and Freedom”, indeterminate movements of the body disrupt materiality’s tendency to determination in which “it gives itself up to calculation, precision, and spatialization.”<sup>52</sup> Grosz interprets Bergson’s concept of freedom as “that which emerges, surprises, and cannot be entirely anticipated in advance”, arguing that:

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<sup>50</sup> Rebecca Solnit. *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*. London: Verso. 2001. p. 21.

<sup>51</sup> Fiona Wilkie. *Performance, Transport and Mobility: Making Passage*. London: Macmillan Publishers Limited. 2015. p. 19.

<sup>52</sup> Elizabeth Grosz. “Feminism, Materialism, and Freedom.” In *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, eds. Diana Coole and Samantha Frost. Durham & London: Duke University Press. 2010. pp. 139-157. p. 150.

Freedom is thus not primarily a capacity of mind but of body: it is linked to the body's capacity for movement, and thus its multiple possibilities of action. Freedom [...] is attained only through the struggle with matter, the struggle of bodies to become more than they are, a struggle that occurs not only on the level of the individual but also of the species."<sup>53</sup>

Grosz's analysis resonates with Brian Massumi's work on nomadology, in which freedom of movement has ontological bearings which defeat presuppositions of an "ordered interiority" which might constitute the "self". For Massumi, nomadology – in some ways a state of existing through perpetual displacement – "does not repose on identity; it rides difference. It does not respect the artificial division between the three domains of representation, subject, concept and being..." In its stricter sense, nomadism is perhaps less apt a term to qualify walking in these novels than, for example, *errance*.<sup>54</sup> However, Massumi's work poses the question of the ontological dimension of walking in *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* and of its dislocative effects, pointing to crucial differences with *flânerie*, for instance, which I will argue is constitutive of a subject rather than collapsing the divide between subject and object.

Walking is pervasive in *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway*, and the three above-mentioned theorists have been crucial to its interpretation, as the substantial literature on the figure of the *flâneur*<sup>55</sup> and on space as an experience in both of these works makes clear.<sup>56</sup> In "Moving Tropes: New Modernist Travels

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* p. 152.

<sup>54</sup> Karin Schwerdtner argues that: "Nomadism carries with it "obvious anthropological and cultural realities" (images of the trade-based and pastoral nomad economies of the desert)... Yet the term "errance," whose complex etymological origins evoke in part the idea of divergence or deviation, can effectively illustrate the "freedom" inherent in some imaginings of wandering through space, and at the same time convey the cultural or ideological uncertainties that so often attend such geographic mobility." Karin Schwerdtner. "Wandering; Women and Writing: Maryse Condé's *Desirada*." In *Dalhousie French Studies*. Vol. 73 (Winter 2005). pp. 129-137.

<sup>55</sup> In this dissertation, the word *flâneur* appears in the French mode except where it is used in a quotation in which it is originally spelled without the diacritical mark.

<sup>56</sup> See Enda Duffy. "Traffic Accidents: The Modernist Flâneur and Postcolonial Culture." In *The Subaltern Ulysses*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1994. pp. 53-93. Anne Friedberg. "Les Flâneurs du Mal(l): Cinema and the Postmodern Condition." In *PMLA*. Vol. 106. No. 3 (May, 1991). pp. 419-431. Rachel Bowlby. *Still Crazy After All These Years*. New York & London: Routledge. 1992. Jeri Johnson. "Literary geography: Joyce, Woolf and the city." In *City*. Vol. 4. 2000. Issue 2 (July 201). pp. 199-214. Caroline Pollentier. "Imagining Flânerie Beyond Anthropocentrism: Virginia Woolf, the London Archipelago, and City Tortoises." In *Woolf and the City: Selected Papers from the Nineteenth Annual*



with Virginia Woolf' Elizabeth Clea Lamont argues that "beyond an interest in formalist issues" few comparisons between Woolf and contemporary Modernists such as Joyce exist due to Woolf's "never [having] embraced the wandering, expatriate, "starving artist" existence" of the former. Nonetheless, she points out that mobility is central to *Mrs Dalloway*, which features "lyrical metaphors of movement and multiple tropes of travel at work" and "seems to propose a dialectical relationship between incessant movement and domestic stasis that performs a radical re-interpretation of twentieth-century ideas of the English home and empire."<sup>57</sup> Walking has many times been presented as a form of political resistance and as instrumental in the process of appropriating space. The centrality of pedestrian mobility in these works raises questions about the body's centrality to narrative and to what extent the experience of embodiment can convey equally centring and decentring dynamics.

For instance, moments of transport in *Mrs Dalloway* often call into question the physical presence of the individual as well as the urban status of the city. London fades into the background as the body and the natural environment become the focus of attention. This produces a displacement which is ideological as well as physical or spiritual. As Wilkie notes, one of the main dichotomies of walking in literature is the urban/rural, solitary/collective dynamic. Deirdre Heddon and Cathy Turner's work on walking women equally reminds us that "the represented landscape of walking as an aesthetic practice is framed by two enduring historical discourses: the Romantics and Naturalists, tramping through rural locations; and the avant-gardists, drifting through the spectacular urban streets of capitalism."<sup>58</sup>

The coincidence – or overlay – of spaces in *Mrs Dalloway* equally articulates an ideological and topical superposition which invests city space with new meanings – one of which being the body's

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*Conference on Virginia Woolf*, eds. Elizabeth Evans and Sarah Cornish. Clemson University Digital Press. 2010. pp. 20-30. John Rickard. "'A quaking sod': Hybridity, Identity and Wandering Irishness." In *European Joyce Studies 11. James Joyce and the Fabrication of an Irish Identity*, ed. Michael Patrick Gillespie. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 2001. pp. 83-110.

<sup>57</sup> Elizabeth Clea Lamont. "Moving Tropes: New Modernist Travels with Virginia Woolf." In *Journal of Comparative Poetics*, n°21. *The Lyrical Phenomenon* (2001). pp. 161-81. pp. 161-62.

<sup>58</sup> *Op. cit.* qtd. p. xvii.

intimate layering of space through memory. Wilkie notes: “still today, discourses of rural walking emphasize introspection, beauty, imagination and inner discovery, while discourses of urban walking focus on modernity, subversion and political comment” and it is easy to see how far Woolf’s walkers are from being constrained by such a dichotomy.<sup>59</sup>

De Certeau’s statement that walking is to “lack a place” in some ways recalls Hamid Shirvani’s claim that “the summarizing idea of postmodernism is the “absence of a center”. One way of perceiving walking in these works, which I mean to insist upon, is its ability to transcribe a centring of marginal experience. The main question which this dissertation aims to answer is one which articulates modernist and postmodernist readings of the novels: does the centralizing trope of walking affirm the centrality of the body – a recentering in which meaning is replaced by being – or does walking further showcase the decentering force of such a mobile perspective which multiplies the possibilities of meaning and constantly shifts the positions of subject and object? How does walking, itself heavily regulated by norms, become a model of subverting the norms which regulate the representation of the body – its relation to city space, its pictorial and cultural encodings, or the presupposition of its unity and individualizing functions?

In her seminal work on materiality, gender and embodiment, entitled *Bodies That Matter*, Judith Butler offers an element of response. She presents mobility as an intrinsic quality of bodies, which are fundamentally transgressive: “this movement beyond their own boundaries, a movement of boundary itself, appeared to be quite central to what bodies “are”.”<sup>60</sup> Underlying these shifts are the discourses which constitute bodies, their constructed nature, and a conception of the body as both an encoded visual image and “the materialization of [...] regulatory norm[s]” which make up its cultural significance and “intelligibility”.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Judith Butler. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. New York: Routledge. 1993. p. ix.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2.

Judith Butler poses the question of whether matter can attain being in terms of cultural significance without being “identifiable in some way as a “citation”” and this question is essential to another direction which I will explore in this dissertation, which is the interconnection between the pedestrian body and text through narrative discourse.<sup>62</sup> For Butler, bodies that matter are not original manifestations of organic matter but also derivative products depending on an iterable model which “materializ[es] the norm.”<sup>63</sup> These bodies that matter are viable through their manifesting a “kind of materialization governed by regulatory norms” which are then understood and rendered significant in contrast to “a field of deformation” of bodies which fail to “qualify as the fully human” and are excluded from meaning.

For Elizabeth Grosz, another new materialist thinker who formalizes the dynamic dimension of corporeality and pays close attention to the notion of the border, it is the interaction between living bodies and the material world of objects which allows the body to escape determination. In Grosz’s reasoning, the body’s mobility links it to a Bergsonian conception of freedom based not on “choice but [on] innovation and invention.”<sup>64</sup> The capacity for freedom, which is also a freedom from form, is “attained only through the struggle with matter, the struggle of bodies to become more than they are,” which relies on diversifying the forms of knowledge-production to include the unpredictable and unprecedented.<sup>65</sup> Grosz writes “life is the continuous negotiation with matter that creates the conditions for its own expansion and the opening up of matter to its own virtualities.”<sup>66</sup>

Walking calls into play the varying discourses articulating the body as a physiological human organism and as a cultural construct which resists categorization. The body may refer both to an identifiable form and to an amorphous concept, characterized by its apparent simple facticity as well as its many dislocations. In addition, literary criticism’s interest in representations of the body

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* p. 13.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* p. 16.

<sup>64</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 152.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* p. 151.

continues to grow, adding to the multiplicity of its meanings. *The Cambridge Companion to the Body in Literature* (2015) exemplifies a fascination for the body in contemporary research, beginning with David Hillman and Ulrika Maude's introductory claim that:

The body is notoriously difficult to theorize or pin down, because it is mutable, in perpetual flux, different from day to day and resistant to conceptual definition. Hence, although many recent philosophers, scientists and writers seem to suggest that the body is the self, it also poses a serious challenge to received notions of identity and subjectivity.<sup>67</sup>

This is true more particularly in the context of Joyce's *Ulysses* and Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Teresa Prudente also underlines the fact that until recently much of the criticism of *Mrs. Dalloway* has been very much content-based, recognizing the importance of cultural materialism in Woolf's work. She notes that over the past decades, however, there has been an increasing interest in the psychological and philosophical underpinnings of the authors' writing. For Le Brun, phenomenology is at the center of many readings of Virginia Woolf, "constitu[ting] the third great philosophical tradition through which Woolf's works have been read."<sup>68</sup> The phenomenological approach to Woolf's works has paved the way for eco-critical and posthumanist analyses of *Mrs. Dalloway* and yielded many valuable new lines of inquiry into her representation of consciousness. An essential development in Woolf criticism identifies the resonances between Woolf's portrayal of embodiment and Merleau-Ponty's concept of intercorporeality and the notion of flesh.

The notions of reversal and encounter which characterize Merleau-Ponty's theory of embodiment and flesh resonate with Woolf's conception of the body as a porous entity negotiating

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<sup>67</sup> David Hillman and Ulrika Maude (eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to the Body in Literature*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 2015. p. 1.

<sup>68</sup> Xavier Le Brun. "L'idée de monde de la vide et la représentation du réel dans la fiction tardive de Virginia Woolf." In *Littératures*. Université Paul Valéry – Montpellier III, 2017. NNT : 2017MON30020. tel-01695583.

private and public domains as well as individual and collective experience in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Furthermore, walking is essential to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology as a kind of prime experience of embodiment which encompasses the encounter or interchange between self and world, subject and object, or sensation in a culturally-charged context. Merleau-Ponty writes "I am with a body", meaning the act of walking is representative of the contradiction of absent presence which this experience aims to exemplify.

There are also clear connections between walking, public space and bodily exposition, which show that if walking can be taken as a prime illustration of a moment of being-in-world, it also problematizes the walker's relation to "body image" either through the walker's entering into a space of exhibition or through their rejection of publicity and visibility. As Francine Hanley notes, the term "body image" was coined by Schilder:

from what Head and Holmes (1911-1912) had previously identified as the 'postural model of the body'. The postural model was a neurological entity that accounted for the ability to move with ease through space without conscious awareness. Head and Holmes described the postural model as having a plastic character supporting the immediacy of postural shifts and the accurate localization of body parts including the accuracy required when using implements held in the hands.<sup>69</sup>

The concept of body image is essential to the notion of a unified body and also to conceptions of identity as stabilized, individual, and relatively finite.

In this sense, I have chosen to focus on the walking body to explore how this trope goes beyond the function of a narrative device, enabling us to theoretically envision the body as a border which negotiates states of dislocation. I have been wary of imposing a systematic, singular theoretical

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<sup>69</sup> Francine Hanley. "The Dynamic Body Image and the Moving Body: A Theoretical and Empirical Investigation." School of Psychology, Faculty of Arts. Victoria University. 2004. Accessed online 09/26/2020: <http://vuir.vu.edu.au/311/1/02whole.pdf>. p. 15.

framework upon my reading of Woolf and Joyce, as the aim of the study is to foreground those dislocations of meaning produced by the artist's transfiguration of the body into an aesthetic discourse. Accordingly, each chapter seeks to draw up its own theoretical framework as organically as possible, the primary goal being to sound out the latent resonances of these two works and thus produce a dialogue between *Ulysses* and *Mrs. Dalloway* by examining the dislocations of the walking body.

## ***Outline***

Chapter 1: "Walking in the City" investigates the role that the walking body plays in *Ulysses* and *Mrs. Dalloway* in the disruption of location and, more broadly, in dislocating space, place and narrative.

In the first part of this chapter I draw upon de Certeau's theory of "lived space" along with Eric Bulson's work on "Disorienting Dublin" and Jon Hegglund's analysis of cartography in *Ulysses* to argue that location is compiled of diverging representations of the city as map space and lived space. This layering of spaces disorients the reader and troubles the city's legibility as a homogeneous location, exposing the constructedness of place as a cultural center as well as the myths of origin and originality which surround artistic production. De Certeau's "lived space" posits everyday practices as acts of resistance to cultural hegemony within the city. In this sense, more recent studies in psycho-geography such as Rodoway's *Sensuous Geographies* serve as a basis to expand our view of the city in both novels as an inclusive space which lies in excess of its conceptualization, by highlighting a making sense of space through the senses. The chapter also draws upon recent criticism by Anne Lovering Rounds, Christopher Sims, Elicia Clements, Melba Cuddy-Keane, Abbie Garrington or Maureen Curtin, which emphasizes the role of touch and sound in the construction of an immersive

location, arguing that Joyce and Woolf employ strategies to disrupt the primacy of sight in the apprehension of city space.

The second part of this chapter is devoted to the archetypal figure of the urban walker, the *flâneur*, and the epistemological links between the *flâneur* and a panoramic conception of city space as a spectacle, as conceptualized by Baudelaire and Benjamin and elaborated upon by Victor Fournel. In this discussion, I draw upon Keith Tester's, Deborah Parsons's and Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson's analyses of the figure of the *flâneur* to question the role of *flânerie* in *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* and how it intercedes in the portrayal of the body and the production of space. Dana Brand's theories of urban spectatorship and Estelle Murail's recent work on the *flâneur* serve as useful starting points for linking the figure of the *flâneur* to feminist concerns, through a focus on the power dynamics of the gaze and through the concept of the city as a site which embodies a "dream of transparency". Here I aim to show that the kind of dislocation at work in Joyce's and Woolf's portrayals of walking in the city is at odds with the kind of apprehension of the city which the *flâneur* implies.

Further on, this chapter addresses the feminist and posthumanist reappropriations of the *flâneur* in Woolf's work initiated by Rachel Bowlby and ultimately argues against a re-reading of Clarissa as a *flâneuse*. It concludes by drawing together the questions of location, spectatorship and *flânerie* in both novels, aiming to shift critical views from the traditional association between wandering and multiperspectivism to the view that wandering functions as a mode of disorientation in which sensory confusion allows for the production of a kinetic city space through its constant reconfiguration into sensorial experiences.

Chapter 2: "Figures: Sighting/Citing the Body" shifts standpoints to focus on the body as an object of representation, which is simultaneously involved in a process of textual production. In this chapter I begin to tackle the intersecting quandaries of materiality and textuality. I hypothesize that the

walking body evidences diverging views of body images in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *Ulysses*, although both novels foreground the body's presence in the text as a culturally encoded construct.

This chapter first analyses variations of the figure of the *passante* in *Ulysses* and *Mrs. Dalloway*, taking the former as evidence of the breaking down of pictorial codes through a process of citation. It reads the figure of the *passante* in *Mrs. Dalloway* in light of Roland Barthes's analysis of pictorial codes, the concept of *ekphrasis* in painting, sculpture and literature, as well as theories of aesthetic consumption in the context of capitalist societies. Here, I examine the role of glamour in Woolf's portrayal of the passing woman and in the pictorial encoding of the body in capitalist culture. I argue that in *Mrs. Dalloway* "figuring" or imaging the body leads to a fantasy space which is, to quote Laura Mulvey, "a move away from the pressing realities of the flesh". At the same time, drawing upon Judith Brown's definition of glamour as an aesthetic mode of production, I explore the link between the production of glamour and the production of an in-between, a space between "materiality and immateriality". Woolf's glamorous *passante* contrasts with avatars of the *passante* in *Ulysses*, which more pointedly oppose the organic body to the classical ideal of the body beautiful. Looking at several examples of reworkings of the figure of the *passante* in *Ulysses*, in which the pictorial and cultural codes of the ideal female body are broken down through the mediation between the *passante*'s body and commercial or lowbrow texts, this chapter foregrounds the connection between sex and text.

Further references to the body beautiful in *Ulysses* are retraced through a re-reading of Gerty as Pygmalion, which connects the meta-artistic dimension of the latter to Baudrillard and Deleuze's conceptions of the simulacrum, through Victor Stoichita's definition of simulacrum. Kenneth Clark's seminal study *The Nude* informs this reading, demonstrating that the pictorial codes defining the body beautiful have emerged over centuries through a process of copying and citation which defeats the ideal of the origin(al). Envisaging originality as a modernist myth, Rosalind Krauss provides a larger scope for this reflection, allowing us to consider it not only within the contexts of *Ulysses* and *Mrs. Dalloway* but also within the wider context of modernism and mechanical production. This section



concludes with a Barthesian analysis of the citational loop which is opened up by considering Gerty as Galatea.

An analysis of the encoding of the female body would not be complete without acknowledging the contributions which gender studies and feminist texts have made to our readings of Gerty. My analysis of Gerty's body as an intertextual artefact builds upon mechanisms and references previously identified by Henke, Irigaray, Katherine Mullin and Vicki Mahaffey among others. All of these feminist texts have emphasized the intertextuality of the episode, focusing on resonances with mutoscope erotica, statues, contemporary fashion magazines or Victorian sentimental novels.

This analysis then contrasts the body's disappearance within the citational loop with another kind of negation, exemplified by the art historian Wickelmann's exaltation of the ideal physical form in *Flesh and the Ideal*. Finally, I argue that Joyce is not aiming to erase the physicality of the body through either process but rather to foreground the body's existence as an open space through which codified images flow in a process of citation which articulates flesh and text. In this context, I explore how such a reading resonates with stone figures and pictorial codes in *Mrs. Dalloway*, most prominently her description of Elizabeth Dalloway, standing aboard the omnibus. Here I suggest a close reading of this passage aiming to unpack Woolf's enigmatic description of Elizabeth's gaze ("the incredible staring innocence of sculpture"), arguing that it may shed light on the more general presence of sculptures and stone figures in public space and their relation to meaning and to creative processes.

The final section of this chapter focuses more radically on body image through the trope of the figure in the mirror. Here I contend that the mirror emblemizes the social body, which is the most fraught manifestation of the body in *Mrs. Dalloway*. This section demonstrates the stratification of portrayals of embodiment in the novel, drawing upon Molly Hite's argument that *Mrs. Dalloway* evidences a discrepancy between the gendered social body and a visionary body. I build upon Hite's analysis to show that the unity between the self and the body can be perceived as part of an oppressive

patriarchal system. By contrast, figures of the double and the figure in the mirror show both the variegation of the self and the alienating force of the social body. I approach the figure of the double through Zivkovic's analysis, which aims to go beyond the psycho-analytical interpretation, which mostly considers the double in relation to identity, by positing that the main function of the double is the violation of the unity of "character". This allows me to explore the idea that in Woolf's portrayal of the body doubling serves as a ploy to destabilize the concept of individual identity itself.

This contrasts with the concepts of reduplication and "reciprocal flesh" in *Ulysses* in the context of the novel's concern with filiation and artistic production. I further explore this idea through an analysis of Molly's self-referentiality and the citational loop in the "Penelope" episode, which builds upon a number of key texts considering Molly Bloom's relation to both materiality and textuality by Valérie Bénéjam, Christine Boheemen-Saaf, Cheryl Herr, Kimberly Devlin and Mary Ann Doane – to name a few. I argue that through Molly's meanderings Joyce continues to express a preoccupation with penmanship which emerges in the split between the self-referentiality of the body and that of the text.

Chapter 3: "The Body Beyond Bounds" suggests that representations of the body in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *Ulysses* erode the concept of the body as an anthropomorphic unit which defines and outlines the individual.

In this chapter, I reframe the classical trope of fragmentation, drawing a link between fragmented bodies and disintegrative narratives, by considering the erosion of the boundaries of the body in light of the erasure of the outline in aesthetic theories which are at the crossroads of the figurative arts, literature and phenomenology. I refer to aesthetic theories of perception formulated by Rilke and Merleau-Ponty, which were respectively inspired by Rodin's sculptures and Cézanne's paintings, as well as Pater. I argue that a comparative analysis of these two novels draws attention to how representations of the body may signify the disjunction of matter and text.

As the “Eumaeus” episode illustrates, references to the body in discourse at times serve to foreground the gap between the literal and the literary. This discrepancy offers a clue to how throughout *Ulysses* physical production is ultimately linked to penmanship. As Maud Ellmann has pointed out *Ulysses* sets up a common system of “circulation and exchange” which concerns both the walking body and the self-referential text. I conclude this section with an analysis of the process of fragmentation and fetishization in the “Sirens” episode which draws upon Blanchot’s reflections on the fascination exerted by the image. Through the circulation of fragments, the episode dramatizes a dream of domination which is countered by the power of flow to connect and the production of an intimate space through silence and vibration. Through this interaction, Joyce breaks down the bounds of the body, portraying it as a complex of shifting discourses and interlinking perceptions. This chapter uses Laura Mulvey’s analysis of the gaze to contrast the visual pleasure derived from images of the body in *Ulysses* with the dichotomy between sight and vision in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Conversely, in Woolf’s novel desire is divorced from the gaze whereas pleasure and intimacy are associated with moments of vision foregrounding the role of the other senses in perceptive experience.

The second part of this chapter demonstrates the expansion of the body through the circulation of objects. It posits that rather than just constituting the plane of the mundane, Woolf relies on the object’s resistance to signification – the muteness of matter in sum – in developing a poetics which foregrounds the mystery of the moment of being. I further explore the idea that Woolf’s representation of the object world differs from Joyce’s in that she rejects materialism when it reduces the female body to an expression of women’s social function. On the other hand, the object world remains nonetheless central to her construction of a lyrical subject. I contend that there is an ambivalence to Woolf’s portrayal of the object world which belies a suspicion surrounding the individuating function of materiality, which connects the body to objecthood. This ambivalence transpires in the way objects destabilize the border between private and public realms as well as between the ordinary and the moment of being. In this sense, the chapter is also informed by studies in thing theory such as

Majumdar's "Objecthood, Banality, and Refusal in *Ulysses*", which argues that the object creates an "epistemological resistance" and sets new terms for knowledge-production. The object world also connects bodies in fostering a sense of commonality by creating networks between different layers and characters within the work. I suggest that Joyce also uses the banality of objects such as Bloom's potato or the lemon soap he carries throughout *Ulysses* to subvert imperializing forms of knowledge-making.

In the final part of this chapter I examine the connection between physical and textual productions. I re-examine the poetics of flux in both novels, taking sea imagery as a starting point and elaborating on the connection in *Mrs. Dalloway* between rhythms of the body and the ebb and flow of the sea and other aquatic metaphors. I argue that Woolf elaborates an intricate network of imagery expressing the expansion and contraction of the self, through which she articulates the connectedness of embodied experience. Walking is supplemented by other forms of drift, travel and floating which connect the visionary to perceptions through the dissolution of the self and the affirmation of a cosmic plane.

In *Ulysses*, water imagery equally connects physicality to the flow of narrative and to fertility, through the materiality of language envisioned as a protean "seaspeech" or "seasoning". Analyzing *Mrs. Dalloway* alongside *Ulysses* has brought me to reconsider the oceanic imagery of the former in light of a shift from the visual to the musical and the sonic. Here Rilke's conception of music as "an ocean of virtualities" which stands in contrast to a view of art as finite and compete serves to enlarge the perspectives of the novel. Rilke's notion of "vibration" connects the personal to the cosmological and sheds light on how the cosmological may serve to expand the body beyond bounds. I extrapolate the notion of vibration through Elizabeth Grosz's study of creativity as an overflow of bodily energies which plays upon the nerves and conclude by asking to what extent a degree of mysticism sets Woolf apart from Joyce in her representation of embodiment. The final question is whether mysticism and the ordinary are not two facets of a common aspiration to call into question the integrity of the subject through the dislocations of the body.

## I. WALKING IN THE CITY: SHIFTS IN SPACE, PLACE AND NARRATIVE

### 1. The Disruption of Setting

#### 1.1. Wandering on and off the map

In *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses* walking is a centralizing trope. It is an essential structural feature prompting a portrayal of the body and of the city which is performative of the inner and outer margins of being. As the reader follows the protagonists on their various journeys through the city, they are made equally aware of the itineracy of reading such works, in which walking mirrors writing and the representation of embodiment reflects the process of representation itself.

Narratives of walking, novels of place or city novels, Joyce's "Dublin novel" and Woolf's "London novel" capitalize on an urban setting in which the intersections of embodiment and landscape lead to new meanings. From early on, it is clear that setting may encompass the mappable city as well as a more volatile sense of place, which pre-exists and disrupts the topography of the city. Walking performs a constant revision of city space and it may be thought of as a narrative ploy which exposes the narrative dimension of the map. The city of place-names and external references co-exists with a suspense-ridden apprehension of place which leaves room for disorientation.

*Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* are now so well-known in literary circles that it is easy to overlook the disorienting effects of first-time reading, especially at one hundred year's remove. The walker's perspective provides a sudden immersion in city life which requires the reader to actively engage with its disorderly conjunctions to place characters and events. These acts of walking draw the reader into a fictional place which has neither been named nor explicitly described, yet it is through this experience of disorientation that the novel conveys a sense of place.

These are not just *in media res* beginnings, as walking erodes the distinction between narrative description and narrative event. *Mrs Dalloway* begins with Clarissa's "plunge" over the threshold "into the open air"; *Ulysses* begins with Buck Mulligan's "stately" stride as the latter ascends Martello Tower. Here the incipit, which conventionally serves to frame and orient the narrative, announces a peculiar construction of setting: on the one hand a map-based representation of the city; on the other its walkable alternative. Although the reader is immediately in step with the character through the rhythms of walking, the former may nonetheless experience a distinct being-out-of-place due, in fact, to an unsettling sense of place. Initially, these works resist orientation, in the sense of locating characters and events within a well-defined setting. They foster a sense of disorientation as the focalisation of the city stroller runs counter to the pre-possession of space which the establishment of setting requires.

Disorientation can then be seen as a strategy through which space comes to signify through the rhythms of the body. The physical apprehension of space in a specific context, from an individual's perspective, is more significant than the master narrative of the map. Narratives of walking show that the city can be apprehended through the cadences of the body in motion, producing a dislocative effect, drawing attention to the spaces of the city which exist beyond the map.

The paradox of these novels' unsettling sense of place arises when despite a certain unity of setting (Dublin for Joyce, London for Woolf) and the distinct imbrication of the representations of city and consciousness, the embodied perspective of the urban wanderer acts as a disturbance, disrupting the reader's orientation and the city's legibility as the fictional copy of a static, pre-existing place. The wanderer foregoes the authority of the map and thus a narrative which organizes the city around places of power. Wandering offers an alternative to place's symbolic role in portraying character. Through the focalization of the walker, which shifts from body to city, the dynamics of lived space threaten to expose place as a fragile fictional construct predicated on an illusionary central unity of self and world. For these reasons, I suggest a reading of the walking body in these novels as a narrative organizing

principle which surpasses thematic and generic concerns, allowing for a conception of urban space which embraces marginal experiences of the city and channels the ‘unproductive’ physical motions of erring and disorientation into a creative force.

In her introduction to *Making Space in the Works of James Joyce*, Valérie Bénéjam points out how, in Joyce’s first novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the child protagonist Stephen Daedalus muses over a list of names he has written upon the flyleaf of his geography book, commenting that “this is how the artist as a child envisions his position in space: he locates himself at the center of a widening series of concentric circles, elaborating a list that begins like a signature, soon turns into a postal address, but eventually evolves into a new, Stephen-centered cosmology.”<sup>70</sup> She notes how the naming process is equally an ordering process and essential to ironically locating Stephen’s subjectivity at the center of the universe:

as absurd as it sounds, the list identifies the successive stages leading from microcosm to macrocosm, in the process positioning Stephen as the primary element and subjective individuality at the central core of this spatially ordered whole. Written on the flyleaf of the textbook, it inscribes subjectivity within – and even as the organizing principle of – the factual, objective, or political realities of official geography.<sup>71</sup>

The list first appears as a game, one of the many games in which children turn to names to make sense of their place in the world:

*Stephen Dedalus*  
*Class of Elements*  
*Clongowes Wood College*  
*Sallins*  
*County Kildare*  
*Ireland*  
*Europe*  
*The World*

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<sup>70</sup> Valérie Bénéjam and John Bishop (eds.). *Making Space in the Works of James Joyce*. New York & Oxon: Routledge, 2011. p.1.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

It also shows Stephen familiarizing himself with the discursive nature of topography. In mapping space, the construction of place is rendered inseparable from the notion of hierarchy. Indeed, the enumeration compiles the various scales of location which determine Stephen's place in the world and his conception of space.

As Bénéjam points out, the irony of Stephen's act of self-location concerns the list's status as a derivative literary production. In his use of place-names to locate his textbook and by affiliation himself, Stephen illustrates the framing devices which dictate the representation of space and points to the idiosyncratic construction of orientation. Stephen's list of place-names shows how spatial representation acts as a tool which allows him to present himself at the center of the universe and to give one conception of space the authority of topographical fact.

The process only reveals itself as ludicrous because the list branches out to the extreme symbolic limits of representation ("The Universe"). However, in its ironic status as a literary production through which Stephen rewrites himself as a fictional origin, the list reveals his location as part of a fictional process of cross-referencing, a naming game of sorts, which quickly points to the limits of topography. Indeed, it allows the reader to read either way, in other words to span space in reverse, narrowing back onto the character as the anthropomorphic center of narration or zoning out to question this status. It shows that the naming game is one to which fiction inevitably turns to determine setting, while showing that fictional territories escape these names.

If the list is read in reverse, what becomes of the name Stephen Dedalus in this sequence and how does it differ from the place-names which succeed or follow? The list points to the status of the name as a point of reference, as determining, but also as a locus tied up with a conception of the body, a knot in narrative space-time which delimits its own territory. If "the world" constitutes the reference point of the global scale of representation, "Stephen Dedalus" constitutes that of the individual scale of



representation which is that of the urban peripatetic. However anthropomorphic Stephen's listing may seem, it also has the effect of dramatizing the embodied perspective of the individual as the level of focalization which holds the narrative in equilibrium.

In *All is True: The Claims and Strategies of Realist Fiction*, Lilian R. Furst calls attention to the many nineteenth-century novels that "include a place name or an element of localization in their titles", such as *Mansfield Park*, *Northanger Abbey*, *La Chartreuse de Parme*, *Middlemarch*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, or *North and South*, to name but a few.<sup>72</sup> In such examples, the novel is located from the start in reference to its setting. In other words, through the place-name, a particular location serves to coordinate characters and events; it is presented as pre-existing the narrative so that the latter is immediately associated with a microcosm which circumscribes it, forming a fictional territory which serves to orient the reader. For example, *Northanger Abbey* refers both to the scene of the action and to the fictional cosmos which the novel constitutes – in this case, a parody of the Gothic.

This is not the case for what I will provisionally refer to as Joyce's and Woolf's city novels. Although the Dublin of *Ulysses* and the London of *Mrs Dalloway* constitute their own, distinct fictional microcosms, in fact, the way in which the setting is established is quite different: the titles of *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* play their own particular naming games to question the conventional framework within which the urban peripatetic operates. They destabilize the process of localization through place-names and references as they foreground a body-bound representation of phenomenological space to disorienting effect.

Today's readers may anticipate their encounter with the Dublin of Joyce or the London of Woolf before opening *Ulysses* or *Mrs Dalloway*, but this anticipation is in contradiction with the initial disorientation which the titles of the novels, in contrast to the localizing titles of the aforementioned nineteenth-century novels of place, aim to produce. For one, these titles posit a framework prior to the

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<sup>72</sup> Lilian R. Furst. *All is True: The Claims and Strategies of Realist Fiction*. Durham & London: Duke University Press. 1995. p.97.

narrative framework of location, which is that of character. *Ulysses*' reference to the hero of Homer's eponymous epic offers an oblique perspective on Bloom's wanderings, implying that the reader's horizon of expectations is predicated upon a geographic, generic and temporal displacement.

The title of *Ulysses* announces a journey through more than one territory and the reader's disorientation and subsequent reassessment of the modern-day Ulysses who must find his place in the every-day context of 1904 Dublin. The title of *Mrs Dalloway* equally enfolds an essential displacement, as it introduces the main character Clarissa through an act of deferral, by naming her in reference to a gendered public identity – her social status as her husband's wife – and thus erasing her own individuality. The novel is in part about the gap which exists between the intimate sensorial awareness of Clarissa Dalloway and the public mask or social body of Mrs Dalloway. Even more, the title implies a simultaneous disorientation and relocation of setting: retrieving the London which defines Clarissa and which she in turn perceives implies producing a fictional London as the novel locale of unsettling female experiences.

In a roundabout way these titles suggest the reader's reading the city through the filter – or tides – of character and reversely mark urban wanderings as an essential component thereof. Explicitly in the case of *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* the naming of the novel is the first indication of a process of disorientation which relies on the mutual dislocation of city and character.

Also, the name of each city is in fact mentioned, but its arrival is staged so as to foster anticipation, so that these novels do not feature a place without a name but naming is delayed and the place becomes a shifting reference of sorts. The beginning of *Mrs Dalloway* quite obviously builds towards a climax through a mounting rhythm, an increasingly emphatic use of punctuation and exclamation, but also the increasing dissemination of clues as to Clarissa's location and an increasing sense of locatedness or coincidence between her sensory self-awareness and sense of place: "Rumpelmayer's men,"

“Durtall’s van,” “Westminster,” “having lived in Westminster,” “Big Ben strikes,” “Victoria Street,” “Acts of Parliament,” “life; London; this moment of June”.

A quick glance at the sequence which takes us from the naming of “Rumpelmayer’s men” to the naming of “London” shows the mention of “London” to coincide with the climax of the scene, so that Clarissa’s euphoric sense of vitality mingles with the dawning significance of her location for the reader. The climax relies on a sense that the disorienting jumble of the city, with its motions and noise, its sound and fury, culminates and resolves itself into a sense of being as locatedness, or a sense of London, the location which it in fact tends to define. Furthermore, this sense of place is aligned with a sense of being alive and aware of the rhythms of the body, “life” being rhythmically and syntactically aligned with “London; this moment of June.”

In *Ulysses*, the larger circumference of Dublin, which composes the novel’s setting, is obscured in the opening scene by close focus on Buck’s body, Stephen’s perception of it, and Stephen’s emotional landscape. Dublin’s status as a homogenous location is doubly undermined through the outward-oriented perspective which the unnamed Martello Tower offers – indeed, when Dublin is finally named in “Telemachus” it is in a sequence which takes the reader from the snot on Stephen’s handkerchief, a physical excrement which Buck interprets as a “new art colour for our Irish poets”(U: 1.110), to the colour of the sea (“grey sweet mother”) as perceived by the English poet Algernon Swinburne, to the “snotgreen” sea surrounding Dublin Bay as perceived by Irish poets.

Focus is in fact diverted from the city itself, either drawn out through Dublin Bay to the surrounding sea which separates Dublin from the continent, or drawn in to Stephen’s digressing thoughts as the haunting image of his dead mother resurfaces in his mind and interferes with the description of the landscape, colouring his perceptions with remorse. In this first episode, Stephen’s emotional landscape acts as an obstacle to establishing the precedence of any cartographic or naturalistic depiction of Dublin.

For instance, the view of Dublin Bay is partially obliterated by the memory of the bowl of green bile beside his mother's deathbed, a detail which shows how a personal, emotional experience alters the perception of the city. The absence of any direct description of setting contrasts with the rich description of Stephen's mental perceptions as he "gaze[s] at the fraying edge of his shiny black coat-sleeve" (*U*: 1. 150), so that in 'Telemachus' the city location gains its significance and specificity through the instability of the borders which divide the inner territory of physical awareness and the outer territories of urban location.

A progressive apprehension of city space attests to Joyce and Woolf's careful consideration of how map-space and place-names should participate in a representation of the city in which cartographic conceptions of space do not pre-exist the narrative of embodied space. These examples show the subversion of the role of point of view and the visual prerogative in establishing setting. Alongside the topographical accuracy of these novels of place is a questioning of the process of location through the representation of the city as an embodied setting and hence through wanderings which challenge the legibility and the prevalence of the city on the map.

Detailed and lacunar, mappable yet disorienting, inviting both symbolic and contingent interpretations, these urban settings are fraught with contradictions. Perhaps contradiction runs deep down to the peripatetic roots of these works in which the dislocations of the wandering body translate the location of the city into a process of constructing the self through dislocation: to borrow Heyward Ehrlich's formula in "James Joyce's Four-Gated City of Modernism," these city novels "both are and are not about [place]."<sup>73</sup>

*Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses* maintain a complex balance between location and dislocation not solely because of their disavowal of conventional plot and space-time, or their aesthetics of fragmentation and the use of multiple viewpoints, but more emphatically through their use of the wandering body as

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<sup>73</sup> Heyward Ehrlich, "James Joyce's Four-Gated City of Modernism." In *Joyce and the City*. Ed. Michael Begnal. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press. 2002.

a disruptive factor. It may seem reductive, but is nonetheless accurate, to speak of these novels as wandering-body narratives in which the body-subject forms the narrative center of a fictional space which in part undercuts any conventional notion of space and time. The extent to which the wandering body functions as its own centralizing trope or even as an embodied setting for lack of a better term is in direct relation to the author's refusal to represent the city as a visible totality which would provide a clear understanding of the setting and orient the narrative.

The centrality of the wandering body prevents the city functioning as a clearly conceptualized space of naturalist and symbolic action and interferes in the process of signification. In other words, the prominence of the wandering body in these novels of place explodes the concept of setting and place as part of a process of orientation, to the extent that Woolf's London, Joyce's Dublin, can respectively be seen as both narrative places and the lack thereof, both a network of topographical references to an actual city and the disruption of the city as a visible or readable entity. To paraphrase Michel de Certeau in "Pratiques d'Espace", wandering is to lack a place and wandering the city contributes to experiencing the city as lived space, and thus the novel's setting, as the locus of displacement<sup>74</sup>:

To walk is to lack a place. It is the indefinite process of being absent and searching for a place of belonging. The wandering that the city multiplies and concentrates turns the city into an immense social experience of lacking a place – an experience which, to tell the truth, is broken up into innumerable tiny deviations (displacements and walks), compensated for by the relations and criss-crossings of these exoduses which intersect,

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<sup>74</sup> Michel de Certeau. *L'invention du quotidien. Volumes 1 & 2*. Paris: Gallimard. 1990. p. 155. (my translation). "Marcher, c'est manquer de lieu. C'est le procès indéfini d'être absent et en quête d'un propre. L'errance que multiplie et rassemble la ville en fait une immense expérience sociale de la privation de lieu – une expérience, il est vrai, effritée en déportations innombrables et infimes (déplacements et marches), compensée par les relations et les croisements de ces exodes qui font entrelacs, créant un tissu urbain, et placée sous le signe de ce qui devrait être, enfin, le lieu, mais n'est qu'un nom, la Ville."

creating an urban fabric placed under the sign of what ought to constitute, all things considered, a place, but which is but a name, the City.

Perhaps one reason why the titles of *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* are devoid of any topographical reference is that they do not aim to locate narrative events by limiting location and setting to the pictorial conventions of landscape and its spatial assumptions. Conversely, they contribute to the impact of the *in media res* beginning, in which both disorientation and location are an effect of the reader's immediate immersion in the urban setting through walking as a narrative.

Walking has fundamental epistemological and ontological ramifications, which is one reason why movement plays such an important part in the Bildungsroman or novels of character and development. However, already present in the titles, this dislocation of character and setting echoes a discrepancy between the representation of the city through naming – a toponymic and indeed cartographic representation of space which points to the extra-textual city – and its representation through wandering, which in turn suggests a troubled involvement with orientation.

## 1.2. The contradiction of mapping wanderings

In De Certeau's theory the visible City of the map or the set location of a fictional topography is a mere relic of location, an erasure of place. Paradoxically, when wandering disrupts the city's visibility it foregrounds the hermeneutic role of reading as a making sense of space, which echoes the reader's compulsion to re-enact the trajectories represented in Joyce's and Woolf's fictions. De Certeau formulates this distinction between the map as a conceptual view of the City and mapping as the "act of passing":

It is true that the operations of walking on can be traced on city maps in such a way as to transcribe their paths (here well-trodden, there very faint) and their trajectories (going this way and not that). But these thick or thin curves only refer, like words, to the absence of what has passed by. Surveys of routes miss what was: the act itself of passing by [...] They allow us to grasp only a relic set in the nowhen of a surface of projection.<sup>75</sup>

Perhaps because of the ambivalence of place in *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway*, readers of Joyce and Woolf have been equally preoccupied by questions of embodiment and orientation, particularly keen to trace the wanderings of Joyce's Dubliners and Woolf's Londoners in the flesh, and consequently putting each city back on the map. The importance of mapping out fictional space in the actual city has been emphasized many times in readings of *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway*, yet Eric Bulson has been one of the few critics to point out its link to the contradictory and disorienting nature of topographical representation in both works.<sup>76</sup>

Joyce famously boasted to Frank Budgen that his rendition of Dublin in *Ulysses* was so complete that were the city to disappear from the map it could be rebuilt from the information contained in his book. This implies that the book contains a mappable city to be retrieved by tracing Bloomean wanderings and highlighting the possible transition from fictional space to embodied space.<sup>77</sup> Analogously, *Mrs Dalloway* has gained a reputation as Virginia Woolf's best known and most emblematic "London novel", offering insight into post-World-War-I imperial London. It is a telling fact that "Mrs Dalloway" was first featured in the itinerary of "Mrs Dalloway in Bond Street", a title which consisted in explicitly locating the main character on the map of London. Dalloway is equally

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<sup>75</sup> Translation by Stephen Rendall, University of California Press, 1984.

"Certes, les procès du cheminer peuvent être reportés sur des cartes urbaines de manière à en transcrire les traces (ici denses, là très légères) et les trajectoires (passant par ici et non par là). Mais les courbes en pleins ou en déliés renvoient seulement, comme des mots, à l'absence de ce qui a passé. Les relevés de parcours perdent ce qui a été : l'acte même de passer [...]. Ne s'en laisse appréhender qu'une relique, posée dans le non-temps d'une surface de projection." Michel de Certeau, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

<sup>76</sup> Eric Bulson. "Disorienting Dublin". In *Making Space in the Works of James Joyce. Op. cit.*

<sup>77</sup> Frank Budgen. *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses, and Other Writings*. London: Oxford University Press. 1972.

a passing figure who boards the ship in *The Voyage Out* (1915) only to disembark at the first port of call. The cartographic element continues to pervade the depiction of the city in the novel.

Indicative of their status as “place novels”, a quick search on Google Maps will conjure up the full itineraries of Mrs Dalloway, Peter Walsh, Rezia, Septimus Smith or map out the various landmarks of *Ulysses*’ Dublin. The past decades’ marketing of Joyce’s Dublin as a touristic commodity being a perfect case in point, these peripatetic novels with their distinctive urban settings seem to encourage a sense of location which makes them enticingly mappable. But the tendency to map also seems to suggest the limits of topography and points to the opacity which characterizes urban space in these novels. Is there a paradox in how one reads these cityscapes, which takes the reader on a winding route from mappable to unmapped spaces? And what does this paradox have to do with the representation of the body which walks, tracing in its course both the contours of the self and the streets to be mapped?

Toponymic representation in *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses* subverts its own agenda. It calls attention to the political fictions underlying places of power and to the marginalizing forces of cartographic space which denies the reality of the bodies which define it. In both novels place-names and proper names abound. Naming serves a vast process of references to an external “reality” which, the process implies, overshadows its fictional double. Clarissa thinks of “Rumpelmayer’s men” coming, before crossing the street she waits for “Durnall’s van to pass”; much emphasis is put on the fact that Clarissa lives in “Westminster”; “Big Ben” strikes the hour, and as Clarissa thinks “such fools we are” she is specifically said to be “crossing Victoria Street.” Depicting “this moment of June” involves mention of “the mothers of Pimlico,” “messages ... passing from the Fleet to the Admiralty,” “Arlington Street and Piccadilly,” “St. James’s Park,” and when Clarissa reaches “the Park gates,” she “stood for a moment, looking at the omnibuses in Piccadilly” (pp.6-7).

As for *Ulysses*... Glasnevin Cemetery, Eccles Street, the Cabman’s Shelter, the National Library, Sweny’s Chemist, the Freeman’s Journal, Nighttown, the Maternity Hospital, Martello



Tower, Sandymount Strand, Davy Byrne's Pub, the Ormond Hotel, Barney Kiernan's Pub..., once divested of its narratological wrappings, the topography of *Ulysses* appears in all its stark, overwhelming density. In an essay entitled "James Joyce's use of topography in *Ulysses*," Mary Beth Delea notes that "James Joyce's *Ulysses* stands out as the most conscientiously topographical novel ever written, according to the authors of *Literary Landscapes of the British Isles*" and restates the well-known fact that "in order to ... insure the most accuracy in numbers, names and addresses, Joyce depended quite extensively on a certain number of volumes of *Thom's Official Directory of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland*."<sup>78</sup>

Yet the sheer mass of topographic references diverts the reader from the simple and otherwise obvious fact that these references are almost exclusively toponymic, proper nouns and names referring to a conception of space external to the text which, in and of itself, offers only the illusion of reality. As Jon Hegglund points out in his study of "*Ulysses* and the Rhetoric of Cartography," *Thom's Directory* – as "most mass-produced maps from the 1850s until the 1920s" – compiled maps of Dublin "derived from the [British Ordnance Survey from 1826 to 1852]" and thus marks out one dimension of spatial representation in *Ulysses* as cartographic, raising the question of how Joyce put to use what is essentially "an imperial mapping of a colonial space."<sup>79</sup>

Hegglund argues that

Joyce reworks the form of the map so that it suggests neither imperialist domination nor postcolonial nationalist resistance, but rather a spatial complexity that cannot be reduced to either term. In spite of its dependence on the exactitude of cartography, *Ulysses* ultimately rejects the static logic of the map in favour of a more dynamic, open-ended view of space.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Mary Beth Delea. "James Joyce's use of topography in *Ulysses*." *Honors Theses*. 1985. pp. 1-2. <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/honors-theses/428>

<sup>79</sup> Jon Hegglund. "'Ulysses' and the Rhetoric of Cartography." In *Twentieth Century Literature*. Vol. 49, No. 2. Summer, 2003. pp. 164-192. pp. 168-169.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* p. 166.

Hegglund associates this “dynamic, open-ended view of space” with the counter-force to cartographic space which narrative (I would add specifically narratives of embodied experiences) provides, as it “must rely on partial views and situated knowledges.” My reading of the dual construction of space in *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* draws its inspiration from both Bulson and Hegglund’s arguments, to suggest that beyond the illusion of facticity which the map construes, naming is a way of refusing to describe the city while foregrounding walking in the city and therefore resisting its construction as a totalized visual entity; it is also an instrument of disorientation, showing the inadequacy of map-space to convey the embodied and therefore particularized meanings of the city. As markers of space proliferate, the reader’s sense of disorientation grows rather than decreasing and the more the city becomes an instable, ungraspable entity, eluding comprehension and losing visibility.

Whereas place-names may lend a degree of factual reality to the fictional city, their main function is also to substitute for description, as Georg Lukacz famously pointed out in his 1936 essay on modernist representation, “Narrate or Describe?” In fact, place-names participate in a fiction of origin, which paradoxically capitalizes on the erasure of the visible (or visualized), compassable city from the text. The main effect of this is that in Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*, in Joyce’s *Ulysses*, toponymy constructs the fiction of an authorized version of city space, by pointing to an “objective” or factual model, all the while invalidating any authorized or conceptualized version of London or Dublin in the text.

Conceptions of space, the map as model, are disrupted by the parallel reliance of spatial representation on the embodied perspectives of the wanderers who reproduce the city as a disjunctive yet collective space as they walk. In this way, place-names are fundamentally disorienting as they sever spatial location from the internal structure of the fictional city. The map, in other words, lies

outside the text and in the event that they should not have prior knowledge of the city of reference first-time (or second-time or third-time) readers are aware of the illusion of place as they strive to reconstitute it as a significant framework for narrative events. In this case, it was not only the density and length of the narrative, or the mass of encyclopaedic references to places and facts, which might have made reading *Ulysses* a more disorienting experience than reading *Mrs Dalloway*, it was also the novelty of Dublin as a literary location. And yet one might suppose Woolf's readers equally taken aback by the disorienting process which presents a familiar fictional space from potentially alienating points of views which allow for its distortion and re-appropriation through the reader's identification with marginal experiences of walking the city.

Undoubtedly Woolf did not entirely share Joyce's (some might say megalomaniac) inclination or enthusiasm for factual detail – although she did share his interest in places as the fictional production of the feeling of an intimate sense of place – and with good reason. One may surmise that in the works under study both authors are intimately involved in retrieving from the normative conception of the city, illustrated by the model of the map, an alternative space of marginal experiences through the fictional (re)production of the city which the perspective of the wanderer allows.

For Joyce, writing about a Dublin which, as a colonized city, did not properly feature on the map and had neither topographical existence nor fictional existence to suit Joyce's idea of it, topographical referencing appears eminently productive and perhaps liberating whereas for Woolf, writing about an imperial London both topographically and fictionally established, at the expense of the political exclusion and overall marginalization of female experience to name but one problem, the more liberating use of place-names and proper names (one may consider the satire of Proportion and Conversion in *Mrs Dalloway*) is one which is more directly satirical, subversive and undoes the supremacy of its topographical underpinnings.

In fact, in the “London scene” sketches, commissioned by the women’s magazine *Good Housekeeping* and published in 1931-32, Woolf presents “word pictures” of the city streets, while discarding the traditional landmarks which pepper guidebooks in favour of intimate scenes which undo the divide between interiority and exteriority such as “Portrait of a Londoner”. In the final essay of the “London scene” sketches, she describes Mrs. Crowe’s drawing room conversation, illustrating the connections between wandering and gossip as parallel narrative digressions which allow Londoners to reclaim the city by producing and interpreting their own narrative. Woolf writes “Mrs. Crowe’s great gift consisted in making the vast metropolis seem as small as a village with one church, one manor house, and twenty-five cottages.” It is difficult not to see a touch of Mrs. Dalloway about Mrs. Crowe, sitting in her drawing-room attuned to the motions of the city, a figure of the artist making meaning out of her everyday perceptions:

As she sat in her chair with her guests ranged round she would give from time to time a quick bird-like glance over her shoulder at the window, as if she had half an eye on the street, as if she had half an ear upon the cars and the omnibuses and the cries of the paper boys under the window. Why, something new might be happening this very moment.<sup>81</sup>

Editorial practice encourages readers to approach *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses* maps in hand, suggesting that these works contain and encourage a concise topographical representation of the city. Over the past decades, the retracing of fictional characters’ itineraries has become a way of commemorating authors which has gained prominence as part of cultural tourism and particularly applies to Joyce and Woolf. As Liedeke Plate highlights in “Walking in Virginia Woolf’s footsteps: performing cultural memory”, the map encourages retracing the steps of authors and the characters in

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<sup>81</sup> Virginia Woolf. “Portrait of a Londoner” written for *Good Housekeeping magazine* (1931-32), rediscovered and published by *The Guardian* in 2004. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2004/aug/11/viriniawoolf>

their works and is part of the mechanism through which space is transformed into a commemorative cultural experience.<sup>82</sup>

Maps in hand, readers have charted the progress of Mrs Dalloway through London, tantalizingly suggesting that the itineracy of the character encourages a connection between the city's disseminated topographical landmarks and the commemorative recollection of city space through walking. Likewise, maps in hand, the diligent reader of *Ulysses* charts the itineraries through which, maps (and compass and *Thom's Directory*) in hand, the meticulous author encoded Dublin as his own fictional space.

The impulse to map partly stems from these urban peripatetic novels' resonance with a material topographical 'reality' external to them and which bears the promise of shedding light on its fictional counterpart, on the cultural and historical context of the writing and on the narrative structure of the work. But the reader's inclination to map also seems to point to the disorienting nature of the work and its portrayal of the city, which manifests itself in the desire to gain a better ground, a better viewpoint, to visualize the city and to arrest the disorienting motions of the wandering body through a time-dispelling lens. Underlying map-making may be the impulse to make visible the spaces of Joyce's Dublin and Woolf's London, spaces which by implication are made up of visual shortcomings, by gaining distance, synthesizing, laying out the city and conceptualizing its space.

By implying that wanderings should delineate a significant itinerary, one risks returning phenomenological space to conceptual space. Representations of the city in *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* are dually constructed through topographical references to the map space of an "actual" city on the one hand, and through the perceptions of its wanderers on the other hand. One may see this double construction of space as part of the authors' will to orient the reader, or to situate the characters and the narrative firmly in a particular place in space and time. However, its effect is equally disorienting,

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<sup>82</sup> Liedeke Plate. "Walking in Virginia Woolf's footsteps." In *European Journal of Cultural Studies*. SAGE Publications. 2009. N°9 (1). pp. 101-120.

positing the city of the map not as an authorized version of space but as a hypothetical space instilled with visual and perceptive confusion, a narrative framework allowing the retrieval of the layered phenomenological spaces of the city through wandering.

The disjunction between topographical space and de Certeau's lived space gains significance when one considers walking as a commemorative practice which allows the reader to retrieve the cultural meaning of a place through narrative. In Plate's words: "memory has been turned into a matter of 'storing' and 'story-ing': it has meaning only when retrieved, recalled ... and recollected as narrative."<sup>83</sup> This is one way of countering the reduction of space to topographical landmarks and retrieving the experience of the city – and one which gives perspective to Joyce's depiction of Dublin out of memory and out of exile. Plate further considers this to be one of the *flâneur*'s characteristics: to be a "repository of cultural memory"; to offer an alternative epistemological ideal which Benjamin terms 'felt knowledge' – "a form of knowledge that stands in opposition to 'facts', it is associated with the body and the senses, rather than the mind."<sup>84</sup> Walking is the performance which questions the opposition between the city as a site and as a situation.

What is more, the wanderers of *Mrs Dalloway* are often alienated from the normalized conception of London, and yet the narrative space of Woolf's cities is constructed as a product of the accounts of what are largely marginalized individuals, marginalized through their relation to their bodies and to city space. In *Sensuous Geographies: Body, Sense and Place* Paul Rodoway addresses the "hidden geographies" which the experience of the sensual constitutes and the need to consider the "sensual dimensions of geographical experience."<sup>85</sup> Rodoway's work examines humanist concerns through a postmodern lens. It is postmodern in its foregrounding of the role of the senses and of erratic sensuous experience in the production and understanding of space as a socio-economic and cultural

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* p. 105.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.* p. 108.

<sup>85</sup> Paul Rodoway. *Sensuous Geographies: Body, Sense, and Place*. Routledge: London. 1994. p. 4.

reality. However, it also shows how focus on the role of the senses in the production of space allows for the inclusion of marginal experiences in our collective understanding of space through its cultural meanings. Rodoway argues that it is necessary to recognize the role of the senses – including touch, taste and smell – both in our making sense of space and in the appraisal of geographies as cultural constructs.

In *Mrs Dalloway* Septimus exemplifies the upturning of spatial hierarchies, as Septimus's London is presented starkly and without mediation, most tellingly through his disproportionate sense of embodiment, his apprehension of London through exacerbated senses, and the resulting sensory confusion of his perspective. By contrast, the rationality of a sensible London is undermined by the caricature of the figures of authority who promote such an ordering of city space: Septimus's doctors, who live by the principles of Conversion and Proportion mentioned in the work. In these two contrasting views of the city there is a clear rejection of the orderly city which Clarissa to some extent finds herself conforming to in her "solemn progress with the rest of them" down Oxford Street at the beginning of the novel. Disorder and sensory confusion are key to presenting an inclusive view of London.

Joyce's representation of Dublin is similarly inclusive. Frank Budgen was the first to underline the peculiar focus on Dubliners and their many voices in *Ulysses* in *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses*. *Ulysses* relies on the embodied perspective of Dubliners walking the city to reconstruct Dublin as the inalienable product of the people who inhabit its streets. The city in *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses* is represented as a place which cannot be conceptualized because it always lies partially in excess of any one representation of it and in this sense, it constitutes a fundamentally unexclusive place. It is never fully envisioned, hardly ever described, constructed as an almost wholly referential space on the one hand; on the other, this network of references is meant to stand in for the city's topographic representation, while pointing to a factual, extra-textual city.

Disorientation is not a pre-existing quality of the urban setting but an effect of the ground-level (a)perception of the body in the city, which Joyce and Woolf cultivate by situating the wandering body within the wider perspective of a mappable city. The tension which Bulson foregrounds, between the mappability of these fictional cityscapes and the impossibility to grapple with a sprawling, lacunar, shifting location and multiple perspectives points to the representation of the wandering urban body as correlative to a troubled involvement with (dis)orientation.

### 1.3. Wandering as narrative relocation

To return to “The Game of the Name” in *All is True: The Claims and Strategies of Realist Fiction*, Lilian R. Furst surmises that it is necessary to distinguish between a mimetic reading of realism which supports the view of place-names as representation and “the post-structuralist perception of realist fictions as verbal compositions rather than as imitations of reality” in which place-names reveal themselves to be a pretense at representation, creating the fiction of the coincidence of fictional setting with a pre-existing extra-textual place.<sup>86</sup>

In this reasoning, the map-space constructed through naming and toponymical references is equally responsible for the reader’s desire to overcome the disorienting experience of a dislocated urban setting. Readers are given the illusion or rather the fiction of a topography, whereas the topographic representation of the city is in fact erased and undermined through toponymy. Naming is not so much part of the process of visualizing the city but in fact reclaims the non-visible dimension of the city, or the blind spaces of lived urban space.

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<sup>86</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 96.



Most critics agree that what *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses* have in common is the representation of city space through the points of view of the various characters who wander the city's streets. Some critics have argued that the main narrative structure of *Ulysses* – a person walking the city on an ordinary day – influenced Woolf's writing of *Mrs Dalloway*.<sup>87</sup> This patchwork of diverse perspectives, the sum of which offers a comprehensive view of the city, is metaphorically referred to by Joycean critics as parallax, a term which Joyce himself uses throughout *Ulysses*. And yet, to say that the city is wholly represented through the eyes or senses of the Londoners or Dubliners who people the pages of *Mrs Dalloway* or *Ulysses* does not seem entirely correct. Critics have already noted the use of an impersonal narrative instance in both novels.

This is most visible in the stylistic unity and equivocal focalisation which underlies Virginia Woolf's use of free indirect style and in the hypertextual quality of *Ulysses* through which the book calls attention to its being a crafted text and creates a distance between the reader and the characters through self-parody. This impersonal narrative instance was coined the "Arranger" in David Hayman's seminal work *Ulysses: The Mechanics of Meaning* in 1970.<sup>88</sup> What is noteworthy is the way in which this impersonal narrator intervenes in the representation of the city, producing a discrepancy between a toponymical view of the city as map-space and the embodied perspective offering a view of the city as lived space.

As in Joyce's *Ulysses*, *Mrs Dalloway*'s London emerges in part as the product of a naming process which results from and works towards the elimination of objective description, or what Virginia Woolf referred to with some measure of frustration as "facts". In this sense, it encourages the retrieval of the visible facet of the city which the map references in turn. To quote Bulson, "modernists like Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Alfred Döblin[']s representational strategies were radically different.

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<sup>87</sup> See for example: Harvena Richter. "The "Ulysses" Connection: Clarissa Dalloway's Bloomsday". In *Studies in the Novel*. Vol. 21, No. 3 (Fall, 1989). pp. 305-319.

<sup>88</sup> David Hayman. *Ulysses: The Mechanics of Meaning*. Rev. ed. Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press. 1982.

Street and place-names are still there, but the objective description has largely disappeared.”<sup>89</sup> Whereas in *Ulysses* the referencing process is taken somewhat seriously, to the extent that Joyce notoriously collected facts and sought to rework them into his fiction through a meticulous adding process, appropriating facts where they intersect with fiction, in *Mrs Dalloway* place-names seem to exist partly in the aim of producing an atmospheric evocation of London, at times to construct a politico-cultural critique, but equally often to illustrate their own futility and that of the isolating and exclusionary spatial representations which they construct. In other words, place-names provide a layering of city space which suggests the variegated nature of place, the constant demise and echo of the significations of a particular location through time: the “there” of the city which is represented in *Mrs Dalloway* is always hollowed out by an “elsewhere” so that fixed space gives in to a notion of space in flux.

For instance, while the itinerary of Clarissa’s thoughts is clearly represented as more or less conscious inner speech (“did it matter then, she asked herself ... did it matter that she must inevitably cease completely”), it is hard to conceive that she should interrupt her thoughts to record so specifically her physical itinerary. Indeed, adding “walking towards Bond Street” both signals an awareness of geographical location and presents this awareness as if at a remove from Clarissa’s immediate or surface consciousness. It may be that parallel to her thoughts the narrative instance registers in more explicit terms Clarissa’s latent bodily awareness of moving towards a familiar location.

The idea that the motions of the material body should feature in appositions parallel to verbalized thoughts, as if it were a haunting presence, as if wandering sparked a process of doubling the immaterial with the material, provides an opportunity for representing the city as a porous space: it is haunted by the presence and absence of other wandering bodies. Clarissa’s wandering body is haunted by the bodies of previous wanderers, walking the trajectory of wanderers to come. This interpretation is in keeping with her ghostlike disconnect from her body, her awareness of the connection between

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<sup>89</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 129.

herself and other Londoner's ("being laid out like a mist" or "web-like"), and her enigmatic intuitions at the end of the novel that "here is one room; there the next" or that "there is an embrace in death." This effect is also amplified by the fact that at the end of the novel the reader is increasingly made aware of the doubling effect between Clarissa and Septimus: when Clarissa learns the details of Septimus's death she has a vivid impression of having experienced his death herself, her body is haunted by the dead man's suffering, reminding us that in an alternative reality Clarissa may have shared the same fate. The "solemn march" "with the rest of them" is not a periodic event but a realization of the body's existence as an echo or a repetition with variations of other bodies and as an instance of individual and collective location.

Furthermore, it is perhaps a mark of the reality of our embodied existence that a person wandering a familiar city is unlikely to consciously map out their own neighbourhood in conceptual terms, i.e. to use street names and place names to locate themselves, a fact which Bulson also points out. The repetition of street names, the precise recording of Clarissa's location, seems first and foremost destined to the reader and marks out a distinct representation of the city, a network of toponymical references, external at least in their mode of representation to Clarissa's stream-of-consciousness. It is also to note Clarissa's location on a main thoroughfare of London and the paradoxical placelessness which she experiences there, as if drifting without will along a predictable route, a highlight of the map. If a map is being drawn, it is at odds with a parallel focus on the wandering consciousness, for the benefit of the reader, and parallel to the phenomenologically-oriented representation of space which the novel otherwise provides.

This peculiar awareness of place-names does not only permeate the reporting of Clarissa's thoughts, but Peter Walsh's as well. Upon his first reunion with Clarissa following his return from India, Peter is overwhelmed by his emotions and escapes by momentarily getting lost in the once familiar London streets. Hearing the sound of St Margaret's bells, he experiences a recollection of Clarissa "coming downstairs on the stroke of the hour in white" and of "some moment of great

intimacy” shared in a “room years ago”. Although Peter has difficulty situating this emotional experience – “But what room? What moment” he asks – he is precisely located “march[ing] up Whitehall”.

The reporting of Peter’s thoughts is interrupted or interspersed with topographic details which show an acute awareness of his physical location: “a patter like the patter of leaves in a wood came from behind, and with it a rustling, regular thudding sound, which as it overtook him drummed his thoughts, strict in step, up Whitehall, without his doing” (p.43). This contrast is even more starkly emphasized when Peter Walsh falls out of pace with the marching boys as “they marched up Whitehall.” In fact, the contrast between outer location and inner disorientation soon becomes a metaphor for the alienation of the individual in post-war London: “sure enough, on they marched, past him, past everyone, in their steady way, as if one will worked legs and arms uniformly, and life, with its varieties, its irreticences, had been laid under a pavement of monuments and wreaths and drugged into a stiff yet staring corpse by discipline” (p. 44).

The repeated mention of Whitehall symbolically locates Peter in the region of officialdom and national identity – one might even say, as “one will” marches the boys and life “drugged into a stiff yet staring corpse” up Whitehall, in the context of death by nationalism. However, these references only contribute to his out-of-placeness as they contrast with the character’s dislocation and the building sense of disorientation which comes through in the string of questions which assails him as he reflects that “nobody yet knew he was in London, except Clarissa, and the earth, after the voyage, still seemed an island to him, the strangeness of standing alone, alive, unknown, at half-past eleven in Trafalgar Square overcame him. What is it? Where am I? And why, after all, does one do it?”(p. 44) Peter Walsh’s emotional agitation shows that he is overcome by disorientation, at the same time as toponymical references serve to locate him precisely upon the map of London.

These two dimensions of spatial representation, the one being the embodied space or Bergsonian *durée* of a central consciousness, the other the conceptualized space of cartography, come through in the interloping representations of the city and of the character's consciousness. This discrepancy hints at how Woolf's use of place-names, far from being an instrument of location, is often indicative of a divorce of will which shows in a character's disconnect from her immediate geographical situation.

Moreover, the use of place-names, while lending the authority of cartography to the representation of the city, serves at the same time to undermine the authority of such a conception of space. In fact, an essential part of the disorienting nature of city space in *Mrs Dalloway* concerns its multisensory dimension, which relates to Rodoway's "sensuous geographies". Recently critics have examined the aural texture of London in Woolf's works, arguing that 'soundscape' may be a more accurate term for describing the city.<sup>90</sup> In *Virginia Woolf: Music, Sound, Language*, Elicia Clements contends that sonic signifiers are essential to giving an impression of London's official stature "with its urban, authoritative, and publicly sanctioned architectural structures."<sup>91</sup> Big Ben's resounding bell and "leaden circles" are perhaps the most prominent and best-known instance of soundscape in *Mrs Dalloway*, and sound can amplify harmony or discord within the cityscape. Cuddy-Keane sees Big Ben as an essential element in establishing the geographical range of London, as it "brings into temporal harmony a multiplicity of listeners positioned in a variety of locations."<sup>92</sup>

Drawing upon the work of Blesser and Salter, Clements further explains that the noise of the city recalls the disruption of the Industrial Revolution, after which the conceptual distinction between

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<sup>90</sup> See Anne Lovering Rounds. "Dissolves in *Mrs Dalloway*: The Soundscapes of a Novel." In *Literary Imagination*. vol. 13. 2010. pp. 58-70. Christopher Sims, "The Function of Technological Sound in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*: Touchstones of Reality and Summons from Daydreams." In *The Scientific Journal of Humanistic Studies*. vol. 3. 2011. pp. 120-29. Rishona Zimring. "Suggestions of Other Worlds: The Art of Sound in The Years." In *Woolf Studies Annual*. vol. 8. 2002. Angela Frattarola. "Developing an Ear for the Modernist Novel: Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, and James Joyce." In the *Journal of Modern Literature*. vol. 33.1. 2009.

<sup>91</sup> Elicia Clements. *Virginia Woolf: Music, Sound, Language*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 2019. p. 44.

<sup>92</sup> Melba Cuddy-Keane. "Modernist Soundscapes and the Intelligent Ear: An Approach to Narrative Theory through Auditory Perception." In *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, eds. Phelan and Rabinowitz, Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2005. p. 387.

silence and noise was fraught with class conflicts.<sup>93</sup> She notes that “as silence became a precious commodity, control over sound became a class issue.” For Clements, Woolf’s disruption of silence is culturally significant:

In contrast, then, to the pattern of sequestering pure sound in private space in the early twentieth century, Woolf repeatedly obscures and distorts sonic “purity” in interior places and employs it in exterior environments that are large, even unwieldy for acoustical physics, disrupting the assumptions of separate spheres.<sup>94</sup>

A good example of this is the ageless female vagrant in *Mrs Dalloway*, singing a wordless song apparently devoid of meaning.

In Woolf’s synaesthetic construction of space it would be reductive to foreground one of the senses over the others, as equally enlightening studies of the haptic dimension of the city in Woolf’s works such as *Haptic Modernism: Touch and the Tactile in Modernist Writing* or *Out of Touch: Skin Tropes and Identities in Woolf, Ellison, Pynchon and Acker* illustrate.<sup>95</sup> Multi-sensory disorientation seems to have a liberating effect, suggesting that in Woolf’s London disconnection from places of power and cultural significance is necessary to the preservation of one’s inner space.

Indeed, Peter experiences this sense of disorientation first as overwhelming, then as liberating, as if he “stood at the opening of endless avenues down which if he chose he might wander. He had not felt so young for years” (p.44). Peter’s moment of escape is depicted as exhilarating, but turns out to be just a momentary interlude. Picturing himself as “a romantic buccaneer, careless of all these damned proprieties” he pursues a young *passante* as “on and on she went, across Piccadilly, and up Regent

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<sup>93</sup> Linda-Ruth Salter and Barry Blesser. *Spaces Speak, Are You Listening? Experiencing Aural Architecture*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007.

<sup>94</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 46.

<sup>95</sup> Abbie Garrington. *Haptic Modernism: Touch and the Tactile in Modernist Writing*. Ediburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013. Maureen F. Curtin. *Out of Touch: Skin Tropes and Identities in Woolf, Ellison, Pynchon and Acker*. London: Routledge. 2003.

Street, ahead of him, her cloak, her gloves, her shoulders combining with the fringes and laces and the feather boas in the windows,” until:

laughing and delightful, she had crossed Oxford Street and Great Portland Street and turned down one of the little streets, and now, and now, the great moment was approaching, for now she slackened, opened her bag, and with one look in his direction, but not at him, one look that bade farewell, summed up the whole situation and dismissed it triumphantly, for ever, had fitted her key, opened the door, and gone! (p.46)

Peter’s liberating wandering is cut short with much irony, the brief adventure showcasing all at once a moment in which Peter momentarily takes possession of the city space, actively reproducing this space as a realm of adventure in which he can think himself anew, at the expense of the passing young woman’s identity, will, and individuality. Yet this moment is short-lived and Peter soon returns to a regulated space and time in which wandering is possible yet curtailed by the constraints of civilization, or the modern man’s timetabled, charted London:

he turned; went up the street, thinking to find somewhere to sit, till it was time for Lincoln’s Inn – for Messrs Hooper and Grateley. Where should he go? No matter. Up the street, then, towards Regent’s Park. His boots on the pavement struck out ‘no matter’; for it was early, still very early (p.46).

The Dublin of *Ulysses* and the London of *Mrs Dalloway* both demand and toy with presuppositions surrounding the constitution and interpretation of city space. In other words, Joyce embeds his representation of the city with the supposition of familiarity, creating the confusing experience of a disorienting space presented as supposedly familiar. The illusion is all the more complete as Joyce reconstructs the specific Dublin of 1904 from the external point of view of an author living in exile. In sum, the supposition is familiarity or orientation, but the effect is unfamiliarity, even uncanny

disorientation. And yet many scenes in *Ulysses* construct a sense of shared familiarity which lend public space the intimacy of a place: Bloom shares conversations on the curb in “Lotus-Eaters” and “Lestrygonians”, exchanges (whether friendly or hostile) in the carriage in “Hades”, in the pub in “Sirens” or “Cyclops”, or in the cabman’s shelter in “Eumaeus”. On the other hand, the public space of *Mrs Dalloway* is marked by a feeling of radical exclusion and city wanderers such as Septimus, Clarissa or Elizabeth are far more connected to the atmosphere and rhythms of the city, along with its sensorial and emotional dimension, than to its social fabric.

In *Mrs Dalloway* the implication underlying the representation of the city is similar to *Ulysses* but not the same: the supposition is location (consider the tantalizing equation of the city of London with life and “this moment of June” in the opening pages of the novel) and the effect dislocation, whether it be a more positive ecstasy or rapture or the threat of physical and mental alienation. It is through such a discrepancy that one may begin to perceive the political implications of the peripatetic form in these works. *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses* represent marginalized experiences as supposedly familiar: through the wanderings of the body, the ostracized is presented as central to narration, the marginal is predicated as the norm, disorientation becomes an essential redirection.



#### 1.4. Walking out of step: a recreation

In Louise Dupré's words: "marcher c'est tenter de lire l'espace urbain, de le reconstituer pour soi. La marche de même que la poésie se donnent comme des pratiques soumises au fragmentaire, au désordre, à l'oublié, à l'échec de la totalisation."<sup>96</sup> Her words refer to a marginal, aimless, leisurely yet essential kind of walk, meandering, in which the city's space is broken down through a process of disorientation and its significance retrieved through the very subversion of the idea that the city might form a unified, charted place. This fragmentary, disorderly walk is very different from the military march which Peter Walsh witnesses in *Mrs Dalloway* or the movements of the crowd, or the deliberate progress of Father Conmee, Mister Kernan or the Earl of Dudley in the 'Wandering Rocks' episode of *Ulysses*. It bears some marginalizing component and offers a window onto an outsider's perspective as well as bearing the hallmark of artistic creativity. It is in some ways an unauthorized, erratic, or drifting walk (*dérive*) which, for instance in *Mrs Dalloway*, Clarissa tries to legitimize through a commercial pursuit: buying the flowers.<sup>97</sup> Nonetheless, the wanderer's perspective is not necessarily in contradiction with the network of toponymic details which maps out the city. Place-naming contributes to the process of disorientation which challenges conceptual space: it is not so much a means of representing the city as a visible or knowable entity as a means of erasing authorized representations of the city, reclaiming its opacity, through the instability of the external reference.

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<sup>96</sup> Louise Dupré. *Stratégies du vertige, Trois poètes : Nicole Brossard, Madeleine Gagnon, France Théoret*. Montréal: Éditions du remue-ménage. 1989. p. 76.

<sup>97</sup> Drift or "la dérive" is a concept developed by Guy Debord to articulate a playful and random passage through various urban environments which compose a psycho-geography. It is an aimless mode of walking in which the drifter abandons her own motives to engage in a spontaneous relation with the urban environment. In Guy Debord's own words: "la dérive se définit comme une technique de passage hâtif à travers des ambiances variées. Le concept de dérive est indissolublement lié à la reconnaissance d'effets de nature psychogéographique, et à l'affirmation d'un comportement ludique-constructif, ce qui l'oppose en tous points aux notions classiques de voyage et de promenade. ... Une ou plusieurs personnes se livrant à la dérive renoncent, pour une durée plus ou moins longue, aux raisons de se déplacer et d'agir qu'elles se connaissent généralement, aux relations, aux travaux et aux loisirs qui leur sont propres, pour se laisser aller aux sollicitations du terrain et des rencontres qui y correspondent." Guy-Ernest Debord. *Les Lèvres nues*, n° 9. Décembre 1956. Available online at [www.larevuedesressources.org/theorie-de-la-derive.038.html](http://www.larevuedesressources.org/theorie-de-la-derive.038.html)

As a canonic extra-textual reference in Anglophone literature of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, contemporary London bore more weight than contemporary Dublin. London existed not only materially as an imperial hub and as a cultural center but also in the works of Dickens, Conan Doyle, and many others, as a well-established fictional construct. Conversely, as Joyce underlined and Frank Budgen reported, Joyce was eager to establish Dublin as a literary city: as such, it had yet to make its *debut* upon the literary scene. Setting Dublin upon the literary map was Joyce's intention and partly informs his inclination towards topographical realism in *Ulysses*. Because of the scarcity of references to Dublin in literature, what the wealth of place-names as a representational strategy in *Ulysses* implies, is first what Heggglund singles out as a very Irish preoccupation with topography and the "lore of places" and second the construction of the city as familiar, through reference to what is portrayed through casual place-naming as familiar landmarks in an actual city.<sup>98</sup>

Spatial representation in *Mrs Dalloway* partly relies on the same process of naming, however, where in *Ulysses* familiarity is assumed despite the disorienting experience which fictional Dublin must have presented to many readers, the London of *Mrs Dalloway*, as literary reference, is supposedly – canonically – familiar and Woolf works against this conception to expose canonic London as a marginalizing, exclusive version of the city. However, both Joyce and Woolf use the discrepancy between the external reference which the place-name points to and the disorienting effects of a phenomenological representation of space as perceived by a wandering embodied subject to present the city anew.

In *Mrs Dalloway* place-names punctuate lived space with places of power which hold prominent positions on the hierarchical space of the map, all the while erasing the very places named from the texture of the fictional city as phenomenal experience. In a sense, in *Mrs Dalloway*, readers witness an inversion of spatial representation which devalues places of patriarchal and political authority. Virginia

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<sup>98</sup> *Op. cit.*

Woolf offers her readers what could be metaphorically perceived as a photographic negative of London, which challenges the conception of fictional London and realist representations of London.

Public places of importance are named not described, and thus become peripheral as private places which would have been peripheral in the literary discourse of early twentieth-century patriarchal and imperial London are given new importance, relocated through the walking protagonist as central to the narrative, such as the marginalized spaces of the city as experienced as female being-in-the-city or schizophrenic being-in-the-city. This is visible in the way Septimus' marginal perception of the passing of the Prime Minister's car transforms what is a public scene into one of painful intimacy. The political significance of the scene and the collective reaction to authority which is depicted translate into sensory information of extreme intensity.

These isolated perceptions deconstruct the rational causal relations between sense perception and the processing of these perceptions into a commonly accepted meaning. Septimus's disorientation seems to result from the severing of an intimate physical perception of the city from its collectively perceived meaning:

Everything had come to a standstill. The throb of the motor engines sounded like a pulse irregularly drumming through the entire body. The sun became extraordinarily hot because the motor car had stopped outside Mulberry's shop window; old ladies on the tops of omnibuses spread their black parasols; here a green, here a red parasol opened with a little pop. Mrs Dalloway, coming to the window with her arms full of sweet peas, looked out with her little pink face pursed in inquiry. Everyone looked at the motor car. Septimus looked. Boys on bicycles sprang off. Traffic accumulated. And there the motor car stood, with drawn blinds, and upon them a curious pattern like a tree, Septimus thought, and this gradual drawing together of everything to one centre before his eyes, as if some horror had come almost to the surface and was about to burst into flames, terrified him. The world wavered and quivered and threatened to burst into flames. It is I who am blocking the way, he thought. Was he not being looked at and pointed at; was he not weighted there, rooted to the pavement, for a purpose? But for what purpose? (p. 13)

The intimacy of the scene and the couple's subsequent exclusion from the crowd further shows in Lucrezia's shame at the idea that "people must notice; people must see." Her private cry for "Help, help!" starkly contrasts with the anonymous collective motions of "the crowd" which moves as one body, the motor car "ruffling the faces on both sides of the street with the same dark breath of veneration whether for Queen, Prince, or Prime Minister nobody knew", "[leaving] a slight ripple which flowed through glove shops and hat shops and tailors' shops on both sides of Bond Street" (pp. 14-15).

Moreover, the description of the domestic space of Clarissa's home, which will be the final setting of the novel, contrasts with the emotional aridity of the naming of public places such as Whitehall or Buckingham Palace, which are never described but featured as distant elements of a two-dimensional backdrop. Within Clarissa's home, each element of setting is doubled over by a further insight into Clarissa's own emotional landscape, offering a complex representation of her intimate environment as a junction between physical, emotional and psychological space. Clarissa's ascent to her room mingles a description of "this matter-of-fact June morning; soft with the glow of rose petals for some, she knew," with her location within the house ("and felt it, as she paused by the open staircase window which let in blinds flapping, dogs barking") and her present emotional state ("let in, she thought, feeling herself suddenly shriveled, aged, breastless, the grinding, blowing, flowering of the day, out of doors, out of the window, out of her body and brain which now failed" p. 26).

A double description of setting is visible in the pairing of sentences, one focusing on the visual description of Clarissa's material surroundings, the other on the expression of a corresponding emotion which hollows out the factual, realist description: "There was the green linoleum and a tap dripping. There was an emptiness about the heart of life; an attic room" (p. 26) The dripping of the tap, along with the seclusion of the "attic room" conveys a hollowness and a sense of social isolation which Clarissa feels as well as observes. This double motion qualifies the description of her bed which

conveys a sense of decline and entrapment through sensory markers: “the sheets were clean, tight stretched in a broad white band from side to side. Narrower and narrower would her bed be” (p.26).

However, the dual representation of setting through the enmeshing of material and emotional realities is neither rigidly maintained, nor consistently given equal proportion. In the bedroom, Clarissa’s intimacy is further explored until the significance of her body, as a nexus of emotional and physical experiences, overshadows the relative insignificance of her material possessions: “laying her brooch on the table, she had a sudden spasm, as if, while she mused, the icy claws had had the chance to fix in her” (p. 31). However, the material setting of the room provides the symbolic, fictional and material occasion for such a shift in representation which originates with the representation of a shift in the character, Clarissa’s, mindset and focalization.

In *Ulysses*, naming equally erases place as it maps out a literary Dublin, in which “errors are the portals to discovery.” This intentional margin of error, which Joyce toys with through his obsessive reliance on factual detail, is part of the guessing game of mapping *Ulysses*’ Dublin. Although the map allows readers to visualize Dublin, it is also an instrument in the itinerary of reading spatiality in *Ulysses*, which compels the reader to look to the misrepresentation of space as a diegetic device. Dublin is posited as a spatial entity which pre-exists the text without giving any authorized description of the city to fill in the blanks. The prominence of toponymy and its divorce from topography allow for a reevaluation of the conception of the city’s space. Spatial representation is not inexistent in *Ulysses*, as the sheer lack of description would tend to suggest, rather it has undergone a shift from landscape as still life to landscape and cityscape as a tumult of people, it has equally undergone a shift from the cityscape as a mainly visual entity to the cityscape as an aural, emotional and olfactory landscape, which is held in place by the wandering body in its position as narrative center.

One particularity of landscape in both novels is that it is peopled in such a way that the central walking body defines itself in relation to and through its distinction from a crowd of walkers. This is

obviously suited to the urban environment, but it is telling that the most particularizing features of the landscape in *Ulysses* are the Dubliners themselves whereas *Mrs Dalloway* shifts from consciousness to consciousness as if the narrative instance were navigating a crowd, picking the crowd apart and returning each person to their individual status within the collective. Notably, wandering can be qualified as a distinctly individuating kind of walking, as opposed to other more deliberate forms of walking such as marching.

Although in *Mrs Dalloway* the motions of the crowd are often reported, the crowd is frequently apprehended as an entity which acts as of one body, threatening to subsume individuality (“this astonishing and rather solemn progress with the rest of them” p. 9). In *Ulysses*, Dubliners hardly ever retain the anonymity necessary to qualify as the mass. Joyce rarely offers his readers a full description of a character’s appearance. However, what the author does consistently convey through his use of verbs and adverbs is each Dubliner’s own particular style, a particular aesthetics of motion with attention to a character’s gait or manner of walking which transpires in adjectives such as “stately” which precedes mention of Buck Mulligan or the verbs and adverbs which qualify Martin Cunningham’s entering the carriage in ‘Hades’: “Martin Cunningham, first, poked his silkhatred head into the creaking carriage and, entering deftly, seated himself” (6. 3930). Buck Mulligan is “stately” whereas Stephen looks “coldly”; Leopold Bloom is said to be “strolling” Dublin, a verb which implies leisure, pleasure and a great deal of idleness (5. 3436).

Bloom’s gait seems to confirm what we learn about him at the start of “Calypso”: he is a curious mixture of appetites tempered by empathy and passivity. The first thing the reader learns about him is what he “ate with relish” and “liked” (4: 2438-39). The fact that he “watched curiously, kindly” the cat, the number of times “feel” is used as a reporting verb in relation to Bloom, or the way he lets the blinds up “by gentle tugs”, all serve as important indications to Bloom’s receptive, empathetic and lustful stance, character traits which are already hinted at in the way he carries himself down the street. The tendency in *Ulysses* is to focus on each face in the crowd as in a close-up which isolates each

separate character through focus on the personal quality of gesture and motion. Crowds hardly ever feature in *Ulysses* without their immediate dislocation into individual passers-by.

The “Circe” episode is an exception. A few years ago at the James Joyce Symposium in London, Stephanie Nelson argued that “Circe”’s length and central position in the book seem to confirm that it is “Circe” rather than “Hades” which is Joyce’s rewriting of Ulysses’ descent into the underworld in Homer. There are only 22 occurrences of the word “crowd” in *Ulysses*, three of which refer to a crowd elsewhere or outside of the Dublin crowd of 1904, and two of which carry connotations of exclusion and othering with them. In ‘Eumaeus’ the narrator quotes Gray’s “Elegy in a Churchyard” to refer to “the madding crowd in Wicklow”, and Bloom reminisces about receiving the “nasty prod of some chap’s elbow in the crowd that of course congregated” to see Parnell before recovering Parnell’s hat (16: 27193). Bloom seeks to distinguish himself from the traitorous mass of Parnell’s betrayers, as he distinguishes himself from the crowd by retrieving the hat and making himself individually known. In “Penelope”, the crowd refers to a foreign landscape as Molly reminisces about watching a

bullfight at La Linea when that matador Gomez was given the bulls ear these clothes we have to wear whoever invented them expecting you to up Killiney hill then for example at that picnic all stayed up you cant do a blessed thing in them in a crowd run or jump out of the way that’s why I was afraid when that other ferocious old Bull began to charge the banderilleros with the sashes and the 2 things in their hats and the brutes of men shouting bravo toro sure the women were as bad in their nice white mantillas ripping all the whole insides out of those poor horses I never heard of such a thing in all my life. (18. 31347-55)

In “Hades” and “Aeolus” crowds receive passing mention as objects of suspicion inviting contempt or distinction, as a means of signaling the apartness and alien nature of a group and their dynamics of exclusion and ostracism are emphasized, as is evident from the adjectives which qualify them. Thus, in “Aeolus” J.J. O’Molloy asks Stephen “what do you think really of that hermetic crowd, the opal

hush poets: A.E. the mastermystic?" whereas in "Hades" Simon Daedalus takes issue with the company his son keeps. His animosity for Buck Mulligan as well as the fact that the latter is below deserving his son's company transpires in his referring to the "contaminated bloody doubledyed ruffian" as "a lowdown crowd" (6. 4017).

However, in "Circe," the crowd is a threatening presence. It makes a full 17 appearances, dramatizing its potential status as a character and a defining element of the setting. The crowd takes on different meanings or roles, successively acting the part of the "gallery", the "congregation", "the populace", or a "pack of curs and laughing hyenas" (15: 21020). The crowd thus functions as a spatial catalyst for Bloom's own feelings of inclusion or exclusion and the dynamics which qualify his rapport to Dublin. Like the masses of the dead in the Homeric episode, even the crowd in "Circe" progressively loses its anonymous character, as it breaks down into individuals who are referred to or addressed by name.

The crowd appears in "Circe" as the expression of a deep-rooted fear associated with it, which is the ultimate dislocation through loss of one's identity and the individual relations which give space its social significance. The crowd may swallow up the individual and weaken the accountability which characterizes individual relations to a known other. The horror of being out of place, unknown, and losing one's social bearings, is at the heart of the fantasized crowd in "Circe": when there is a "call for lynching" following Bloom's trial, he "turns to a figure in the crowd, appealing" directly by name to a person he knows. Bloom calls to Hynes: "Hynes, may I speak to you? You know me. That three shillings you can keep. If you want a little more..." to which Hynes replies "(Coldly) You are a perfect stranger" (15. 21262-66).

Later in the episode the crowd is broken down into a detailed list of names, as if in "Circe" listing names were a process by which the narrative shows a desperate attempt to keep at bay the full threat of the crowd which is dissolving the Dublin crowd of human relations and may result in disorientation



(15. 21486-532). The “mute inhuman faces” which “throng forward, leering, vanishing, gibbering” figure further in the sentence in a string of names which re-introduces the faces as those of the familiar members of a well-known cast: “Booloohoom Poldy Kock, Bootlaces a penny, Cassidy’s hag, blind stripling, Larry Rhinoceros, the girl, the woman, the whore, the other, the...).” Naming functions as a mantra recalling that like the Dublin of *Ulysses*, the crowd in “Circe” is always composed of a definite cast of characters so that no matter how disorientating an experience the “Circe” episode may be, this swirl of people only contributes to the certainty of location and the specificity of the Dublin setting.

The dangers of wandering through the crowd are part of the fantasized expression of unconscious fears in *Ulysses* but are a substantial threat in *Mrs Dalloway* where walking becomes an act of defiance, of emancipation from the self, or of heightened vitality. The coordinated motions of the crowd connote a subordination to empire and to a patriarchal system which inspires all at once awe, fear, and repulsion.

In *Mrs Dalloway* one’s body image or the social body is tied up with gendered patriarchal constraints which are militaristic, imperialistic and fundamentally alienating for the female city walker. One may think of the chain reaction at the passing of the Prime Minister or some unidentified official’s car in *Mrs Dalloway*, or the row of “tall men, men of robust physique, well-dressed men with their tail-coats and their white slips and their hair raked back, who, for reasons difficult to discriminate, were standing in the bow window of White’s with their hands behind the tails of their coats” who when the car passes “stood even straighter, and removed their hands, and seemed ready to attend their Sovereign, if need be, to the cannon’s mouth, as their ancestors had done before them” (pp. 15-16). Their posture expresses a masculinity and an orderliness in alliance with the might of empire and its alienating military march. Generally, in *Mrs Dalloway* a rigid posture signifies the pressure of responding to the crushing imperatives of patriarchal and imperialist London society, the most deathly example of which is war. This solemn and uniform progression, which marks the movement of the

crowd in London, haunts the wanderers of *Mrs Dalloway* and contrasts with the motions of collective life which bind Londoners together in a common social space.

The social dimension of embodiment is an equally powerful source of creativity and empathy, which is the bright side of the public sphere in *Mrs Dalloway* manifest in acts of composition which Clarissa carries out by offering a meeting point. The motion of the crowd in this moment sketches a collective orientation which implies individual loss of direction but guarantees each element's significance as part of the urban landscape.

Clarissa at times glimpses into this articulating process and more punctually shares this capacity when, for instance, she watches the old woman through the window in the house opposite and thinks that "here was one room; there another" (p. 108). The party which is the climax towards which *Mrs Dalloway* tends is in this sense a final act of composition, which echoes the effort Clarissa puts into composing herself for society:

How many million times she had seen her face, and always with the same imperceptible contraction! She pursed her lips when she looked in the glass. It was to give her face point. That was her self – pointed; dartlike; definite. That was her self when some effort, some call on her to be her self, drew the parts together, she alone knew how different, how incompatible and composed so for the world only into one centre, one diamond, one woman who sat in her drawing-room and made a meeting-point, a radiancy no doubt in some dull lives, a refuge for the lonely to come to, perhaps... (p. 37)

The party which concludes *Mrs Dalloway* is set in contrast to Clarissa's "solemn progress with the rest of them" at the beginning of the novel, and the accompanying sensation of fading into shadow, being "nothing, nothing at all." In this light, Clarissa's party may be a way to exorcize the dread of falling into pace with the procession of an apathetic crowd marching to its death by transforming it into a gathering of her own composition which culminates in a final sense of location. From the threat of "nothing" Clarissa manages to compose herself into a meeting-point or focal points of space and

time which is the last narrative event expressed by the final lines: “there she was.” It is also a way of opposing the facelessness of the crowd. In the collective space of the party names are put on faces and what is emphasized is the connectedness between individuals which gives the moment its significance.

It is a conundrum which seems all the more relevant in the context of the inter-war period, when the reality of war had laid emphasis on the instrumental nature of the walking bodies which fueled the war, often torn into parts, and of the potential for resistance of the marginal body and alternative ways of walking, or falling out of step. Walking is in this sense both an actual physical event and a metaphor for the entire militaristic nationalist discourse surrounding the empire.

So it seems that Woolf develops two conceptions of walking throughout *Mrs Dalloway*. Walking at times seems a passive act in which individuals lose their agency to become ghostlike bodies mindlessly retracing the steps of others before them. At first glance, one could be tempted to make a hasty comparison between Woolf and Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*, as wandering – like waiting – could be read here as an existentialist allegory for the inanity of existence. However, any nihilistic view of life as a trajectory with an inescapable orientation, as walking in a faceless crowd without any other direction than to trace well-worn footpaths, contrasts with a view of wandering as the disorienting assertion of the chorus. Although the disorienting motions of the city threaten the wanderer with dissipation and dissolution, the rhapsodic nature of the city suggests that art and narrative provide a way of connecting to a vital and musical rhythm which is the only means of inhabiting the moment in all its intensity and integrity and subsequently holding death at bay.

From a phenomenological perspective elaborated by Heidegger in his lecture “Building, Dwelling, Thinking,” to wander is to inhabit space and man’s relationship to space is essentially a form of dwelling.<sup>99</sup> What Woolf sketches out in *Mrs Dalloway* and further develops through the

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<sup>99</sup> Martin Heidegger. “Bâtir habiter penser”. In *Essais et conférences*, trad. A. Préau. Paris: Gallimard. 1958. pp. 186-188. “[...]le rapport de l’homme à des lieux et, par des lieux, à des espaces d’habitation. La relation de l’homme et de l’espace n’est rien d’autre que l’habitation pensée dans son être.”

character of Bernard in *The Waves* are two modes of walking which function as metaphors both of life and of narrative, which are linked in the novel.

This depiction of walking is uncannily resonant with de Certeau's view of mapping as a double process either of tracing the dead routes of conceptual space (a form of copying or imitation) or of mapping as an act of engaging with and inhabiting space (a form of creation). In sum, there are those who trace and those who map: the first view aligns walking with tracing, repeating a movement like a ghost of past movements, with neither direction nor significance, the second suggests a direct link between walking and an active process of mapping which implies reenacting space by inhabiting it.

For Michel de Certeau, the cartography of the city lends it visibility, but this visibility comes at the price of erasing the process of wandering through which it was constituted. What de Certeau makes clear is the contradiction between the disorienting process of wandering the city constitutive of lived space and the orienting process of map-making or representing the city which relies on forgetting that initial blindness of being-in-the-city. In *L'invention du quotidien*, de Certeau praises the spatial language of walking while criticizing its representation in urban cartography:

Itself visible, it has the effect of making invisible the operation that made it possible. These fixations constitute procedures for forgetting. The trace left behind is substituted for the practice. It exhibits the (voracious) property that the geographical system has of being able to transform action into legibility, but in doing so it causes a way of being in the world to be forgotten.<sup>100</sup>

Thus, in many ways, unfamiliarity and disorientation feature as privileged processes of signification and the richest topographic elements of the Dublin landscape are the Dubliners themselves. Although there are very few elements of surface description of landscape features, the bodies and sensory

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<sup>100</sup> Translation by Stephen Randall.

“Visible, elle a pour effet de rendre invisible l’opération qui l’a rendue possible. Ces fixations constituent des procédures d’oubli. La trace est substituée à la pratique. Elle manifeste la propriété (vorace) qu’a le système géographique de pouvoir métamorphoser l’agir en lisibilité, mais elle y fait oublier une manière d’être au monde.” Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-48.

realities of the Dubliners who people the urban environment compose Joyce's representation of space. Although it is possible to rename, divide, and appropriate a territory, Joyce suggests that Dublin is a product of the gestures, relations and experience of its inhabitants.

If the wandering body features so prominently in Joyce and Woolf's city novels, it is surely not so much as a medium for visualizing the city. It is less of a transparent means of apprehension or a lens through which the city is revealed than a means of disorientation, capturing the opacity of the lived urban experience, the essential blindness of being in the modern-day capital, the waywardness of wandering, and re-instilling city space with vital blind spots which are the necessary correlative to the creative force of *errance*. The focus on walking in the city opposes the representation of the city as an object of sight and complicates the notion of point of view. From the perspectives of Joyce's and Woolf's walkers, the city retains a certain opacity; their wanderings suggest a form of blindness necessary to experiencing the urban landscape not as a sight but as an immersive environment.

## 2. In the Footsteps of the Flâneur? An Attempt to Unsee the City

### 2.1. The flâneur, the panorama, and the Victorian “dream of transparency”

In *The Arcades Project*, Walter Benjamin terms “panoramic literature” a series of social vignettes composing “moral dioramas... of unscrupulous multiplicity” which sought to represent urban life and urban types.<sup>101</sup> In his description of what he saw as an emerging genre he lays stress on a characteristic of the urban setting: tied up with such visually potent representational strategies as the panorama or the diorama for instance, its representation embeds the impulse to see which gives it form. Although all representation may be understood to answer to a desire to see, the panorama goes further in equating the gaze with knowledge and power, through its all-encompassing bird’s-eye-view. From the sweeping panoramas of Dickens’ *Bleak House*, in the opening scenes of which the fog coordinates descriptions of the urban landscape, to the enthralling perspectives of New York as an overpowering vision in Céline’s *Voyage au bout de la nuit*, the fictional city has often been constructed from a remote viewpoint better to grasp its entirety; it is thus delineated as a potentially (however illusory) total visible entity.

Victor Burgin dates the appearance of the word ‘panorama’ in English to the late eighteenth-century, following the Irish portraitist Robert Barker’s patenting of “his idea of a landscape painting that would encircle the viewer” in 1787.<sup>102</sup> Possibly because the experience of the panorama replicated the viewer’s immersion in a microcosm of sorts, from its inception cityscapes were a preferred theme of panoramas. However, Burgin offers a concrete example of how the panorama specifically came to

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<sup>101</sup> Walter Benjamin. *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland & Kevin McLaughlin. Cambridge: The Harvard University Press. 1999. Q2, p. 6.

<sup>102</sup> Victor Burgin. “The Time of the Panorama.” In *Situational Aesthetics: Selected Writings by Victor Burgin*. Ed. Alexander Streitberger. Leuven: Leuven University Press. 2005. pp. 293-312.

serve as a means of restoring the legibility of the city in response to the growing sprawl and incomprehensible nature of city space. He writes that at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century:

London itself had become opaque to those who lived there. In 1829 the second Panorama of London opened in London itself, one of a number of such spectacles offering a comprehensive overview of a city for the benefit of those who lived in it. The streets from which the spectators entered the panorama were experienced as largely obscure, incoherent and unintelligible.<sup>103</sup>

At this time the panorama already functioned as an epistemological tool responding to the city's opacity, enabling the viewer to apprehend or possess the elusive space of the city or at least offering an illusory sense of mastering its confusing spaces. Likewise, the physiologies from which the figure of the *flâneur* was born, or what Walter Benjamin coined 'panoramic literature', sought to condense the essence of city dwellers or city walkers into character types and likewise constituted a way of gaining a synthetic view of the city which would help to "[make] sense of a metropolis veering into senselessness."<sup>104</sup> Physiologies, as their name indicates, were vignettes which aimed to incorporate urban city dwellers into the city's panorama by reducing them to visualized and discernable types with a set physiology. In this sense, panorama, *flâneur* and physiologies all relate to a scopic drive to view the city through its representation as a (more or less distant) sight.

In *The Routledge Companion for Architecture Design and Practice*, James Carpenter and Ben Colebrook explore the ideal of transparency in Victorian architecture, following the influence of constructions such as the Crystal Palace (1851-1854).<sup>105</sup> Although their essay insists on transparency entailing not so much the erasure of materiality from architectural design as a new engagement with

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<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.* p. 297.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* p. 300.

<sup>105</sup> James Carpenter & Ben Colebrook. "Transparency: The Substance of Light in the Design Concept". In *The Routledge Companion for Architecture Design and Practice*. Eds. Mitra Kanaani & Dak Kopec. New York: Routledge. 2016. pp. 169-183.

light as substance and its use in architecture, they do underline how elements of Victorian urban architecture had begun to explore erasing the boundaries between interior and exterior space which the *flâneur*'s walk articulates. For example, Joseph Paxton's 1855 proposal for the Great Victorian Way is described as representative of:

a radical urbanism, merging transport, commerce and residential functions, all built around a 108 foot high and 72 foot wide, 11-mile glass-enclosed pedestrian arcade. [...] The pedestrian arcade is at its center, a steel arched frame onto which the commercial, residential and transportation elements are attached. What are usually interior functions/spaces are applied to the building's exterior, while the boundary and façade of the urban building system is inserted into its center. Retail spaces open on to the arcade at ground level while residential spaces are above the retail spaces and look out into the arcade. The elevated rail lines delineate the outer wings of the structure. The highest point of the structure is the arching glass vault above the arcade harvesting and transmitting light within the ceramic-clad volume of the arcade. [...] The sky and daylight are harvested by the glass vault, the surface treatments reflecting light to create a luminous volume penetrating the full height of the structure and running its length (McGrath & Frost, 1961). From this volume of light, the other habitable spaces access daylight.<sup>106</sup>

Is the *flâneur* equally the product of an architectural city space expressing a desire for transparency or visibility? Such an architectural structure, with its metallic frame, arching glass vaults and arcade function is emblematic of the galleries which the rise of capitalism and the need for adapted retail spaces entailed. It equally coincides with women's increased presence in the semi-public shopping spaces of the city in which the dream of women's economic emancipation encountered the dream of accessing public space, viewing the city and gaining visibility. The modern city, whether imperial or colonial, incorporated retail spaces which linked walking to an intrinsically encouraged scopophilia and to the notion of point of view. The scopic sweep of the *flâneurly* gaze likewise seems to rely on an opening up of urban space onto grand panoramas, open boulevards and, to a degree,

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.* p. 181.



megastructures which encourage the notion of space as a spectacle, contrasting for example with the wanderer or *badaud*'s representation of the city which results from their adventuring into the disorienting spaces and resulting sensory confusion of back-alleys, side-streets, and alternative itineraries.

In "The *Flâneur*'s Scopic Power or the Victorian Dream of Transparency," Estelle Murail links this scopic impulse to what she calls the Victorian dream of transparency and, as Walter Benjamin before her, to the emblematic nineteenth-century urban literary figure of the *flâneur*.<sup>107</sup> The *flâneur* functions as a representational strategy which illustrates a conception of the relation between the individual and urban space in literature and, as traditionally instrumental to the establishment of a point of view, is strikingly appropriated and subverted in *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses*.

In an analysis of the evolution of the figure of the *flâneur* from one of its earliest appearances in a nineteenth-century pamphlet entitled *Le Flâneur au salon ou M. Bonhomme* to Baudelaire's bohemian *artiste-flâneur* to the early shoppers of Zola's *Au Bonheur des Dames* and Flaubert's Frédéric Moreau, Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson hints at the figure's role in expressing the "dream of domination" with which the representation of a panoramic urban landscape is so frequently imbued.<sup>108</sup> Essential to this dream of domination is the scope through which the viewer apprehends the city, namely the remote viewpoint:

However different the mode and the tone of the texts, the *flâneur*'s distance from the city replays the dream of domination so obvious in Hugo's celebrated 'Paris à vol d'oiseau' in *Notre-Dame de Paris*. The disengagement that sets the *flâneur* apart depends upon the marked social distance, which reproduces the physical distance of the bird's-eye-views and panoramas in which contemporaries so often indulge. In both, the city revolves around the spectator, who copes with urban diversity by reducing it to a marvellous show.

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<sup>107</sup> Estelle Murail. "The *Flâneur*'s Scopic Power or the Victorian Dream of Transparency". In *Cahiers victoriens et édouardiens*, n° 77 (Spring, 2013). Online at: <http://cve.revues.org/252>. Last consulted: 20/07/2017.

<sup>108</sup> Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson. "The *flâneur* on and off the streets of Paris". In *The Flâneur*. Ed. Keith Tester. Abingdon: Routledge. 1994. pp. 22-42.

The *flâneur*'s ability to celebrate the unanticipated lies in his evident superiority to whatever challenges he may encounter.<sup>109</sup>

In other terms, as the archetypal mode of representing walking in the streets in Western literature through the narratological device of the point-of-view, the *flâneur* signals a spatializing, disembodied conception of space which encourages the reader's orientation within a city through his masterly perspective.

## 2.2. Cities with a view? Panoramas in *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway*

At the city's heart of darkness lies a dream of domination, informed at one end of the spectrum by the scopic impulse which fuels descriptions of the fictional urban setting from a god's-eye-view and at the other by the suggestion of its more confusing labyrinthine meanderings, recesses and excesses, which is foregrounded in the urban wanderer's apperceptions, blindness and visual confusion. Needless to say, the urban wanderers of Joyce's and Woolf's cities wind their way through these contradictions. Although I will ultimately argue that Joyce and Woolf mediate their representations of the urban setting through the wandering body, which offers an immersive experience which differs from that of the *flâneur*, with significant political, ontological and aesthetic implications, the dream of domination suggested by panoramic or dioramic effects is not entirely absent from Joyce's Dublin or Woolf's London. Rather, both authors periodically wrought an underlying panoramic view concomitant with a flâneurly scopic impulse into their representation of the city.

In *The Spectator and the City*, Dana Brand argues "that the most popular forms of representation in London at the same time as the flâneur was the dominant mode of representing

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.* p. 31.

London in the magazines”, including “panoramas, dioramas, cosmoramas, eidophusikons, magic lanterns, and camerae obscurae,” which all “made use of the same techniques of typological and schematic reduction as the flâneur. They would offer the impression of seeing the “whole” by representing a few recognizable structures and features interspersed with “typical” objects, establishments, and individuals.”<sup>110</sup> He highlights the panorama’s role in fostering the optical illusion which allows for a representation of the city as a view.

In this light, the most notorious literary city walker of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the figure of the *flâneur*, may be seen as a medium of sight, serving an epistemological function. Indeed, the process in which the *flâneur* is involved is that of mediating city-space’s disparity through the assembling, unifying dynamics of representation, reconfiguring the city as a visible, meaningful entity and distancing himself from the confusion of the urban environment by reverting it to a spectacle. This is particularly clear in the *flâneur*’s historic association with the trope of the devil Asmodeus, able to lift off the rooftops of the city to reveal the vices of its inhabitants. Asmodeus’s all-seeing devil’s-eye-view is directly related to the remote viewpoint and resulting omniscience which constitute the *flâneur*’s superiority.<sup>111</sup> In the *flâneur*’s apprehension of the city sight is linked to the power of possessing space through one’s visual knowledge of it. The figure thus emblemizes an insidious link between sight, knowledge and power. The *flâneur* renders the city visible and comprehensible by enabling the transition from the urban environment as embodied space to the fictional city-scene as conceptual space.

In a recent essay focusing on the figure of the *flâneur*, Estelle Murail makes this point, noting that “the *flâneur*’s enduring ubiquity is due to the fact that he offers us a perspective from which we can view and comprehend the city.”<sup>112</sup> Such a claim equally underlies Walter Benjamin’s famous

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<sup>110</sup> Dana Brand. *The Spectator and the City in Nineteenth Century American Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1991. p. 52.

<sup>111</sup> Estelle Murail. *Op. cit.*

<sup>112</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 67.

association of the *flâneur* with the panorama or remote viewpoint. If the *flâneur* enables the reader to view the city, it is mostly as a spectacle which involves a certain measure of distance. Echoing Anthony Vidler's claim that "modernity has been haunted, as we know very well, by a myth of transparency: transparency of the self to nature, of the self to the other, of all selves to society", in Estelle Murail's view, the *flâneur* reflects a Victorian dream of transparency which perhaps bears a connection to the urban wanderer of early modernist literature and its simultaneous forays into subjectivity through the stream-of-consciousness technique.<sup>113</sup>

As the title of Dorrit Cohn's seminal work on techniques of reporting thought and inner speech, *Transparent Minds*, attests, there seems to be a common denominator in the dream of transparency which ranges from seeing the city streets to seeing into the channels of consciousness. It may be that when the dream of transparency extends to the mind one seems to have reached the limits of the *flâneur*'s territory, yet such a dream begins with the *flâneur*'s exploration and exposure of city space. It was for instance inevitably reflected in the glassing of London city and the rise of arcade spaces later in the century to promote retail consumption.

In Murail's view, the *flâneur* more fully enables this dream because he himself acts as a "transparent medium through whose eyes we see the city" thus "[becoming] the perfect embodiment of the Scopic dream." Here it is perhaps necessary to distinguish between two possible conceptions of transparency as they relate to narrative. "Transparent" might mean that the *flâneur* is invisible, and, in this sense, not the object of scrutiny or the focus of narration but a self-effaced medium of sight whose function is to allow the reader enough distance to see and enjoy the city. This is not, however, the conclusion Murail arrives at. She argues that the *flâneur* is not "purely transparent – he does not make the city 'manifest, evident, obvious and clear' (OED), or restore it without distortions." Rather, she

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<sup>113</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 217.

sees the *flâneur* as a mediator, a translator of the “urban text”, “the reader and interpreter of modern life”.<sup>114</sup>

Another conception of transparency is that which Cohn employs in *Transparent Minds* to mean quite the reverse, which is to say that consciousness – the seeing or perceiving subject – has become the object of scrutiny, highly and immediately visible, and is presented in such a way as to foster the illusion of being accessible without any obstruction.<sup>115</sup> This contradiction already seems to call attention to the difficult question of *flâneuring* as a mode of walking in *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* and the conflict between the desired transparency of the subject’s consciousness and the materiality of the streetwalker’s body. The *flâneur* himself is transparent, “an invisible type” illustrating what Murail sees as “a sort of drive to the dematerial in the nineteenth century in which dense matter is overcome by a desiring gaze.”

The figure of the *flâneur* undoubtedly informs the urban wanderings of *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* and much criticism has been devoted to interpreting Bloom as a *flâneur* and, significantly for feminist studies, to whether Clarissa Dalloway may be conceived as a *flâneuse*. The question of how Woolf’s female city walkers subvert the figure of the *flâneur*, which is historically an exclusively masculine type, has been instrumental to arguing for a feminist re-appropriation of the public spaces of the city and resistance to a patriarchal hegemony which seeks to control women’s use of space along with their body images. Considering the *flâneur*’s role in the representation of the city in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century literature, the question of the *flâneur* has inevitably informed criticism of Joyce’s and Woolf’s representation of the walking body in the city. For example, in *Realist Fiction and the Strolling Spectator*, John Rignall begins a chapter on “Modern Metamorphoses of the Flaneur” with reference to Woolf and Joyce<sup>116</sup>:

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<sup>114</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 26.

<sup>115</sup> Dorrit Cohn. *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1978.

<sup>116</sup> John Rignall. *Realist Fiction and the Strolling Spectator*. Abingdon: Routledge. 1992.

There is a clear continuity here between the modernists and their realist predecessors, and it extends to their use of a strolling witness to life on the streets. Woolf's Peter Walsh and Joyce's Leopold Bloom are descendants of the realist *flâneur*, agents of a vision that once again inspires to inclusiveness, but, as a few examples will illustrate, an inclusiveness of a different order and achieved on a different level.<sup>117</sup>

It is tempting to see Clarissa Dalloway as a *flâneuse*, navigating the streets of London, reveling in the vitality and modernity of city life. First, because in her essay "Street Haunting" Virginia Woolf depicts the liberating pleasures of roaming the streets through the representation of the street-walker as a transparent entity, comparable to an all-seeing, lidless eye which resonates with the *flâneur* while expressing an emancipatory desire for feminine walking devoid of the pressures and constraints of the gaze which in public reduces women's bodies to objects and the female sense of self to her body-image. As *flâneuse*, woman takes to the streets and dons the empowering robes of the voyeuristic onlooker who enjoys the erasure of her own body-object and its ability to turn her into a potential object of the other's gaze.

In *The Spectator and the City*, Dana Brand notes:

the emergence of the flaneur is related to a process that the sociologist Richard Sennett has identified as central to the urban culture of the early nineteenth century. During this period, Sennett observes, in *The Fall of Public Man*, "public behavior" for the bourgeoisie was transformed into "a matter of observation, of passive participation, of a certain kind of voyeurism."<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.* p. 152.

<sup>118</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 42.

One facet of this passive participation, the emancipatory pleasure of the voyeur, can be seen in Woolf's depiction of the urban wanderer in "Street Haunting", in which wandering amounts to a fantasy of freedom from the self. Such aesthetic detachment resonates with what Baudelaire writes of the artist Constantin Guys in "The Painter of Modern Life":

So out he goes and watches the river of life flow past him in all its splendor and majesty. He marvels at the eternal beauty and the amazing harmony of life in the capital cities, a harmony so providentially maintained amid the turmoil of human freedom. He gazes upon the landscapes of great cities.... He delights in fine carriages and proud horses, the dazzling smartness of the grooms, the expertness of the footmen, the sinuous gait of the women, the beauty of the children, happy to be alive and nicely dressed – in a word, he delights in universal life.<sup>119</sup>

Baudelaire's euphoric description of the city as a spectacular vignette recalls in its very syntax and style the no less euphoric depiction of London as a vignette in the first pages of *Mrs Dalloway*. However, in Baudelaire's description, the object of delight seems to be the vitality of the city with its civilized mechanisms. Although the painter relishes this aesthetic experience, which is indeed more than a spectacle, including an enthusiastic impulse ("delight") which draws him into the city's motion not unlike Clarissa is drawn by the rhythms of London, Constantin Guys is depicted as adopting a posture of contemplation which shows his subjectivity to be unaltered by the city he marvels at. Conversely, although Clarissa's stance is highly reflexive, as she is caught up in the rhythm of the city and in "this moment of June", her sense of self becomes mingled with the sense of the city to the extent that she experiences not just delight but a moment of ecstasy which is both liberating and dangerous.

As the conventional vector or product of a dominant gaze, the panorama is one representational technique which Joyce and Woolf appropriate, but it creates a disorienting effect and produces visual

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<sup>119</sup> Charles Baudelaire. "The Painter of Modern Life." In *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, trans. Jonathan Mayne. New York: Phaidon. 1964. p. 11.

confusion. Indeed, the incipit of *Ulysses* serves its purpose as an exposition scene all the while mocking the panoramic, bird's-eye-view perspective of the conventional portrayal of setting adopted in novels of place. "Wandering Rocks" goes further in parodying the bird's-eye-view perspective in relation to wandering. All throughout the first three episodes, the "Telemachus" section of the book, Stephen's gaze relays a depiction of the setting which is somewhat out of focus, either seen at too great a distance, as in the "Telemachus" episode where the panoramic view of cliffs and sea recurs, mediated through Shakespearean lines, or at too close quarters, as in "Proteus" where Stephen's blindness intermingles with sight to form his perception of things, which become the isolated objects of his focus as they draw near, constituting obstacles to his blind "wandering into eternity."

In the opening chapter of *Ulysses* rather than any global view of Dublin readers have the recurring limits of Dublin Bay impressed upon them through the returning image of the sea and its overlapping with the emotions of grief and betrayal which haunt Stephen in the wake of his mother's death. In "Proteus" immediate forms and specifically Dublin-based landmarks intermingle with timeless entities, as Stephen reads them from the perspective of phenomenological philosophy, hinting at their partaking in a process of eternal regeneration.

It may be useful to recall that "Proteus" functions as a transitional episode marking the return or taking to the streets which in "Calypso" leads us into the streets of Dublin and the actuality of the city. In "Wandering Rocks" Joyce draws up a parody of panoramic representations of space, which turns the figure of the *flâneur* upon its head, replacing the idle waywardness of individual wandering with the deliberate orchestration of a narrative structure in which the motions of the characters are instrumental in portraying a larger view of the city as a vast mechanism of itineraries and coincidental encounters, the irony of which emerges when they are put into perspective through the remote viewpoint. In this sense the roaming point of view in "Wandering Rocks" seeks to create the illusion of exposing the clockwork of a transparent Dublin.



Furthermore, *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* revisit the panorama in their exposition of setting yet these panoramas paradoxically foreground a visual and sensory confusion which contributes to a profound sense of place. *Ulysses* begins with the ascent of Martello Tower and a panoramic view of Dublin and the encircling Dublin Bay. In a ceremonious parody of mass which has oft been noted for replicating a mock god's-eye-view, Buck Mulligan "solemnly [...] came forward and mounted the round gunrest. He faced about and blessed gravely thrice the tower, the surrounding country and the awaking mountains" (*U* 1.18) The initial location of Buck Mulligan and Stephen Dedalus atop Martello Tower, walking around the parapet, is suggestive of the aforementioned 18<sup>th</sup>-century panorama, a circular painting representing a landscape which surrounded the viewer who could appreciate it in a form of peripatetic immersion due to its forming a 360° angle, otherwise called a reflex angle.

However, whatever Buck sees from a "god's-eye-view" – or indeed the perspective of the colonial usurper – never quite suffices to sight the surrounding city or for the reader to gain a dominant point of view. Barely is the panoramic view sketched by the suggestion of "the surrounding country and the awaking mountains" that Buck "catching sight of Stephen Dedalus," diverts his gaze to focus on Stephen, who "displeased and sleepy, leaned his arms on the top of the staircase and looked coldly" and begins an exchange of watchful gazes (1. 21). Indeed, Stephen is referred to as Buck's "watcher", and the wariness which qualifies the gaze from this point on is in contradiction with the distance which one expects of a panoramic view. Buck is described as "shav[ing] warily over his chin" which implies a close and careful focus on the body. As Buck goes "over to the parapet" the reader is not gratified with a view of Dublin but with the depiction of Stephen Dedalus "[sitting] down on the edge of the gunrest, watching him still as he propped his mirror on the parapet, dipped the brush in the bowl and lathered cheeks and neck" (1. 55). Many times, the parapet is mentioned, coming to constitute a sort of brink over which sight could plummet, but being in fact the very edge of that vision which is consistently denied in favor of the construction of a closer physical intimacy.

Buck's razorblade remains the main focus until he "hopped down from his perch and began to search his trouser pockets hastily," and though he does gaze closely "over the handkerchief" painted with "a new art colour for our Irish poets: snotgreen," when he "mount[s] to the parapet again and gaze[s] out over Dublin bay," visual focus stops at Stephen's sight of "his fair oakpale hair stirring slightly" (1. 97-114). Invited to come and look, Stephen "[goes] over to the parapet" but even in this instance the close focus of his gaze, directed downwards and registering only a "mailboat clearing the harbor mouth of Kingstown" frustrates a comprehensive view.

In fact, the exposition scene of *Ulysses* recalls the dominant viewpoint of the panorama while presenting a view of the surroundings which is pointedly obscured by the more focused attention given to the body which interferes with any proper sighting of the city environment. Stephen's gaze is watchful, articulated through the careful assessment of his surroundings, not synthetic as a panoramic gaze would imply, but analytic. Under his decomposing gaze Buck's body is metonymically fragmented until each separate part swamps the field of vision, disrupting the exposition of setting and the appropriation of the place. The panorama is made of consistently interrupted views so that it retains none of the sovereign immobility or entirety of the image. The material body operates as a network of interferences which impede the constitution of a remote viewpoint and of the city as a sight. The city from afar, the vertical panorama which is retrieved through parody in "Wandering Rocks", is lost from view through a focus on the body from up close.

In those few instances where Stephen's gaze does frame the surrounding landscape, the body acts as a visual obstruction. Close focus on the body comes to contaminate the view, so that the panorama does not reveal the setting as a comprehensible entity so much as underline the instability of an embodied perspective. In this way, when Buck does come to focus on the sight of the sea surrounding Dublin, he refers to it as "the snotgreen sea. The scrotumtightening sea," linking the view of the sea to a physical sensation of excretion and recoil. Furthermore, this description comes directly in the wake of his close observation of Stephen's soiled handkerchief, so that the close examination of

the bodily excrement contaminates the panorama of the surrounding country. Likewise, when Stephen rests an elbow “on the jagged granite” in a posture of contemplation, “lean[ing] his palm against his brow” what comes into close focus is his relative destitution apparent in “the fraying edge of his shiny black coat-sleeve.”

What Stephen does see “across the threadbare cuffedge” is grammatically ambiguous: “he saw the sea hailed as a great sweet mother by the wellfed voice beside him”, for what exactly Stephen saw hangs in the balance of whatever focus the reader chooses to privilege: either he saw the sea or he did not see the sea but “saw the sea hailed [...] by the wellfed voice beside him” and in this case, did not see at all but heard a voice somehow bearing with it the physicality of the corpulent form from which it originates (1. 156). The one sentence which seems to offer an actual panoramic view of the sea: “the ring of bay and skyline held a dull green mass of liquid” equally suffers the interference of Stephen’s snapshot memory of the sight of the “bowl of white china [which] had stood beside [his mother’s] deathbed holding [...] green sluggish bile” so that the body of the sea is preceded by the interfering presence of the maternal body (1. 158).

Through such acts of interference, the embodied perspective allows Joyce to represent both the stigma and the failure of a colonialist appropriation of Dublin from the particular perspective of Stephen. The body of the exiled Irish artist is stigmatized by the double bind of the maternal body which ties him to his country and the mother-sea which he rejects. Stephen’s Dublin is expressed in bodily terms by the ambivalence of the “snotgreen” “scrotumtightening” sea: a source of both poetic inspiration and invasion. The Dublin landscape is shown to be engaged in a process through which its meanings are re-appropriated as it is inhabited by the bodies of the Dubliners who walk its streets.

In the exposition scene of *Ulysses*, the panoramic viewpoint offers no view of the city as a visible sight but rather presents sight as a zone of interference subordinated to the confusion of the body. The body functions as a disruptive force, unsettling the scale of perception and the boundaries

between the internal and the external, the mental and the physical. It is notable, on the other hand, that “Telemachus” enacts a descent from the tower and into the streets, into the relative blindness of the “Proteus” episode which explores the “modality of the visible”, in which things give themselves at close focus to be read and (mis)interpreted.

*Mrs Dalloway* equally begins with a panorama of sorts, a representation of London which suggests ubiquitous vision as filtered through a prism of independent sensations and perceptions. Here as in “Telemachus” the panorama is disrupted, however, in “Telemachus” these interruptions are mostly spatial, focus being set on the fragmented elements of the body, and Stephen’s memory of his mother’s body acting as visual interferences in a scene otherwise firmly anchored in the present. By contrast, in *Mrs Dalloway* these disruptions are decidedly temporal, instilling the London cityscape with images of Bourton which distance Clarissa from the present as they resurface through sensation-induced memories linked together by a prevailing sense of self. When Clarissa opens the door to step out onto the streets of Westminster, the sensation of the fresh air calls up the window view at Bourton with its “flowers” and “trees with the smoke winding off them and the rooks rising, falling.” This temporal density entails not just a form of extended sight but also a form of blindness.

Considering the representation of the city through the panorama and the perspective of the *flâneur* in these urban peripatetic novels, one could argue that these cities are as equally characterized by blindness as by sight. Molly’s perspective as a Dubliner is entirely constructed from the darkness of her bedroom; Clarissa’s eye is as often turned inward or to the past as it is outward or to the present; Bloom looks for things he cannot see, such as the anuses of statues of Greek Goddesses at the National Museum; the blind stripling is a character who in *Ulysses* recalls the alternative to viewing the city with the persistent “tap” of his cane upon the pavements; Elizabeth Dalloway boards the omnibus and looks into the distance with the unfocused gaze of a “sculpture”.

Indeed, when Scrope Purvis catches sight of Clarissa waiting to cross, we learn that this is a recurring event and that although she has lived next door to him in Westminster for over twenty years, she continues to perch “never seeing him.” Clarissa’s foray into the streets is almost immediately followed by what can be considered a panoramic description of London but it is oddly conflated with an almost mystical association of the city with life. That the same vitality imbues life and London, the same rhythm orchestrates the flow of blood through the body or the flow of people in the streets or words on the page, is a hidden meaning which Clarissa touches upon many times throughout the novel. The physical and spiritual dimensions are articulated through rhythm. This transpires in the succession of verbs in “-ing” form, the quick enumeration of means of transportation, and the alliterative quality of the sentences, all conveying the equation of London with vitality and movement:

In people’s eyes, in the swing, tramp, and trudge; in the bellow and the uproar; the carriages, motor cars, omnibuses, vans, sandwich men shuffling and swinging; brass bands; barrel organs; in the triumph and the jingle and the strange high singing of some aeroplane overhead was what she loved; life; London; this moment of June. (p. 4)

The following paragraph pursues this description, taking us through a succession of vignettes which escape the fixity of the image through their temporal span and the multiplicity of points of view involved. The description begins with a scene which takes us from one Londoner to the next: “Mrs Foxcroft at the Embassy last night eating her heart out because that nice boy was killed and now the old Manor House must go to a cousin,” and moves on to the rumor (“they say”) of “Lady Bexborough [opening] a bazaar [...] with the telegram in her hand, John, her favorite, killed” and continues with a survey which aims at ubiquity:

It was June. The King and Queen were at the Palace. And everywhere, though it was still so early, there was a beating, a stirring of galloping ponies, tapping of cricket bats [...]

wrapped the soft mesh of the grey-blue morning air, which, as the day wore on, would unwind them, and set down on their lawns and pitches the bouncing ponies [...] the whirling young men, and laughing girls [...] and even now, at this hour, discreet old dowagers were shooting out in their motor cars on errands of mystery; and the shopkeepers were fidgeting in their windows with their paste and diamonds [...] and she, too, loving it as she did with an absurd and faithful passion, being part of it [...] she, too, was going that very night to kindle and illuminate; to give her party. (pp. 4-5)

As mentioned previously, this passage from *Mrs Dalloway* recalls Baudelaire's description of the artist Constantin Guys in "The Painter of Modern Life". The enumeration of select elements to form a scene or vignette recalls the synthetic view associated with the panorama and with the panoramic viewpoint of the *flâneur*. However, as the pleasant features of the landscape which Baudelaire pictures in Constantin Guy's mind's eye underline, the *flâneur*'s view of "universal life" was particularly skewed to suit a certain vision of bourgeois city life which does not entirely align with the self-surrender of Joycean and Woolfian walkers who physically engage with their urban environments.

In the introduction to *Life in London*, Pierce Egan describes *The Devil upon Two Sticks* as offering "a Camera Obscura View of London, not only because of its safety, but because it is so *snug* and also possessing the invaluable advantages of SEEING and not being *seen*."<sup>120</sup> The "snug" security of the *flâneur*'s panoramic point of view is in stark contrast with the sense of danger which infuses Clarissa's view of London with vitality and the dangerous association of "Life" with London. Whereas on the one hand the reader is offered a panoramic view of the city as a visual consumption, a vast display of commodities from which one may choose one's pickings for pleasure, on the other, Clarissa's participation in the London scene, and her potential exclusion from it, suggest that the representation of the city in *Mrs Dalloway* is colored by suggestions of a *flâneurly* gaze with which it is nonetheless fundamentally at odds.

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<sup>120</sup> Pierce Egan. *Life in London*. London: John Camden Hotten. 1869. p. 46. (his emphases)

In “Imagining Flânerie Beyond Anthropocentrism: Virginia Woolf, The London Archipelago, and City Tortoises,” Caroline Pollentier stakes the interesting claim that there is an “imperceptible ontological displacement at work in the practice of “street-haunting”.”<sup>121</sup> Insofar as I see the *flâneur*’s lack of vulnerability or his inability to be impressed upon by his external environment which is reduced to a sight, her argument that Woolf questions the “self-enclosed” nature of the *flâneur*, is compelling. Pollentier argues that Woolf portrays a “deterritorialized *flâneuse*” of sorts, involved in an “urban process of transmigration” which “momentarily disrupts self-enclosed subjectivity.” She highlights an essential quality of the Woolfian and Joycean wanderers which distinguishes them from the conventional *flâneur*, which is an empathetic stance or their predisposition to project themselves into the skins of other passersby. The *flâneuse* of Woolf’s texts would thus find in metempsychosis a way to escape the constraining dimension of the female body object or self-image through a momentary displacement. In doing so, however, she foregoes her detachment from the external world or the city, returning to the environment the capacity to affect the self in an act of willful dispossession. If there is a *flâneuse* in *Mrs Dalloway* she distinguishes herself from the *flâneur* quite remarkably by giving up her self-possession to empathize and adopt other points of view, however momentarily.

This is the opposite of what Victor Fournel describes, when he opposes the *flâneur* to other figures of urban wanderings such as the *badaud* in “Ce qu’on voit dans les rues de Paris” in 1858:

The average flâneur is always in full possession of his individuality, while that of the rubberneck disappears, absorbed by the external world, [...] which moves him to the point of intoxication and ecstasy. Under the influence of the spectacle, the rubberneck becomes an impersonal being. He is no longer a man – he is the public; he is the crowd.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Caroline Pollentier. “Imagining Flânerie Beyond Anthropocentrism: Virginia Woolf, the London Archipelago, and City Tortoises”. In *Woolf and the City: Selected Papers of the Nineteenth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf*. Eds. Elizabeth F. Evans & Sarah E. Cornish. Clemson: Clemson University Digital Press. pp. 20-30. p. 1.

<sup>122</sup> Translation by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. “Le simple flâneur... est toujours en pleine possession de son individualité. Celle du badaud disparaît au contraire, absorbée par le monde extérieur... qui le frappe jusqu’à l’enivrement et l’extase. Le badaud, sous l’influence du spectacle, devient un être impersonnel ; ce n’est

The Woolfian female wanderer, while bordering on the *flâneuse*, is indeed haunted by the threat and exaltation of a dispossession which can also be liberating. Clarissa's absorption in her environment in the opening of *Mrs Dalloway* stands in stark contrast to the *flâneur* who, albeit a marginal figure, is one characterized by his detachment and self-possession. Clarissa's powers of observation along with her acutely reflexive stance (as is generally true of Woolf's pedestrians) provide the grounds for the reader or the critic to conflate her stance with that of the *flâneur*. As a way of underlining the importance of an early twentieth-century female character who undertakes the politically significant act of occupying public urban space and is productive of the space which she occupies, which becomes a space of her own, the association is tantalizing. However, the fact that in my view Clarissa is precisely not a *flâneuse* emphasizes her profoundly embodied anchorage in the city she navigates and serves to validate other marginalized spaces which would escape the centralizing orientation of the *flâneur's* gaze.

Bloom likewise blends into his environment, as his body language expresses priorities which interfere with the priorities of the narrative in "Lotus Eaters" (when for example the reader's attention is drawn to Bloom's hand in his pocket calling attention to his preoccupation with the letter he has received from his lover Martha) or when his sensory perception disrupts the correctness of syntax to mingle with the goods offered up for consumption in "Lestrygonians" ("perfume of embraces all him assailed. With hungered flesh obscurely, he mutely craved to adore" 8. 7957), or when he mimicks the gait of a servant-girl in the street on his way back from the butcher's in "Calypso". Bloom's visual apprehension of the city is consistently conveyed through metonymy. At the butcher's in "Calypso" he notes the servant girl's "sodachapped hands" and the butcher's "sausagepink" ones. His gaze is submerged by the materiality of body parts or isolated sensations such as her "crooked skirt" or the

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plus un homme: il est public, il est foule." Victor Fournel. "Ce qu'on voit dans les rues de Paris." In *Paris, capitale du XIXe siècle*. Paris: Éditions du cerf. 1989. p. 447.



sleek black of Molly's cat. The close focus of Bloom's gaze constitutes a unique form of visual apperception which equally sets him apart from the *flâneur*.

However, for Bloom, performing a different identity or slipping into another's skin never entails a threat to one's self but rather enriches his experience with alternative layers of the self which add to his character. For instance, in imitating the servant girl in "Calypso" he expresses his arousal by her female presence but also his arousal at impersonating female sexuality. This fantasy of Bloom's is confirmed in "Circe" in which Bloom is divided into male and female personalities, Bello and Bella, which allow him to experience his sexual fantasies from both perspectives, actively and passively. In this sense, transmigration is a far more dangerous process for Clarissa than it is for Bloom because a woman's self although infinitely malleable is as equally vulnerable to distortions and external impositions in the public eye.

In *Beyond the Flâneur: Walking, Passage and Crossing in London and Paris in the Nineteenth Century*, Estelle Murail equally offers a valuable revision of the concept of the *flâneur*.<sup>123</sup> Murail points to the need for a necessary qualification of the scopocentric conception of the *flâneur* which has existed since the emergence of the concept in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. She lays emphasis on the *flâneur's* fluidity as an urban type and his link to "other gazing figures whose traits he adopts and discards as he moves seamlessly through time." Building upon Baudelaire's comparison of the *flâneur* to a sketch-artist, she argues that the *flâneur's* gaze is not solely panoramic but adopts other forms of gazing, having that quality of the sketch which "con[veys] the sense of loss and speed which epitomizes the Dionysian urban experience" because it is "fragmentary and swiftly outlined."<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Estelle Murail. *Beyond the Flâneur: Walking, Passage and Crossing in London and Paris in the Nineteenth Century*. PhD dissertation. Online at: [https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/en/theses/beyond-the-flaneur\(63133494-2062-4b12-a4c2-b4e6d9596548\).html](https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/en/theses/beyond-the-flaneur(63133494-2062-4b12-a4c2-b4e6d9596548).html). Last accessed: 20/07/2017.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.* p. 111.

Indeed, as the above quoted passage from “The Painter of Modern Life” illustrates, the aesthetics of the panorama entail composing multiple fragments into a synthetic whole, so that what is distinctive about the *flâneur*’s panoramic gaze is not so much the absence of a fragmentary perspective, but rather their participation in a process of orientation, which is to say the reduction of these fragments into the impression of a “whole”, which is a conception of the city’s space. Underlining the link between the panorama and the *flâneur*, Dana Brand sees the same use of the fragmentary in other modes of visual representation such as “panoramas, dioramas, cosmoramas, eidophusikons, magic lanterns, and camerae obscurae,” which Richard Altick describes in *The Shows of London* as “the most popular forms of visual representation in London at the same time as the flaneur was the dominant mode of representing London in the magazines,” arguing that “in spite of their differences, all of these forms of representation produced images that resembled those produced by the flaneur.”<sup>125</sup> Brand sees the fragment as a recurring element in the construction of a panoramic representation of space which such apparatus aimed at:

In order to represent such potentially overwhelming multiplicity, each of these forms of representation made use of the same techniques of typological and schematic reduction as the flaneur. They would offer the impression of seeing the “whole” by presenting a few recognizable structures and features interspersed with “typical” objects, establishments, and individuals.<sup>126</sup>

This fugitive fragmentation recasts the *flâneur* as a creative component of the cityscape and offers a reinterpretation of the *flâneur* which goes beyond the god’s-eye-view and relocates him, in Murail’s view, at ground-level. This allows Murail to lay emphasis on the *flâneur*’s participation in the cityscape through other sensory dimensions than sight and to argue that “Baudelaire’s vision of the

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<sup>125</sup> Dana Brand. *The Spectator and the City in Nineteenth-Century American Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1991. p. 51.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.* p. 52.

sketcher of the city corresponds to that of Michel de Certeau's urban walker. According to him, the perception of the walker at ground-level is intrinsically partial and fragmented."<sup>127</sup>

In my view, Murail offers us a valuable alternative to the scopophilic *flâneur*, reminding us that the *flâneur* is not a type cast in stone but a fluid figure capable of adopting or articulating the various facets and personas of the urban walker. However, to perceive the *flâneur* as representative of a phenomenological, ground-level point of view seems to me to capitalize on the pleasures of perception which the figure invites and perhaps to overlook the ontological underpinnings of this phenomenological reframing of space in relation to the body, to which Merleau-Ponty's early work *The Phenomenology of Perception* tends, and which is further developed in his later work *The Ontology of Flesh*.

De Certeau's conception of lived space relies on a concept of embeddedness which implies an interchanging dynamic between the perceiving self and the perceived environment which is predicated on the potential reversal of the subject-object position and the vulnerability of the self to its dissolution through the presence of the other. One dimension of de Certeau's thought which illustrates this conundrum transpires in his referring to the blindness of urban wanderers (*wandersmänner*), positing blindness as the condition of immersion which is the partial but continual loss and retrieval of self through perception:

The ordinary practitioners of the city live "down below," below the thresholds at which visibility begins. They walk – an elementary form of this experience of the city; they are walkers, *Wandersmänner*, whose bodies follow the thick and thins of an urban "text" they write without being able to read it. These practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen; their knowledge of them is as blind as that of lovers in each other's arms.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 113.

<sup>128</sup> Michel de Certeau, *op. cit.* p. 141. trans. Stephen Randall. "C'est "en bas" au contraire [...] à partir des seuils où cesse la visibilité, que vivent les pratiquants ordinaires de la ville. Forme élémentaire de cette expérience, ils sont des marcheurs,

What matters is not so much a ground-level focalization but the loss of perception which such a stance entails. For Guillaume Sibertin-Blanc the ground-level urban wandering which de Certeau conceptualizes in his description of blind *Wandersmänner* does not denote a change in point of view as much as the abolishing of all point of view “as if entering an absolutely opaque space which makes those who walk it blind and causes them to rely on a tactile and bodily apprehension.”<sup>129</sup> He emphasizes the importance of this notion for de Certeau's theory in “Pratiques de la ville et inconscient urbain”:

Une telle situation doit sans doute prendre ici une signification anthropologique plus générale concernant la condition urbaine moderne, qui n'est d'ailleurs pas étrangère à une perception baudelairienne de la ville, et pour reprendre l'acception analytique de la mélancolie, à quelque chose de l'ordre de l'expérience de la perte et de l'inscription de l'objet perdu au lieu du moi. Chez de Certeau, il semble que l'objet perdu soit, non un objet d'amour, ni même un système de valeurs ou un idéal lui tenant lieu de substitut sublimatoire, mais bien plutôt l'aptitude, tant individuelle que collective, à se localiser, c'est-à-dire à attacher son identité, dans ses dimensions symboliques et imaginaires, à quelque chose comme un lieu « propre ». (Précisons que la dépropriation dont il est question ici ne peut dissocier complètement la manière dont l'espace habité, l'espace environnant vécu, est articulé sémiologiquement (valeurs expressives et symboliques d'un lieu « propre » comme « mien » ou « nôtre ») et les bouleversements indissociablement sociopolitiques et économiques affectant d'autres échelles d'espace, continentales et mondiales, qui surdéterminent toujours le « propre »).<sup>130</sup>

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dont le corps obéit aux pleins et aux déliés d'un "texte" urbain qu'ils écrivent sans pouvoir le lire. Ces praticiens jouent des espaces qui ne se voient pas ; ils en ont une connaissance aussi aveugle que dans le corps à corps amoureux.”

<sup>129</sup> Guillaume Sibertin-Blanc. “Pratiques de la ville et inconscient urbain : déplacements de l'utopie dans le discours critique de l'urbanisme.” In *Meta: Research in Hermeneutics, Phenomenology, and Practical Philosophy. Vol. II, N°2*. 2010. pp. 287-315. p. 302. (my translation)

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.* p. 309.

In *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses* walking entails the constant fracturing of the walker's subjectivity through a sustained state of loss which does not necessarily carry the usual pejorative meaning of the term. Rather than delimiting the contours of identity, the walking body increases the instability or porosity of the individual through its receptivity to the sensuous distortions of the city and consequent inclusion of marginalized experiences in its cultural significance. Though the *flâneur* experiences the pleasurable dimension of sensory perception, in his archetypal form he is too far immune to the elements of danger and transformation (in *Mrs Dalloway*) or self-surrender and self-derision (in *Ulysses*) which signal the partial loss of subjectivity necessary to representing the spaces of the city as an ongoing process.

### 2.3. The city up close: leaving flâneurs behind

Contrary to the city which the conventional *flâneur* enjoys from an unassailable vantage point, Joyce and Woolf's urban environments are the intimate productions of the bodies which walk their streets, leading not always to a better view of the city, but to a very different hold on space, and at times to a necessary dislocation or disorientation. In *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* a strong sense of location (being in a specific place and time) rivals an even stronger sense of dislocation (being elsewhere) and disorientation.

As David Leatherbarrow points out in "Disorientation and Disclosure," an analysis of orientation in architecture, "the verb 'to orient' derives from the Latin word for 'east' or 'dawn,' which in turn comes from the verb 'to rise,' and is closely related to 'origin.' Orientation [...] is inaugural, a

movement that interrupts prosaic affairs, beginning something new”.<sup>131</sup> As its architectural use makes clear, orientation encompasses and bears with it the fiction of an origin closely linked to visual disclosure, a remote viewpoint and the apprehension of space as a conceptualized, architectonic entity. In the urban peripatetic novels under study, situation, or a character’s location in space, substitutes for the conventional development of plot, so that the body’s situation in space comes to produce various intrigues of its own. Through the representation of the wandering body-consciousness, these narratives dismantle the omnipotent gaze embedded in the representation of the city.

*Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses* are not narratives which establish a setting which offers a firm view of the cityscape from a dominant perspective. They begin at close focus. What is more, they begin with a suspended process, on the threshold or, in more pedestrian terms, on the doorstep. The reader can imagine that Mrs Dalloway has just plunged into the London streets and left the door swinging on its hinge; Stephen Dedalus is on the verge of leaving Martello Tower with no prospect of return when *Ulysses* begins (“Telemachus”) and *Ulysses* begins again (“Calypso”) with Bloom on the point of leaving home without a key.

Any notion of orientation and origin linked to point of view and setting is swayed by disorientation, dislocation, and an uncertain viewpoint. For instance, the opening sentence of *Mrs Dalloway*, a simple phrase, “Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself,” leaves the reader in an uncertain location which is precisely the result of an uncertain identification of the point of view. First, it is an instance of reported speech, so that the narration of this initial event is, in a sense, already second-hand. Is the narrative agency reporting Clarissa Dalloway’s words as she leaves the house or are these words an echo in the thoughts of the maid Lucy, leaving the reader with Lucy and Clarissa already gone, one step ahead?

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<sup>131</sup> David Leatherbarrow. “Disorientation and Disclosure”. Keynote address at the 2010 *Interstices Under Construction Symposium* in Auckland. pp. 93-94. Online at: [http://interstices.ac.nz/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/INT12\\_Leatherbarrow.pdf](http://interstices.ac.nz/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/INT12_Leatherbarrow.pdf). Last accessed: 17/07/2017.

Furthermore, whatever the case, *Mrs Dalloway* begins in such a way, with an impulse out into the streets and the reader's suspension in a moment of departure which has already taken place. *Fait accompli*. This kind of suspension, which relies on uncertainty, is incompatible with the perspective which the *flâneur* provides, which is that of a comfortable, pleasing or detached relation to space or at least a stable, identifiable viewpoint. Cast out from an implied but unnamed point of departure into the uncertain space of the streets, over the next few lines the reader will find the narrative swiftly relocated, re-centered by a narrative focus which takes its cues from the embodied perspectives of a walking, moving body – a body which has already been set in motion.

Joyce's *Ulysses*, like Homer's, is equally the tale of a departure, here in its prosaic mode, of taking to the streets. More or less willingly, Stephen and Bloom are sent walking, the one to retrieve a sense of self-possession and future, the other to retrieve a kidney and fulfil his essential out-of-placeness, both to retrieve a home. The tale starts from a potentially strong, dominant viewing point, the top of Martello Tower, and leads to the darkness of "Penelope". *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* are not arbitrarily the narratives of walking, wandering bodies. In such novels the remains of the conventional notion of intrigue seem to tend toward the successive disruption of the city sight and retrieval of a sense of location which is intimately linked to embodiment.

One could note, for example, that *Mrs Dalloway* begins with Clarissa's departure and ends at a standstill, with that certainty that Clarissa's location provides (:"there she was") effecting a sense of homecoming or resolution which relies on a retrieval of self and place. One could consider how in *Ulysses* the body is consistently equated with a coming home of sorts, through the parallel established explicitly by Joyce to Budgen when he equated Molly to flesh and exclusively positioning her within the home, further in giving her the much debated final position of "Penelope" (debates concerned with the central versus the peripheric position of Molly and "Penelope" within *Ulysses*) and mischievously complicating the notion of return with Molly's tantalizing delayed disclosure. The differing senses of embodiment which oppose Stephen and Bloom further the impression that the male protagonists tend

towards “Penelope” as the return to the (female) body or as the promise of reconciliation with the body. Finally, the mythopoetic and socio-culturally constructed ancestral associations of home with hearth, warmth, domesticity, interiority and intimacy are starkly problematized in their relation to gendered space and the articulation of public and private space in *Mrs Dalloway*.

So it seems, the initial narrative mode of these novels is not just *in media res* but more tellingly *in media corpus*, in which narrative events do not just center around a body already in motion which provides an established point of view, but in which the body already in motion is the central locus which generates disorderly narrative events and intrigues and substitutes for the more conventional representation of setting and plotline.

Moreover, in these works Woolf seems to have recuperated the panorama as the archetypal *flaneur*-ly mode of representation to better subvert its ostracizing powers. Dana Brand comments on Terry Eagleton’s suggestion in *The Function of Criticism* that *flâneurly* spectatorship contributed “to the forming and consolidation of the idea of the “gentleman,” as a model of behavior for the men of England’s increasingly dominant haute bourgeoisie, a model whose posture toward social life combined features of the attitudes of a mercantile class and features of the attitudes of the aristocracy”.<sup>132</sup> She notes:

The entertaining yet edifying moralism of the Spectator, Eagleton suggests, helped to create what he calls, following Habermas, a “public sphere,” an area of discourse, physical, social, and rhetorical, that would reflect the shared assumptions of the bourgeoisie. As Peter Stallybrass and Allon White have suggested, an important part of the creation of this bourgeois “public sphere” was the cleaning up and reconceptualization of urban public space.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>133</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 32.



Woolf's representation of London in *Mrs Dalloway* questions the conditions of visibility of the public sphere by women and of women in the public sphere through Clarissa's wanderings. Looking closely, it appears that the panoramic description of London is instilled with a particularized temporality: it is not a description of "London" but more precisely of London as "this moment of June". In fact, London, as it is displayed in Clarissa's mind's eye is located more directly in relation to her body as a point in space and time: "Mrs Foxcroft at the Embassy [...] eating her heart out" is situated temporally in the field of Clarissa's perception as an event which Clarissa witnessed "last night"; "they said" serves to introduce the borrowed image of Lady Bexborough opening a bazaar "with the telegram in her hand" announcing the death of her son but also to link this news to Clarissa who heard it; the repetition of "even now" confirms this supposition, so that the whole passage is at a crossroads between the distance of the panoramic view ("everywhere [...] there was") and the specific landmarking of the scene, anchored by Clarissa's perception. By locating the description of the city in relation to Clarissa's embodied perspective, the visibility of the "public sphere" is unsettled, deconceptualized and laced with obscurity.

The view of London which Woolf offers her readers through the perspectives of marginal wanderers is pointedly incomplete. In fact, the panoramic view of London which one might expect to open *Mrs Dalloway* ends with an anti-climax. As Clarissa enters the Park, "the silence; the mist; the hum; the slow-swimming happy ducks; the pouched birds waddling;" constitute a natural environment contrasting with the dangerous rush of the city. This peaceful scene is intruded upon by Hugh Whitbread "coming along with his back against the Government buildings, most appropriately, carrying a dispatch box stamped with the Royal Arms" (p. 5).

With the appearance of Hugh Whitbread, the panorama proves itself to be no more than a dream, promoting a conception of the city as a sight, a visualized space, from which Clarissa as a woman is both highly visible and necessarily excluded. Hugh recalls the places of Government which figure prominently on the map and to which Clarissa has no access, indicating that the "public sphere"

which the *flâneur* conceptualizes is an exclusive one predicated on false privilege and discrimination. Inversely, the London of *Mrs Dalloway* is a blind-sighted one, and necessarily so: its lacunar space, interspersed with blind spots, recalls the necessary opacity of lived space in its ability to adapt its meanings to individual embodied perspectives.

In the same sense, the voyeuristic drive of the *flâneur* is invalidated by Clarissa's female perspective. If the *flâneur* enjoys the security of seeing without being seen, the panorama reconstructing city space as a pleasant sight which the *flâneur* controls and which leaves him and the perception of his body unaltered, the female characters of *Mrs Dalloway* are all too often confronted with the constraints of their female bodies' own visibility. One trait which sets women walkers such as Clarissa and Elizabeth Dalloway apart from the *flâneur* – and which they share to some extent with Leopold Bloom – is that they thirst for a transparency which they never seem to attain. Although Bloom enjoys moments in which he is able to live a fantasy of “see but not be seen” such a fantasy is never within Molly's reach as she is obsessively “seen” throughout the novel and embraces this visibility. On the other hand, Clarissa's horror of Miss Kilman dramatizes a failed dream of erasing the female body from view which Elizabeth seems to meet with resignation.

Other secondary characters are instrumental in giving a sense of the fullness of women's experience as urban wanderers in *Mrs Dalloway* and the precariousness of their individual identity. Indeed, *Mrs Dalloway* contains depictions of women who are signaled as fallen through their presence in the streets. There is hardly a true male nomad in *Mrs Dalloway*, despite Peter Walsh's status as expatriate returned home. The old female tramp in the park, or the woman singing her timeless song by the underground, are ageless figures of the street who have taken possession of the city streets at the cost of their youth and femininity. The old Mrs. Dempster both testifies to a continued existence beyond the flowers of youth and deplors her destitution, pointing out that “life had been no mere matter of roses” and asking “what hadn't she given to it? Roses; figure; her feet too” (p. 23). These women are shown as stripped of their identities in the public eye, their bodies devalued, which may be

the price a woman pays for the freedom to roam public space. The *passante* which Peter Walsh pursues and fantasizes about before she takes shelter behind the closed doors of her London home is another example of this.

The female perspective in *Mrs Dalloway* all too often expresses the disintegration of the panorama through the focus on female bodies as objects of sight. Walking women in *Mrs Dalloway* often struggle with a womanly self-consciousness and a susceptibility to being defined by the other's gaze which is incompatible with the *flâneur*'s easy detachment from and enjoyment of public space. Even the women-friendly spaces of the capitalist marketplace such as Oxford Street or the Army and Navy Stores express the fetishistic consumption of women's bodies: thus the fineries in the shop windows carry over into the description of the body of the *passante* whom Peter Walsh pursues in the street, the gloves Clarissa sees in Oxford Street recall her to the conventions which clothe her body and dictate her actions, the petticoats in the Army and Navy Store seem to pursue Miss Kilman, who is at odds with the constraints of femininity to which society seeks to subject her.

The female walker, as evidenced by Clarissa's apprehension of Hugh Whitbread's assessment of her as "schoolgirlish", Elizabeth's transformation into "hyacinths" and her subsequent petrification under the gaze of Londoners in *Mrs Dalloway*, is exposed in public space, in which she is thrown into a fraught relationship with her body because forced to take account of the body object or self-image as a defining part of her social being. For such a reason, though Clarissa may temporarily enjoy the illusion of walking in the footsteps of the *flâneur* and the freedom from self-consciousness which this position offers, the illusion cannot be sustained without a profound redefinition of the *flâneur* as a literary figure. The question is then: is there not room for walking women who inevitably overflow the *flâneur*'s conceptual territory in literary criticism? The reversibility of the body (both a site of emancipating sensuality and an objectifying force) haunts Clarissa's forays into the public space of the city and transpires both in the effort she puts into composing herself when looking into a glass and in the ostentatious physicality of Miss Kilman which is the counterpart to her self-effacement. The

nightmarish reality of the body-object which doubles the self is dramatized in Miss Kilman's desperate attempt to escape her image at the Army and Navy Stores, which inevitably fails as she finds herself facing her body in the mirror:

She got up, blundered off among the little tables, rocking slightly from side to side, and somebody came after her with her petticoat, and she lost her way, and was hemmed in by trunks specially prepared for taking to India; next got among the accouchement sets and baby linen; through all the commodities of the world, perishable and permanent, hams, drugs, flowers, stationery, variously smelling, now sweet, now sour, she lurched; saw herself thus lurching with her hat askew, very red in the face, full length in a looking-glass; and at last came out into the street. (p. 113)

Clarissa's impulse to envision the city is in this sense not so much demonstrative of a representation of the city as sight but rather of a view of the city as vision through an extended corporality which allows her to escape the bounds of her own body and through acts of perception to embrace and be melded with the diverse points of view which people London. By contrast, Clarissa's vision is cut short by a reversal of the gaze which is Hugh's – with “the manner and breeding of an English gentleman” – prerogative. Accordingly, Clarissa has her vision turned inward and her body become the short-sighted focus of sight and her consciousness imprisoned by a self-appraising gaze: “not the right hat for the early morning, was that it? For Hugh always made her feel, as he bustled on, raising his hat rather extravagantly and assuring her that she might be a girl of eighteen [...] she always felt a little skimpy beside Hugh; schoolgirlish; but attached to him” (p. 6).

In my view, the temptation to see the female wanderers of *Mrs Dalloway* as *flâneuses* belies their imbrication with their environment, which supposes a receptivity to the environment and a porosity of self (receiving shocks in Woolf's terms) at odds with the *flâneur's* transparent stance. Clarissa is not a transparent medium but like the multifaceted diamond she compares herself to, drawing herself to a point in front of the mirror, a prism through which the city refracts its spaces

reflected through her own self, her past, her emotions, her thoughts, her sensuous rhythmical qualities. The female characters in these novels have a fraught relationship to the city as a place where they risk being metamorphosed by perception. And although female characters such as Clarissa adopt a quasi-voyeuristic stance when they stroll through the city, references to their body images often serve to recall the fragility of this relation to space and to suggest that voyeurism remains in part a fantasy, in part a salutary opportunity for trespassing into public space.

In “Trespassing and Voyeurism in the Novels of Virginia Woolf and Marguerite Duras” Deborah Gaensbauer argues that Woolf “experimented with aspects of voyeurism as theme and narrative perspective.”<sup>134</sup> She explains that voyeurism was traditionally clinically defined as a “perversion ... found only in males.” Woolf’s use of voyeurism certainly allows for a reversal of roles. However, she argues that this reversal is complicated by a curious parallel between “the feminine experience of deprivation and incompleteness to a voyeur’s inadequacy” or in other words “the incompleteness of the voyeur having to fabricate or “steal” an existence.”<sup>135</sup> In contrast to the *flâneur* who is often represented as eminently self-possessed, Gaensbauer finds “in Woolf’s experience and writings, to be a woman is to be dispossessed, always emotionally, usually materially – thus the need to peep in and live vicariously.”<sup>136</sup> A woman in the streets does not have the privilege of transparency, as Molly’s absent presence throughout *Ulysses* exemplifies. Molly marks the Dublin of *Ulysses* although for the greater part of the book she is present only as a trace, an imprint of her own passage. She is in this sense at least the ultimate *passante*, an engaging feminine mystery which informs the other *passantes* which Bloom pursues or seeks to impersonate.

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<sup>134</sup> Deborah Gaensbauer. “Trespassing and Voyeurism in the Novels of Virginia Woolf and Marguerite Duras.” In *Comparative Literature Studies*, Vol. 24. N°2. 1987. University Park & London: The Pennsylvania State University Press. pp. 192-201.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.* p. 192.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.* p. 195.

Though the *flâneur* may be a sketch-artist whose gaze captures the ephemeral motions of the city, Woolf's street-walker-artist never entirely manages to remain unaltered in the act of sketching the city. Her sketching gaze implies the perilous enterprise of undoing the outlines of herself in an act of artistic recreation. On the omnibus Elizabeth turns to stone, her "beautiful body" "like the figure-head of a ship", "her cheeks the pallor of white painted wood; and her fine eyes, having no eyes to meet, gazed ahead, blank, bright, with the staring, incredible innocence of sculpture" (p. 115); Miss Kilman is confronted by her own image in a "full-length mirror" as she tries to escape; in *The Waves* Rhoda fears the opening doors and anonymous faces of social gatherings: the gaze turns upon the female wanderer.

Insofar as the *flâneur* may be said to act as a transparent medium, presenting the city as a sight to be viewed, implying a measure of physical, intellectual or emotional distance from or superiority over the object of sight, the wanderers of *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* are closer to de Certeau's "blind *Wandersmänner*", whose incomplete vision signals their immersion in the city, their vulnerability or receptivity to its effects on them, and their participation in the production of the city as an environment. Perhaps the subtext of this argument is that Joyce's Dublin and Woolf's London, are cities benighted by a heart of darkness of their own, seeking to escape the hegemony of place while caught up in its folds; enfolding a dream of (ever better) location in response to what lies at the other end of the architectural and epistemological spectrum of modernist urban and – emphatically – embodied space: sprawl, with its unruly, unpredictable, fundamentally disorienting nature.

In her 2009 essay "Getting Lost: Modes of Disorientation in Twentieth-Century Literature" Ondrea E. Ackerman explores such a paradox, in her words "the productive tension that resonates between the commitment of these authors to some notion of place and their interest in textual strategies of displacement", arguing that "in modernist literature [...] there is still a world in which the center –

the there – occurs.”<sup>137</sup> Like Eric Bulson, Ackerman underlines the double nature of a modernist urban cityscape held in tension between location and dislocation. However, Ackerman does not relate this tension, which I link to Bulson’s intuition of a “double space” (that constructed by the narrative instance and that represented from the character’s perspective) in *Ulysses*, to the discrepancy conceptualized by thinkers such as Michel de Certeau and Maurice Merleau-Ponty between map-space and embodied space.

In Ackerman’s view the Joycean “there” is the map. It is my view that understanding *Ulysses* or *Mrs Dalloway* in reference to map-space remains problematic, or begs that one clarify their interpretation of the map, for precisely the same reason that readers show less interest in mapping Woolf’s later work, *The Waves*: the commonplace conception of map-space is that it adheres to conceptualized, rationalized, even authoritative notions of space at odds with the partial opacity which characterizes these fictional cities and invites mapping as a synthetic process of visualizing and understanding space. What I suggest is that the Dublin and London of the map, which emerge in Joyce’s and Woolf’s use of place-names for instance, stands in contrast to the city of the wandering body from which it derives an actual meaning much as the Woolfian “there” opposes a cartographic conception of London to a sense of being-in-London and takes its mobile, roving center from the wandering perceiving body.

The map-as-model is what Michel de Certeau takes as an example of intellectualized, conceptual space in *L’Invention du quotidien*, a conception of the urban environment which he opposes to the city as the lived space of its “blind *wandersmänner*”, highlighting the scopic impulse with which representations of the modern city are embroiled.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Ondrea E. Ackerman. “Getting Lost: Modes of Disorientation in Twentieth-Century Literature.” Phd dissertation. Ann Arbor: ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. 2009. pp. 13-14.

<sup>138</sup> *Op. cit.*

The city's labyrinth-like incomprehensibility, its mass and juxtaposition of extremes, supposes a remote viewpoint in order to apprehend it as a legible whole and to arrest its agitation through the synthetic powers of vision. In a passage which resonates with Merleau-Ponty's description of intellectualized space and its dependence on the remote viewpoint, and which could read as a commentary of the irony of "Wandering Rocks", De Certeau writes<sup>139</sup>:

When one goes up there [to the god's-eye-viewpoint], he leaves behind the mass that carries off and mixes up in itself any identity of authors or spectators. An Icarus flying above these waters, he can ignore the devices of Daedalus in mobile and endless labyrinths far below. His elevation transfigures him into a voyeur. It puts him at a distance. It transforms the bewitching world by which one was 'possessed' into a text that lies before one's eyes. It allows one to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a God. The exaltation of a Scopic and Gnostic drive: the fiction of knowledge is related to this lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more.<sup>140</sup>

In this way, De Certeau conflates the remote vantage point of the god's-eye-view, the panorama, with a need for orientation conducive to the map, the impulse to locate the city and suspend the spatial confusion which constitutes its "bewitching" power. The opacity of the urban environment, the meaning of which overflows the limits of perception and representation, emerges for instance in Morrier Evans' description of London in his 1845 preface to *The City or The Physiology of London Business*:

The City is a world within itself. Centred in the heart of the metropolis, with its innumerable capacities for commercial pursuits, it presents at first sight, to a stranger, a

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<sup>139</sup> Michel de Certeau. *The Practice of Everyday Life, Vol. 1*. Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1984. pp. 91-92.

<sup>140</sup> Michel de Certeau. *L'invention du quotidien*. Paris : Gallimard. 1980. p. 140. "Celui qui monte là-haut sort de la masse qui emporte et brasse en elle-même toute identité d'auteur et de spectateur. Icare au-dessus de ces eaux, il peut ignorer les ruses de Dédale en des labyrinthes mobiles et sans fin. Son élévation le transforme en voyeur. Elle le met à distance. Elle mue en un texte qu'on a devant soi, sous les yeux, le monde qui ensorcelait et dont on était « possédé ». Elle permet de lire, d'être un « Œil solaire, un regard de Dieu ». Exaltation d'une pulsion scopique et gnostique. N'être que ce point voyant, c'est la fiction du savoir."



most mysterious and unfathomable labyrinth of lanes and alleys, streets and courts, of lanes thronged with bustling multitude, whose various occupations, though uniting in one grand whole, seem to have no direct association with each other.<sup>141</sup>

As this description emphasizes, the City's mystery lies in it constituting a fractal-like macrostructure which surpasses human perception, already suggesting the grounds for an obvious affiliation between the City and the panorama or remote viewpoint as a representational strategy capable of redeeming the City as a visible space. Indeed, in 'The Age of the Panorama' in *Situational Aesthetics*, Victor Burgin notes the uncanny coincidence between Robert Barker's patenting of the panorama in 1787 and Jeremy Bentham's writing of the series of letters defining his Panopticon prison in the same year:

The material apparatus of the Panorama – rotunda, platform, foreground objects and painting – was one expression amongst others of a more general desire for an unobstructed and totally comprehensive view. The panorama represents a denial of the intrinsic discontinuity and incompleteness of vision, the society of surveillance and control is the dark side of this denial.<sup>142</sup>

He links the scopic impulse underlying the panorama to its epistemological function, arguing that "the interest in panoramas and in transient details may both be seen as responding to the disorientation and depersonalization engendered by modernity."<sup>143</sup> This disorientation and depersonalization, as well as the modern experience they characterize, are intimately linked with the desire to view the city which finds expression in the *flâneur*'s scopophilic perspective.

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<sup>141</sup> David Morrier Evans. *The City; Or, The Physiology of London Business; with Sketches on Change, and at the Coffee Houses*. London: Baily Brothers, Exchange Buildings. 1845.

<sup>142</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 307-308.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.* p. 298.

De Certeau draws an opposition between the conceptual space of the map-as-model and the blind space-in-becoming of the “Wandersmänner” who roam the city’s streets, engaging with the confusion of lived cityspace, “below the thresholds at which visibility begins.”

They walk – an elementary form of this experience of the city; they are walkers, *Wandersmänner*, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of the urban “text” they write without being able to read it [...] It is as though the practices organizing a bustling city were characterized by their blindness. The networks of these moving, intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces: in relation to representations, it remains daily and indefinitely other.<sup>144</sup>

However, what emerges is that the panoramic god’s-eye-view perspective is no more than an archetypal manifestation of a scopic pulsion associated with the city which long predates the 19th-century panorama and transcribes a link between the representation of the city and a corresponding *libido sciendi*. De Certeau puts the question in the following terms<sup>145</sup>:

The desire to see the city preceded the means of satisfying it. Medieval or Renaissance painters represented the city as seen in a perspective that no eye had yet enjoyed. This fiction already made the medieval spectator into a celestial eye. It created gods. Have things changed since technical procedures have organized an “all-seeing power”? The totalizing eye imagined by the painters of earlier times lives on in our achievements. The same scopic drive haunts users of architectural productions by materializing today the utopia that yesterday was only painted. The 1370 foot high tower that serves as a prow

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<sup>144</sup> Michel de Certeau. *Op. cit.* p. 93. “C’est « en bas » au contraire, à partir des seuils où cesse la visibilité, que vivent les pratiquants ordinaires de la ville. Forme élémentaire de cette expérience, ils sont des marcheurs, *Wandersmänner*, dont le corps obéit aux pleins et aux déliés d’un « texte » urbain qu’ils écrivent sans pouvoir le lire. [...] Ces pratiques de l’espace renvoient à une forme spécifique d’opérations (des « manières de faire »), à « une autre spatialité » (une expérience « anthropologique », poétique et mythique de l’espace), et à une mouvance opaque et aveugle de la ville habitée.”

<sup>145</sup> Michel de Certeau. *Op. cit.* pp. 140-141. “La volonté de voir la ville a précédé les moyens de la satisfaire. Les peintures médiévales ou renaissantes figuraient la cité vue en perspective par un œil qui pourtant n’avait encore jamais existé. Elles inventaient à la fois le survol de la ville et le panorama qu’il rendait possible. Cette fiction muait déjà le spectateur médiéval en œil céleste. Elle faisait des dieux. En va-t-il différemment depuis que des procédures techniques ont organisé un « pouvoir omniregardant » ? L’œil totalisant imaginé par les peintres d’antan survit dans nos réalisations. La même pulsion scopique hante les usagers des productions architecturales en matérialisant aujourd’hui l’utopie qui hier n’était que peinte. La tour de 420 mètres qui sert de proue à Manhattan continue à construire la fiction qui crée des lecteurs, qui mue en lisibilité la complexité de la ville et fige en un texte transparent son opaque mobilité.”

for Manhattan continues to construct the fiction that creates readers, makes the complexity of the city readable, and immobilizes its opaque mobility in a transparent text.<sup>146</sup>

In Joyce's Dublin as in Woolf's London the naming process which fuels map-making, still predicated on a hierarchy of place as meaningful, conceptualized, pre-existent space, is partially undone by its encounter with the shifting, body-bound space of the wanderer whose ability is to call blank space into fictional existence. From the panoramic view suggestive of the map, with its insistence on the priority of place, the wanderer returns cityspace to a ground-level and fragmented representation attentive to the opacity and confusion which distinguish the city as sight from the city as situation.

Though the walkers of Joyce's Dublin and Woolf's London may recall the figure of the *flâneur* so prominent in the city novels of the previous century they share a fundamental difference: in his transparency the *flâneur* acts as a medium for a scopic desire embedded in the cityscape and for the representation of an almost exclusively male public sphere; the streetwalkers of Joyce's Dublin and Woolf's London are no transparent medium enabling the viewing of the city, the walking body through its engagement with an environment constitutes a process through which space and self are simultaneously co-constituted through an encounter which may result in vision but which may also result in blindness.

In contrast to this dream of transparency which also informs the conventions of plot, exposition, symbolism of setting and naturalist description, in *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses* the wandering body is a purposefully blind-sighting one. Part of the disorienting impetus in these works results from a tendency to restore the density of matter, the opacity of lived urban spaces and their resulting confusion.

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<sup>146</sup> Translation by Stephen Randall. *Op. cit.* p. 92.

### 3. Walking, a Changing Conception of Landscape

#### 3.1. Parallax and the kinetic city

The focalization of the protagonists who walk the city in these novels quite reasonably resonates with that of the *flâneur*. However, applying the lens of the *flâneur* to Joyce and Woolf's representations of the city may prove an obstacle to reading past the conceptual territories of stream-of-consciousness and point of view, notions which are also tied up with preconceptions of what constitutes the notions of landscape and cityscape. These narrative devices have long been central to critical approaches of Joyce's and Woolf's representations of the city and of the body in *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway*. Earlier works of criticism focused on polyphony such as Hugh Kenner's *Joyce's Voices* as well as more recent branches of criticism inspired by thing theory, cognitive sciences and anti-anthropocentric approaches to Joyce and Woolf, have sought to further widen the representative scope of the point of view and to question the anthropocentric narrative mode which the stream-of-consciousness implies.

The construction of shifting, multiple viewpoints has long been considered a hallmark of modernist aesthetics and of Joyce and Woolf's depictions of slices of city life. In "Virginia Woolf, Modernism and the Visual Arts" Merja Kaipainen sees a reflection of Cubism in Woolf's use of multiperspectivism, while noting one essential difference:

The technique of observing an object or event from many angles simultaneously is also a device used by the Cubist painters. The Cubist painter, however, is more interested in the depicted object, e.g. a vase or a man, than in the viewers of the object, whereas in *Mrs*

*Dalloway*, the observers of the motorcar and their different interpretations of the situation are more important and interesting from the reader's point of view than the motorcar.<sup>147</sup>

Another example would be the concept of parallax, borrowed from astronomy to describe the simultaneous coexistence of multiple viewpoints, the sum of which determines the reality of what is perceived, which recurs throughout *Ulysses*. In the foreword to *Parallaxing Joyce*, a volume seeking to respond to the lack of a full-length study of the concept which is nonetheless prevalent in Joyce's work, Andreas Fischer describes parallax as "encapsulat[ing] a very basic, essential principle of vision and thus of cognition," and goes on to link this mode of cognition directly to Bloom's wanderings and the wandering perspectives which participate in making parallax "one of the guiding principles of *Ulysses*."<sup>148</sup> He writes: "in order to 'see,' that is, to understand, an object of any kind in its fullness one has to change one's own position, one's point of view, one's angle of vision. From a fixed point of view one has only one, necessarily limited view, but when one moves, perspectives multiply and one's view automatically becomes multidimensional."

To this extent, the trope emblemizes a vast-ranging preoccupation with point of view and its link to wandering in Joyce criticism, while hinting at a prerogative of sight which curtails conceptions of wandering and the representation of the city. Similarly, Woolf's writing has often been labelled impressionistic, a term used by Woolf herself, which in some ways resonates with parallax and which accounts for the underlying artistic belief that multiple perspectives enrich the representation of an experience and lead to a deeper perception of the moment. *Mrs Dalloway* has a similar narrative pattern to that of *Ulysses* to the extent that the city is formed as a patchwork of the various perspectives of its many wanderers.

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<sup>147</sup> Merja Kaipainen. *Virginia Woolf, Modernism and the Visual Arts*. Licentiate's Dissertation in English Philology. University of Tampere. 2006. Online at: <https://tampub.uta.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/76423/lisuri00043.pdf?sequence=1>. Last accessed: 07/20/2017.

<sup>148</sup> Penelope Paparunas, Frances Ilmberger et al. (eds.). *Parallaxing Joyce*. Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto. 2017.

And yet, as recent works such as *Making Space in the Works of James Joyce* illustrate, Joyce and Woolf critics alike have recognized that a narrow definition of point of view cannot account for the full scope of experiences represented in these texts. Advances in the interdisciplinary field of literary studies which intersect with cognitive sciences have foregrounded the synesthetic quality of both authors' representations of consciousness. These critics have made valuable advances in exploring and foregrounding the aural, tactile and olfactive dimensions of how city space is rendered in these Dublin and London novels. Such work aims at shifting the conceptual grounds of the notion of "point of view" underlying a predominantly pictorial conception of spatial representation and knowledge to include all senses as well as a wider spectrum of affects, motion, emotions and socio-cultural interactions.

In an essay entitled "Virginia Woolf's Two Bodies" (which was awarded the Florence Howe Prize for the best essay in feminist theory and criticism), Molly Hite presents Woolf's use of point of view as something which goes beyond the empowering subject position of a perceiving embodied perspective to dialogue with an alternative view of the body as a socially-constrained gendered object.<sup>149</sup> Her starting point is an apparently contradictory comment Woolf made in "A Sketch of the Past", in which Woolf wrote: "I could feel ecstasies and raptures spontaneously and intensely and without any shame or the least sense of guilt, so long as they were disconnected with my own body." Noting that Woolf distinguishes between a pleasurable and shameless experience of feeling "ecstasies and raptures" and her "own body" she thus argues that Woolf portrays two bodies, a "visionary" one which enabled her to "create passionate and sensuous female characters without embroiling them in the societal consequences of female eroticism that had shaped the romance plot" and a "social" one, "bodies consolidated by and for the gaze of others." These views of the body coincide with the subject/object divide which in Merleau-Ponty's thought are a constitutive dialectic of embodiment.

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<sup>149</sup> Molly Hite. "Virginia Woolf's Two Bodies." In *Genders 1998-2013*. University of Colorado Boulder. 2000. Online at: <http://www.colorado.edu/gendersarchive1998-2013/2000/01/10/virginia-woolfs-two-bodies>. Last accessed: 20/07/2017.

This is why criticism's return to the figure of the *flâneur* to qualify Joyce's and Woolf's urban wanderers somewhat contradicts the past decades' effort to escape narrowing these authors representations of the city down to a dominantly visual dimension along with an understanding of embodiment as a dialectic, fundamentally parallaxic, maybe even kinetic, principle. *Flâneur*-ly walking is particularly interesting to consider as a negative model which in some ways contradicts with the phenomenological implications of representing the city as an embodied experience, whether it be *Ulysses*' Heideggerian involvement with space, which Cheryl Herr convincingly argues for in "James Joyce and the Art of Shaving", or the voyeuristic gaze and concomitant somatophobia which imbues *Mrs Dalloway*, which gender-sensitive works of criticism such as *Word of Mouth* point to.

In the *flâneur*'s experience of walking the city, the latter's own body rarely – not to say never – relinquishes its status as subject and thus never becomes the means of conveying a visual or epistemic distortion. It is rarely the ostentatious object of representation which threatens to fracture or expose the narratives of the self. Nor can it be said common to find the *flâneur*'s urban environment attest to a two-way slippage between the representation of the self and the city, as the city acts as a site for the extended expression of the former's embodiment and, in reverse, the walker's body finds its meaning in the effects of the city. In this sense, parallax seems interesting in relation to the wandering body and the construction of setting, not because it allows us to understand the city as a complex of subjective sights which make up a comprehensive view, not in its providing a fuller visual knowledge of the city, but because of the idea of double sight, in which sight is solely a metaphor for other modes of sensing, and the kinetic conception of setting which it introduces.

To explain my meaning, Elizabeth Bronfen's remarks on the meaning and relevance of parallax to Joyce criticism may prove to be enlightening:

Here, at issue is the idea of a parallel vision, or rather a parallel perception, which is to say the way parallel perceptions bring disjunction into play in the field of vision. ... The

second definition allows us to use the concept of parallax as a critical term for thinking through issues having to do with distortion. I would add, however, that parallax does not necessarily mean that something is being seen incorrectly. Instead, the interesting point about parallax, especially for a critic like myself who has been trained in psychoanalytic thinking, is the cognitive gain to be had from seeing things in a distorted manner.<sup>150</sup>

She later goes on to link this distortion to Barthes' description of double perception as a metaphor for the "duplicity of the signifier". He explains that "driving in a car, you can look out the window. Either the windowpane is in focus or what you are seeing through the windowpane, but never both at the same time. Instead, your gaze must oscillate between the two."<sup>151</sup> This principle of double perception may extend beyond sight to characterize what for lack of a better term is called embodied perspective. The walking body of the urban wanderers of Joyce and Woolf offers what I call a kinetic representation of walking in the city because it allows for an oscillation between different perceptions of city space in the same way that focus can oscillate from the windowpane to the view beyond. The body may be a transparent medium, as occurs with the *flâneur*, but it is also potentially an aesthetic object on which narrative may focus.

To state the issue in terms suited to post-colonial urban theory, in an essay entitled "The Static and the Kinetic", Rahul Mehrotra makes a distinction between the "Static" and "Kinetic City" which has intriguing implications for understanding walking as a "kinetic" mode of representing city space as a product of the people who walk the streets in the corpus of this dissertation.<sup>152</sup> He writes:

Cities comprise two components that occupy the same physical space. The first is the formal or Static City. Built of more permanent material such as concrete, steel, and brick,

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<sup>150</sup> Interview in *Parallaxing Joyce. Op. cit.* p. 17.

<sup>151</sup> Paraphrased by Elisabeth Bronfen in *Parallaxing Joyce*, eds. Penelope Paparunas, Frances Illmberger et al. Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto. 2017. p. 32. Roland Barthes. "Myth Today." Trans. Annette Lavers. In *Mythologies*. London: Vintage. 1957. pp. 109-159. pp. 123-24.

<sup>152</sup> Rahul Mehrotra. "Negotiating the Static and Kinetic Cities: The Emergent Urbanism of Mumbai". In *Other Cities, Other Worlds: Urban Imaginaries in a Globalizing Age*. Ed. Andreas Huyssen. Durham & London: Duke University Press. 2008.



it is comprehended as a two-dimensional entity on conventional city maps and is monumental in its presence. The second is the informal or Kinetic City. Incomprehensible as a two-dimensional entity, it is perceived as a city in motion – a three-dimensional construct of incremental development.<sup>153</sup>

I have already mentioned that one thing which *Ulysses* shares with Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* is that these are walking-body narratives, which begin in motion with a shifting point of view and constitute a kinetic urban environment. I mean that the walking body functions as a narrative principle which centers around embodied interactions with an urban environment through which both the representation of the body and the city are co-constituted in an ongoing process. The city is neither a sight nor a scene to be accessed from the privileged standpoint of an embodied perspective. Rather, as Mehrotra's Kinetic City it is caught up in a process of recycled elements fuelled by the walking body. The Static City is described as "an obvious target for graphic documentation and analysis."

In contrast, Mehrotra posits the Kinetic City as a new lens with which to view the contemporary urban environment:

The Kinetic City is temporary in nature and often built with recycled material: plastic sheets, scrap metal, canvas, and waste wood. It constantly modifies and reinvents itself. The Kinetic City's building blocks are not pieces of architecture, but spaces that hold associative values and that support their residents' lives and livelihoods. [...] Here the memory of the city is an 'enacted' process – a temporal moment as opposed to buildings that contain the public memory as a static or permanent entity. Within the Kinetic City, meanings are not stable; spaces [are] consumed, reinterpreted, and recycled. The Kinetic City recycles the Static City to create a new spectacle.<sup>154</sup>

One might easily note that the *flâneur* equally allows for a kinetic representation of the city space in the sense that he too walks the city streets and even, as Estelle Murail points out, captures a

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<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.* p. 206.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.* p. 206.

representation of the city which has an ephemeral, unfinished dimension to it. He too portrays fragments of city life which have the quality of a sketch.

However, by kinetic I do not merely mean the act of featuring a mobile, roving point of view in a fast-paced urban environment, the speed which surrounds modernity, or even the switch from one point of view to the next. Rather I mean that the embodied perspective of the walker provides more than one perspective in that it introduces a double representation of the city, a visual and perceptive distortion which results in the representation of the subject as a process and of the city as a dialectic with an ongoing narrative process. The city in its material dimension, its clutter of passing bodies and commodities, recycles elements of Clarissa's, Bloom's, Molly's, bodies and perceptions to widen the narrative beyond the individual point of view.

### 3.2. The body-centered city and the illusions of landscape

*Be still. The Hanging Gardens were a dream  
That over Persian roses flew to kiss  
The curled lashes of Semiramis.  
Troy never was, nor green Skamander stream.  
Provence and Troubadour are merest lies  
The glorious hair of Venice was a beam  
Made within Titian's eye.*

—Trumbull Stickney

The centralizing walking body trope provides a kinetic and parallax representation of the city which has the effect of calling into question the city's existence as a visual or pictorial aesthetic artefact traditionally upheld by the conventional figure of the *flâneur* – in other words as a landscape. In his critique of the idealist construction of landscape as a “western European and modern phenomenon” in

*Landscape and Power*, W.J.T. Mitchell underlines that one of the main assumptions which critics have made about landscape is that it is essentially visual/pictorial.<sup>155</sup> Mitchell argues that there has been a problematic conflation of landscape “viewing and painting, perception and representation.”<sup>156</sup>

According to Mitchell, the lack of distinction between these terms obscures the myths of origin which landscape constructs. For instance, one of these myths is the Western origin of landscape painting, belied by the Chinese tradition of landscape painting, which “flourished most notably at the height of Chinese imperial power.” The fabricated notion that landscape painting should be a typically Western art form obscures the issue that landscape, “understood as the historical “invention” of a new visual/pictorial medium,” may be “integrally connected with imperialism.”<sup>157</sup>

Although Mitchell makes clear that it would be reductive to see landscape as a concept or as a representational strategy as intrinsically imperialist – indeed, landscape may also be anti-imperial in practice – the question of a potential link between conceptions of landscape and relations between power and the construction of fictional spaces may shed new light on the shifting views of the city and on the role of the walking body in constituting space in *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses*.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, the London scene is interspersed with natural landscapes. These scenes capture Clarissa Dalloway in the role of the observer, in the act of contemplating either visions of a lyrical natural landscape or memories from her past in the countryside. Although these interruptions occur throughout the novel, the natural elements depicted draw up two landscapes or mental/sensuous spaces which are parallel to the city: the first is the garden at Bourton, which is the scene for memories from Clarissa’s girlhood; the second is the beach and accompanying seascape, which is a visionary space which connects Clarissa and Septimus on a deeper psychosomatic level.

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<sup>155</sup> W.J.T. Mitchell. “Imperial Landscape.” In *Landscape and Power*, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press. p. 7.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.* p. 8.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.* p. 9.

To some extent, through these incursions, landscape is still presented as a poetic property susceptible to aesthetic consumption, expressive of Clarissa's spiritual activity but also of her bourgeois posture and dominant position in society. The contemplation of the English landscape has at least been encoded with class values, one example of this process being the prominence of English landscape gardening in major estates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. And yet, although Clarissa's position as an onlooker is insisted upon ("standing there at the open window" "looking at the flowers" "standing and looking" p.4), it does not so much amplify the pictorial quality of these scenes as draw attention to Clarissa's marginal position and to the foregrounding of the act of viewing or the experience of perceiving landscape rather than the landscape as an aesthetic object.

Furthermore, the synesthetic dimension of scenery in *Mrs Dalloway* calls into question the distinction between natural landscapes (landscape viewing) and psycho-geographic inscapes (aesthetic insight into emotional and psychological states). One could note how the following scenes qualify as "sensuous geographies" through the prominence of senses and the affective values of feeling, touch, degrees of agitation and temperature:

how fresh, how calm, stiller than this of course, the air was in the early morning; like the flap of a wave; the kiss of a wave; chill and sharp (p. 4)

as if it were the evening and girls in muslin frocks came out to pick sweet peas and roses after the superb summer's day, with its almost blue-black sky, its delphiniums, its carnations, its arum lilies, was over [...] every flower seems to burn by itself, softly, purely in the misty beds (p. 11)

As Septimus's consistent observation of natural elements makes clear, perception is a potentially ostracizing act in the novel, where onlooking can be a sign of marginality. This is because what is foregrounded through landscape in *Mrs Dalloway* is not so much the alienation or appropriation of landscape through national discourses but rather that of the body. Clarissa links "looking on" with

being outside: “being out, out, far out to sea and alone” (p.7) and the two landscapes which resurface throughout the day – the garden and the sea – perpetuate a complementary sense of danger through seclusion and exclusion.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, Clarissa’s walking may seem to be an intellectual or ethereal affair compared to the body-centered erotic preoccupations of Gerty and Molly. However, references to Clarissa’s sexuality, or lack thereof, are in fact directly linked to her walking the city and perhaps the strongest vector of expressing her marginalization. These references abound throughout the novel and rather ironically Woolf relies on these to pit the construction of a more conventional symbolism of setting which expresses the constraints of female existence against an emancipatory sexual dimension which is channelled into Clarissa’s physical involvement with the city through the rhythms and motions of the walking body.

Indeed, the novel opens with a reference to flowers, a traditional symbol of femininity, however these flowers are mostly how Clarissa might justify her walking the city streets – a masculine prerogative. Presented from the outset as part of an economic transaction, the flowers are cut off from their traditional role as symbols of femininity. Clarissa’s room is at the top of the house, and this long ascent marks how withdrawn from society her intimate self is and perhaps the preservation of her body from male contact. The description of her narrow bed with tight white sheets suggests virginity, frigidity, as well as the proximity of death. She contrasts this depiction of Clarissa’s fraught relation to her body with other images of embodiment, those of Sally Seton whose posture and vivacity and denial of socially-constructed gender norms show her to be all at once more sexually and socially emancipated.

In Woolf’s depiction of Sally, flowers abound as Clarissa remembers Sally cutting the heads off all the flowers and setting them to float in glass bowls. This is a parodic castration which culminates in the expression of a feminine sexuality and aesthetics as well as an expression of her unconventional

nature. Like Sally, who in one of Clarissa's memories ran naked through the house, the flowers reflect the capacity of the body to escape its condition as a cultural construct by renewing the viewer's awareness of its status as a phenomenon, in other words by increasing our awareness of its raw materiality.

Miss Kilman's fraught relationship to her body finds another outlet in what Clarissa judges to be a crass and ostentatious display of repulsive physical attributes such as an uncomely and slovenly appearance, dirt, excess weight, appetite, and worn clothes. All of these seem to express a terror of drawing attention to the body which Clarissa suppresses but cannot control in the person of Miss Kilman. The voyeurism in Woolf's novels is in this sense very different from that of *Ulysses*: unlike *Ulysses*, in which there is much pleasure to be gained in seeing bodies and one's body being seen, the pleasure of embodiment in *Mrs Dalloway* demands the prior withdrawal from such a gaze-oriented dialectic entirely. Somatophobia in this novel is very much related to seeing the body and the body being seen. However, in the rush of the city, in the external environment which the walking body experiences as the sense of place of the novel, Clarissa's sexuality is exteriorized to become an integral part of her sense of the city and of its fictional representation. The city provides an outlet for the same sensuality which is expressed in the confines of Clarissa's room. Elements of Clarissa's embodiment carry over into the representation of the city.

For instance, flowers play a significant part in constructing a strong sense of place which is linked to an expression of Clarissa's fragile sense of self and her fluctuating sexuality in *Mrs Dalloway*. The novel begins with the flowers which Clarissa said "she would buy", marking them out as a possible excuse for Clarissa to walk the streets of London freely, but first and foremost as an urban commodity. In addition, this excuse is already heavy with gendered implications which go beyond the conventional association between flowers, romance and the feminine. The flowers are a domestic attribute with an aesthetic and ornamental purpose, but also an emblem of the intersection between capitalist shopping spaces and women's increased presence in public space. That Clarissa should be going to buy flowers

can be read in this sense as a *pied-de-nez* to the masculine prerogative of *flâneuring* because it shows that Clarissa is entering the traditionally masculine space of the economic city.

This appears all the more convincing if one considers that they are also rather consistently associated to a sense of climax directly linked to Clarissa's embodiment and to her queer sense of self, whether the sexual climax expressed through the image of "a match burning in a crocus" which is described as an "inner meaning almost expressed", or the aesthetic and emotional climax which occurs in Miss Pym's flower shop when Clarissa sees the overflowing baskets of flowers just before an exhaust pipe explodes, interrupting her moment of rapture. In both instances, the description of flowers coincides with the construction of an intimate space, as the description of the crocus takes the reader further into the construction of an "inner" space which begins with Clarissa's retreat into the private recesses of her room. Likewise the flowers at Mulberry's are viewed "with her eyes half closed", signalling an intimate vision or in-sight which paradoxically relies on darkness and not seeing.

The passage in which Miss Pym's flowers are described relies heavily on smell and touch: Clarissa "breathed in the earthy-garden sweet smell", "snuffing in, after the street uproar, the delicious scent, the exquisite coolness" (p.11). Even when she opens her eyes, Clarissa notes that the sight of the flowers in fact suggests tactile sensations: "how fresh, like frilled linen clean from a laundry laid in wicker trays, the roses looked". In fact, the sole truly visual element in this description is, as with the description of the crocus, a spectrum which ranges from darkness ("dark and prim the red carnations", "the sweet peas... tinged violet, snow-white, pale", "the superb summer's day, with its almost blue-black sky... was over"... ) to a burning light which is almost another tactile sensation: "it was the moment between six and seven when every flower ... glows; white, violet, red, deep orange; every flower seems to burn by itself, softly, purely, in the misty beds..." (p. 11).

In such descriptions, not only is the conventional mechanized masculine public space of the city interrupted by an intimate feminine space, but the light which Clarissa's name bears is diffracted

through the description of flowers not as a symbol for expressing her character, but as the expression of a burning sensation seated in the body, and as the extended expression of her sexuality. Nor is this burning sexuality in contradiction with Clarissa's self-expressed fear of her own frigidity. One might note that the image of the flowers cleanly, primly arranged in Miss Pym's store, and an uncanny insistence on their purity ("like frilled linen clean from a laundry", "girls in muslin frocks", "softly, purely, in the misty beds") along with the image of "grey white moths spinning in and out" evocative of death and sterility contradicts with the intense image of flowers burning in the darkness and the burning sensation of sexual desire.

One might equally note, in this vein, how this description of the flowers both resonates and contrasts with Clarissa's description of her former lesbian lover, Sally Seton, who had a "way with flowers" (p. 29), "went out, picked hollyhocks, dahlias – all sorts of flowers that had never been seen together – cut their heads off, and made them swim on the top of water in bowls. The effect was extraordinary – coming into dinner in the sunset" (p. 29). The chiaroscuro which characterizes descriptions of flowers in Clarissa's stream-of-consciousness carries over into her description of her relationship with Sally Seton. Reminiscing on her excitement "coming down to dinner in a white frock to meet Sally Seton!" she remembers herself as "all light, glowing, like some bird or air-ball" (p.30). What is more, Sally's kiss possesses the same burning quality, "a diamond, something infinitely precious, wrapped up, which, as they walked ... she uncovered, or the radiance burnt through" (p. 30). The warm radiance of the kiss contrasts sharply with the "icy claws" which refer to Clarissa's awareness of her ill and aging body in the present: "laying her brooch on the table, she had a sudden spasm, as if, while she mused, the icy claws had had the chance to fix in her. She was not old yet" (p. 31).

The *flâneur* may take pleasure in the city sights and even enjoy its sensorial dimension however a *flâneur* nonetheless apprehends the city as a view-bound focalizer and through representational processes which set it at a distance from himself and imply the city's existence as a pictorial aesthetic



object or a scene distinct from the spectator who eyes it. By contrast, city walkers such as Leopold Bloom and Clarissa Dalloway lose themselves in the confusion of the urban environment through ambivalent focalization. Their lacunar perception of the city, a semi-blindness, enables an intertwining of the city and the body which constitutes their sense of self while emphasizing its equivocal status as a narrative. Walking the city produces a narrative which gives an account of the intermingling between city and embodied self. In this narrative, the close focus on the body prevents the reader or the character from gaining a perspective from which to view the city as an integral sight. Moments in which focus is closely drawn to the body, whether to body parts through metonymy or to sexuality through symbolism, act as an interference in the construction of a panoramic point-of-view.

The city equally acts as an extension of the motions and emotions of the body, as the urban setting is portrayed as an emotionally charged, sensuous landscape. Such a representation of the body in the city allows for alternative conceptions of the figure of the walker. For instance, Molly, though she wanders all over Dublin in the talk and minds of other Dubliners as they walk and in reported instances of walking, is perhaps the strangest walker of them all. Emphatically denied the status of *flâneuse* in 'Penelope' she is presented through the reference to a domestic scene in which a woman waits, immobile yet not static as she strategically weaves to stave off her suitors, arrest time, and regain control of the narrative of her life.

Joyce's Molly emphasizes the link between the walking body and weaving narratives through acts of self-presentation in "Penelope". She stages her own body, carving out a space for herself in Dublin city which rivals her existence as a product of gossip and male gazes in the chapters preceding "Penelope". Molly's blindness emblemizes a final view of Dublin through a locatedness which shows no need to sight the city, in other words no need for a visual or mental representation of the city. Furthermore, Molly's thoughts include temporal transmigrations, wandering far from the Dublin scene, enlarging the scope of the narrative to other wanderers and other countries entirely. She migrates from Dublin and returns to Dublin, inscribing the city in a network of migration linking it to elsewhere

places and other times which open up the concept of place. Molly asks the question of the capacity for one body to set the stage, to create an interactive space of representation in which the city and the self along with other participants of the city space are co-constituted and escape their boundaries.

Although less pervious to the public gaze, Bloom is equally receptive to his environment. Though his wanderings emphasize the city's double status as a site and sight of pleasure compatible with the *flâneur*'s idle enjoyment of city space, Bloom's mutability and his willingness to think himself into another's skin distinguishes his perspective from the *flâneur*'s sketching gaze. Bloom illustrates the reversibility of the body, emphasizing the porosity of the self, when for example he feels pain in sympathy with Molly's menstruation cycles, or adopts the point of view of her cat in "Calypso" or that of a bat circling overhead in "Nausicaa". Drawn into his environment, he all too often lacks the *flâneur*'s capacity to distance himself from it. "Telemachus," "Wandering Rocks," "Cyclops," all tend to show that in *Ulysses* the remote viewpoint and other forms of narratological distance verge on parody.

Bloom's gaze is submerged by materiality at too close focus, when focus is drawn to the "sausage-pink" hands of the butcher or the crooked skirt of the servant girl with her "moving hams," and the direction of his thoughts is consistently swayed by his sensorial environment and the desires they call forth: the smell of lemon-scented soap which he buys for Molly in "Lotus-Eaters" causes him to think of the lemons of Gibraltar and leads him to indulge in bathing with the soap himself.

Such a body-centric representation of space leads to the representation of alternative geographies which are not so much conceptual but sensuous and enable the disruption of a hierarchical ordering of stream-of-consciousness by allowing for a narrative space predicated on the in-between. If Stephen's emotional landscape highlights his personalizing tendency, his ambition to aesthetically reconstruct both himself and his surroundings in an act of self-creation, Bloom's emotions are

impersonalized, disseminated. They are tragically ventriloquized by the everyday world of mundane, functional or dysfunctional objects.

In “Calypso,” the episode otherwise known as the breakfast scene, there is scarce explicit reference to Bloom’s emotional predicament. The emotional charge of the events can be guessed at: Bloom prepares his wife Molly’s breakfast as she lies in bed upstairs; he has a more fruitful exchange with her cat than with her despite her constantly being on his mind; he goes out to get a kidney – the last; and he delivers a letter to Mrs. Marion Bloom announcing her bold lover Boylan’s visit later that afternoon. However, it is only in retrospect, re-reading the episode that the reader will grasp the facts and allusive texturing referring to Bloom’s suggested impotence, the loss of his son Rudy, his coping with his daughter’s blooming sexuality and his cuckoldry. What the reader does immediately perceive is a discomfort, a sense of inadequacy and of Bloom’s being at home with the inadequate, with permeates the text through his relation to an object world which mediates his emotion and prevents emotional excess.

As Fritz Senn has noted of language, objects in “Calypso” and throughout *Ulysses* never seem to be quite right and what I would add is they trigger and circumscribe an emotional out-of-placeness, in-betweenness or inadequacy which Bloom successfully copes with. Paradoxically, they suggest Bloom’s usurpation in his own home but also his ability to shoulder such usurpation, foregrounding the hero of *Ulysses* as a man of inadequate emotional magnanimity. The Ulyssean anti-hero or man of many wiles who never seems to get it quite right accepts his perpetual displacement as central subjectivity through the intrusion of unwanted, unsettled emotions materialized by objects. Thus, Bloom goes about “righting her breakfast things on the humpy tray”, his possessions are broken, dysfunctional or second-hand like “his lost property office secondhand waterproof” or his “high grade ha” which is missing a letter and will later carry another secret letter. His movements within his own home are impeded by the intrusive noise of “quietly creaky” boots or the “creaky wardrobe” where he may have misplaced his key.

The resounding leitmotif of the “brass quoits of the bedstead [jingling]” with Molly’s every move, associates Molly with the suggestive sound of the jingling bed, just as the erotic novel she was reading “fallen, sprawled against the bulge of the orange-keyed chamberpot” draws up a lascivious image of her possessions as Bloom sees them and as he foresees Boylan’s seeing of them. Most telling perhaps, is the description of the kettle which Bloom sets to boil (as Fritz Senn noted at the 2011 James Joyce Summer School, perhaps Boylan, Molly’s lover is already on his mind): “it sat there, dull and squat, its spout stuck out” (4. 2454). The awkward sonority of the words and the choice of strong monosyllables reinforce the awkwardness of the image. The mundane kitchen utensil hardly advocates such a concise, emotionally charged depiction.

The transferal of Bloom’s emotions to the teapot is confirmed when the latter resurfaces in the ‘Circe’ episode as the fetishistic object correlative of Bloom’s sexual desire: “BLOOM: (MEANINGFULLY DROPPING HIS VOICE) I confess I’m teapot with curiosity to find out whether some person’s something is a little teapot // MRS BREEN: (GUSHINGLY) Tremendously teapot! London’s teapot and I’m simply teapot all over me!” (15: 20460-61). Rather than explicit reference to Bloom’s emotion, the reader is brought to experience the world through Bloom’s perception, a perception modulated by his emotion: thus his immediate surroundings constitute what Vike Plock has referred to as “the emotional penumbra” which environs the subject.<sup>158</sup> But this emotional penumbra challenges or even misplaces the character; indeed, one might call it an emotional limbo.

In *Ulysses*, the object world participates in constructing an emotional, sensuous landscape which is part of the hermeneutic game into which the reader is drawn. In my view, the provisional consubstantiality of Bloom’s emotions with a world of objects and its subsequent ventriloquized dissemination equally contributes to what Darren Tofts has referred to as the hypertextual quality of *Ulysses*. Through its hypertextual cross-referencing and reworkings emotion undergoes a parodic

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<sup>158</sup> Vike Plock. “‘Object Lessons’: Bloom and His Things.” *James Joyce Quarterly*. Vol. 49. n°3-4 (Spring-Summer, 2012). pp. 557-572.

recirculation as object which comically fractures and requalifies the tragic scope of Bloom's existence. What is significant resurfaces as what could have been significant as it is given to be re-read on an amplified and yet often irreverent mode of apprehension (such as Bloom's sense of impotence and inadequacy is recirculated by the reappearance of the teapot in "Circe").

The pathos of Bloom's situation is qualified by the mechanic productions of the text which is so full of extraneous and miscellaneous material that it draws the reader into a hermeneutic game to which there is no answer – or a cosmic joke. Thus in the "Sirens" episode, the emotions sketched in "Calypso" resurface in a hypertextual and musical network of references which condense and aestheticize them: "Blew. Blue bloom" becomes the code word and encoded leitmotiv for Bloom which musically reconfigures an emotional narrative. If we look closely at some of the occurring leitmotifs of the "Sirens" episode what is notable is that these are not mere repetitions. What is taking place is a cross-referencing of Bloom's prior perceptions till they are imbued with a further emotional charge: "Jingle.Bloo."

Bloom is pursued by the sound of "jingle jaunty jingle" of the carriage taking Boylan to Molly. The action: Bloom "sighed on the silent bluehued flowers. Jingling. He's gone. Jingle. Hear" entails a systematic repetition of emotional triggers whose effect is amplified by their cruel repetition. 'Sirens' seeks to create narrative in the form of a musical fugue (11. 13043). The "jingle" resounds throughout 'Sirens' constituting a prison of sound of sorts, signaling material fixations ("Blazes sprawled on bounding tyres") and Bloom's obsessive return to the emotion from which he cannot escape.

Such hypertextuality which can be cruel or liberating contributes to arresting the spontaneous overflow of emotion and the reader's spontaneous identification with such emotion through its mechanical recirculation within the text. Sentimental moments in *Ulysses* are thus countered by a hypertextuality which inflects their meaning though it participates in furthering the production of emotion. Likewise, the landscape of the city disappears to give way to a hypertextual process of

emotional landscaping in which what is presented is the dramatized perception of Bloom's emotions. A spectrum of avatars of the body, possible engagements with city space.

To see the *flâneur* as an illustration of De Certeau's ground-level conception of lived space is to conceive of lived space as mainly visible, visualized space and in my view to slightly skew lived space away from a phenomenological conception of it. De Certeau's lived space is not ground-level in the sense of visual perspective it is ground-level in the sense of the walker's immersion because the focus is not on space as visualized object but on space as the relationship between the perceiver and the perceived. What is drawn into focus in Joyce's Dublin and Woolf's London is the junction between the self and the environment and that junction may be vision but it may also be varying degrees of blindness. The *flâneur* and his city space are two different coinciding entities but the urban walker of these texts is the condition for the cityscape. The city is not a sight, it is not a thing, it is the body – not metaphorically but phenomenologically as the orientating and substantiating principle from which its space and the significance of its matter extends. The *flâneur*'s gaze implies his distinction from the urban space in which he evolves: his body does not 'mean' the space in which he moves; with Joyce and Woolf the body signifies space.

I suggest that what *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* more radically foreground is the body's role in the process of focalization itself, through various modes of involvement with city space. The narratological device through which such a process is represented could be termed the walking-body trope. By suggesting this term I seek to distance the representation of the body in the city and the embodied perspective in these urban peripatetics from the gender bias which inevitably conditions the figure of the *flâneur*, and from the latter's imbrication with the representational device of the point of view and its visual or pictorial connotations. This walking-body-subject is a dynamic locus of perpetual displacement in that it functions as a site of intermingling which negotiates the dimensions of space, self, and narrative; it is the walking, often wandering, body which orients the reader's progress through the fictional city and the narrative through a central process of disorientation.

This “there” is forcefully sustained throughout *Mrs Dalloway*, constituting a luminous and essential part of Woolf’s fictional investigations. In contrast, in Joyce’s *Ulysses* the question morphs to address what happens when the body can no longer hold the center, or when the phenomenological locus of narrative, ontology, is challenged by the disseminating processes of language and fiction. In other terms, *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* are peculiar peripatetic novels in which a strong topographical dimension or sense of location is mediated through the disorienting chronotope of the walking body. This may seem an excessively simple claim but it is one which has complex implications: the body, the walking, wandering, moving, sensing, perceiving, emoting, interacting body, functions as the main coherent principle of narrative organisation; and it is one which relies on disorientation – an original being-out-of-place of sorts – and thus articulates dispossession.

I choose to speak of the representation of the body in the city in these novels by Joyce and Woolf as a “walking-body trope” to insist on the yoking of body and city not only in the representation of space but in a spatial narrative of sorts, and also to highlight how Joyce and Woolf tend towards the latter end of the spectrum to challenge any authoritative hierarchical view of space. In my view, the walking body or the (marginal) body-walking-the-city-narrative is at odds with other canonical representations of city space such as conveyed by the panorama or the figure of the *flâneur*.

Through the walkers, some of them paradoxically immobilized, of their streets, these novels anticipate a conception of space and of the self in the city voiced by “human geographers such as Yi-Fu Tuan, Anne Buttimer, David Seamon, and Edward Relph” in accordance with Merleau-Ponty’s conception of an embodied space at odds with intellectualized space, which is that “the concept of location does not denote a fractional unit of space, but is approached, rather, as an effect of man’s being in the world.”<sup>159</sup> In such a sense, the narratives in question here may be said to be primarily concerned with acts of positioning multiple selves in a resulting environment and negotiating their

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<sup>159</sup> *Postcolonial Translocations. Op. cit.* p. liii.

meanings through linguistic interferences. “Relph explicitly draws on Edmund Husserl’s and Martin Heidegger’s work to grasp place as a phenomenon directly related to the practice of dwelling: i.e. of placing oneself through one’s body in space. For Relph, the essence of place “lies in the largely unconscious intentionality that defines places as profound centers of human existence.”<sup>160</sup>

It may be useful to approach the body in these works of fiction not only as an object of perception and of representation, nor as the site of perceptions and emotions forming an individual perspective or point of view, but as an equivocal territory of representation: on the one hand, the walking body functions as an overarching chronotope, which is to say a principle ordering the construction of a fictional spatio-temporal relationship between an embodied self (along with perceptions and emotions) and an environment (a material surrounding which includes other selves). On the other, the body remains an objection to the subjective point of view, a compelling object of artistic and aesthetic representation which interferes with the representation of the self as individual consciousness.

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<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*



## II. FIGURES: SIGHTING/CITING THE BODY

### 1. “Un éclair ... puis la nuit ! Fugitive beauté”:<sup>161</sup> The Fleeting Figure of the *Passante*

#### 1.1. The Aesthetic of the *Passante*

*Look again, look at her as she really is, and you will see something very different from what appears from the perspective of the masculine writer ... look instead at the conditions of representation that made it possible for the woman to be seen as a passante.*

*-- Rachel Bowlby, Still Crazy After All These Years*

If in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *Ulysses* a central focus on walking determines the representational codes through which the city is presented to the reader, the narrative perspective which walking provides further challenges what may be called, in terms borrowed from Roland Barthes, the “preeminence of the pictorial code in literary mimesis.”<sup>162</sup> In this chapter, I analyze some figures in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *Ulysses* and more broadly the process of figuring the body. I use the terms figure and figuring to designate representations of the body which imply negotiating pictorial codes.

In this sense, the figure of the *passante* is emblematic. The elusive *passante* walks by definition: her walking image invites fiction-making, opening a gap between experiencing the city and exhibiting the body. What are the implications when passing is given as synonymous with a state of being? If the *passantes* of *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses* are such transient figures as that which Baudelaire described, what is produced and what is consumed in their passing? The tension between walking as embodied experience and walking as bodily exposition – or even exhibition – may offer some insight into the

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<sup>161</sup> Charles Baudelaire. “A une passante.” *Les Fleurs du mal*.

<sup>162</sup> Roland Barthes. *S/Z*. New York: Hill and Wang. rptd 2002. p. 55.

many reversals of the body's subject and object dimensions in *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway*. The body's potential to articulate these two meanings is one of the reasons I find for its haunting, self-negating, self-contradicting quality in both Joyce's and Woolf's texts.

The imbrication of embodied perspectives and city spaces is one way in which Joyce and Woolf re-imagine the body in *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* by setting aside the late nineteenth-century conventional establishment of setting, physique and character. Another, I argue, may be through the deforming and reforming of the figure of the body as an aesthetic event which complicates the manifestation of a self. Although there are clear differences in both authors' portrayals of the passing woman, both equally draw the *passante*'s body into a citational loop in which sighting the body implies citing the body.

Baudelaire's depiction of the *passante* in *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857) emblemized the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century figure of the *passante*, a woman who walks the streets of the city, the sight of her moving body articulating a mystery conducive to artistic creation.

La rue assourdissante autour de moi hurlait.  
Longue, mince, en grand deuil, douleur majestueuse,  
Une femme passa, d'une main fastueuse  
Soulevant, balançant le feston et l'ourlet ;

Agile et noble, avec sa jambe de statue.  
Moi, je buvais, crispé comme un extravagant,  
Dans son œil, ciel livide où germe l'ouragan,  
La douceur qui fascine et le plaisir qui tue.

Un éclair... puis la nuit ! – Fugitive beauté  
Dont le regard m'a fait soudainement renaître,  
Ne te verrai-je plus que dans l'éternité ?

Ailleurs, bien loin d'ici ! trop tard ! jamais peut-être !  
Car j'ignore où tu fuis, tu ne sais où je vais,  
Ô toi que j'eusse aimée, ô toi qui le savais !

As Rachel Bowlby and Deborah Parsons note, Baudelaire's poem has served as an archetypal example of women's objectification through the male gaze, particularly in the public spaces of the city's streets.<sup>163</sup> Several elements of this depiction strike the reader: (1) the suspension of the hustle and bustle of the city streets in a moment of contemplation which takes the woman's body as its focus, (2) the persona's voyeuristic enjoyment and reveling in his own sensations and (3) the transformation of the woman's body into an object of art, or an aesthetic experience.

The use of *ekphrasis* in the description of the *passante*'s body – her leg suggests that of a statue, her eye a canvas of stormy skies – confirms the process of objectification through which the poet-persona attempts to stay the progress of the fleeting woman by reverting her passing form to a *tableau* or a work of art which allows for a lasting contemplation. One might also note, as Turman does, that the sudden flash of light followed by darkness (“un éclair... puis la nuit!”) recalls the recent invention of photography and its potential as a novel art form, stressing the visual dimension of the poem.

However, the ekphrastic dimension of the poem contrasts with the impassive stance of the *passante*, marking out her portrayal as an aesthetic object as an *impasse*. The description of her statue-like leg, suggesting the immobility of stone, contradicts the following allusion to her beauty which is fundamentally linked to her transient, fleeting nature (“fugitive”). This contradiction may reference

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<sup>163</sup> Baudelaire's *passante* can be better understood in the broader context of literary criticism dealing with Baudelaire's ambivalent treatment of women and their place in the city. Interpretations begin with Walter Benjamin's analysis of Baudelaire's portrayal of modern subjectivity through the concept of the gaze in *Charles Baudelaire. A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* in the essay “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire.” Leo Bersani (1977), Patricia Clements (1985) and Paul Sheehan (2013) have all addressed what they perceive to be Baudelaire's “mysogyny.” For studies of Baudelaire's ambivalent portrayal of women see Amy Ransom. “Mon semblable, ma mère: Woman, Subjectivity and Escape in *Les Fleurs du mal*.” In *Paroles gelées*, 11(1993). pp. 31-55. Debarati Sanyal. *The Violence of Modernity: Baudelaire, Irony, and the Politics of Form*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press. 1996. Kerry Weinberg. “The Women of Eliot and Baudelaire: The Boredom, the Horror and the Glory.” In *Modern Language Studies*, 14 (1984). pp. 31-42. Peggy Kamuf. “Baudelaire's Modern Woman.” In *Qui Parle: Literature, Philosophy, Visual Arts, History*, 4 (1991). pp. 1-7. Elaine F. Dalmolin. “Modernity Revisited: Past and Present Female Figures in the Poetry of Banville and Baudelaire.” In *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, 25 (1996-7). pp. 78-91.

In *Le Mythe de la Passante* (1999), Claude Leroy notes that if the *flâneur* has received much critical attention the figure of the *passante* has been neglected, emphasizing that public city space is still strongly associated with the masculine sphere. Deborah Parsons in *Streetwalking in the Modern Metropolis* aims to reclaim the city streets as part of feminine experience, but she does not do so by focusing specifically on the *passante*, but rather by broadening the conceptual scope of the *flâneur* to include the female *flâneuse*. Other critics such as Janet Wolff (1985; 2006), Catherine Nesci (2007), Aimée Boutin (2012), Allyson Kreuter (2015), or Lauren Elkin (2016) have equally focused their attention on the *flâneuse*.

the codes of ancient Greek sculpture, by which artists sought to convey the expressivity of the body through the *contrapposto* pose.

Through such a reference to *contrapposto*, a hallmark of classical and later on Renaissance sculpture, the passing woman would enter the realm of the ideal, the qualifier “agile” insisting on the connection between ideal physical form, self-integrity and ability. In fact, upon closer investigation of the ekphrastic process at work, the qualities which seem to define Baudelaire’s *passante* the most – those which portray her as “agile and noble”, and deep in majestic mourning – could even suggest the poet’s projection of the ideal body of classical statuary onto the body of the passing woman, furthering the impression of a statuesque being.

The statue, all at once expressing a classical ideal, a memorial tradition and a noble art form, conveys its own qualities to the passing woman, so that one might question to what extent the poet has aimed to capture the *passante* at all. The figure of the woman may be no more than a direct product of the *ekphrasis* device through which the poet seeks to represent her and a reflection of his own identity as an artist. In this representational loop she may have escaped entirely, consumed by the aesthetic pleasure of the poet-persona in enabling his own artistic production. The poem’s irony is thus intelligently designed to reflect back upon its maker by questioning the “I” or “je(u)” of artistic production.

The *passante* has stood at the intersection of aesthetic and political concerns from as early on as Baudelaire’s glamourized portrayal of her in *Les Fleurs du mal*. In “Modern Transitions in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Paris” Karen Turman explicitly links the emergence of the figure of the *passante* in Baudelaire’s poetry to his observation of the changing landscape of Paris due to the demands of industry and transportation under Napoleon III. She sees the poem “A Une Passante” as a simultaneous mourning of “the loss of pre-industrial Paris” as well as an appreciation of “its new modern identity.”<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Karen Turman. “Modern Transitions in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Paris: Baudelaire and Renoir.” *Paroles Gelées*. vol. 26. issue 1. 2010. pp. 3-12. p. 4.

Turman's point is to contrast Baudelaire's "A Une Passante" and Renoir's *Les parapluies* to trace the "emergence of modernity in Paris through the textual and later the visual" and "explore the dichotomy between conceptions of modernity and its representation."<sup>165</sup> The terms in which she frames her conclusion shed light on the figure of the *passante* and the mode of apprehending the body which this device enables. She mentions "the fresh and changing experience of the consumer of the text and the painting," along with the "*consumption* of poems and paintings" (her emphasis).<sup>166</sup> This foray into the Paris of Baudelaire to contemplate the Parisian *passante* may set the grounds for considering the depiction of the *passante* as that of a particular experience of aesthetic consumption in which a supposed ideal physical form gives way to a focus on the production of aesthetic discourses which surround the body, determining its consumption.

Underlying these experiences of the *passante* are more or less oblique references to the body's cultural status as an object of art and of consumption. In "The Aesthetics of consumption and the consumer as an aesthetic subject" Alladi Venkatesh and Laurie Meamber suggest the following definition of "aesthetic consumption":

We define aesthetic consumption as those aspects of sensory experiences that are made manifest in the consumption of everyday objects that are presumed to have aesthetic qualities, as well as those experiences relating to art and art-like objects and artistic events.<sup>167</sup>

One aspect of the duality of Joyce's and Woolf's city walkers is that they may provide embodied perspectives which give new meaning to city spaces, but may also highlight the body's uncanny affiliation to commodity objects through its role in aesthetic consumption experiences.

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<sup>165</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 3.

<sup>166</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 11.

<sup>167</sup> Venkatesh Alladi and Meamber Laurie A. "The aesthetics of consumption and the consumer as an aesthetic subject." *Consumption Markets & Culture*. 11:1. 2008. pp. 45-70. p.48.

Granted, this is not news: an intriguing illustration of this would be the fashion industry's long history with public city space through the close connection established between catwalk and sidewalk. In London for example, the reversal of influence – which saw street style begin to dominate the runway instead of style imperatives trickling down from the private runways of elite designers – took place during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is partially documented by Polhemus Ted in *Streetstyle: From Sidewalk to Catwalk*.<sup>168</sup> Although street fashion exacerbated the reduction of the body to a figure on display akin to other commodity objects of mass consumption, it was equally part of an aesthetic and ideological revolution which gave value to the street as a hotbed of lowbrow culture.

From catwalk to sidewalk the walking woman's body undergoes a similar dematerializing process, as the singularity of her body is erased by the material commodities which she wears, which in turn compile cultural and aesthetic codes signaling femininity. That the *passante* exists solely on the street is no coincidence for my corpus: I call attention to her as one of the aesthetic arcs which connect the subjective experience of the body to the figure of the body. Attention to the portrayal of the human figure mediated by the figurative arts, rather than undermining the portrayal of embodied experience, allows us readers a fuller view of the distinct ways in which Joyce and Woolf respond to the classical ideal of the body most prominent in highbrow art forms, by shedding light on the disembodying forces at the heart of such an ideal.

Illustrating the streetwalker's potential to occupy the role of the impenetrable object of aesthetic consumption, figures of the *passante* flit through *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses*, adding a new dimension to the question of the inaccessible subjectivity of the other and of the body's mysterious kinship with the object world. In what is perhaps the most significant study of the female city walker in modernist literature for my purposes, *Still Crazy After All These Years*, Rachel Bowlby offers a concise and prosaic definition of the *passante* as the “passing woman of a modernist literary tradition, glimpsed by

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<sup>168</sup> Ted Polhemus. *Streetstyle: From Sidewalk to Catwalk*. London: Thames & Hudson. 1994.

the *flâneur* who sees her as the one and only just at the point when she is already out of sight forever.”<sup>169</sup> As a literary figure, the *passante* seems on the one hand to embody certain ideal qualities of femininity and on the other to have a close connection to the desacralized aesthetic and/or erotic product of industrialization. Bowlby describes women in the street from the *flâneur*’s perspective as on a par with other commodities, “part of the spectacle, one of the curiosities in which the *flâneur* will want to take an interest in the course of his walking.”<sup>170</sup>

From an experiential perspective, Venkatesh and Meamber qualify the consumption experience as “a phenomenon directed toward the pursuit of fantasies, feelings, and fun. Hedonic experience, defined as enjoyment or pleasure, is one type of aesthetic response that activates the multi-sensory, fantasy, and emotive aspects of experience.”<sup>171</sup> By Venkatesh and Meamber’s terms, one might read the passing of the *passante* as an archetypal aesthetic consumption experience which transfigures the body of the passing woman into an item of pleasurable pursuit and self-gratification for the onlooker.

The *passante* is a figure which might be said to represent the physical advent of the idealized body in the street, the spectacle of which momentarily arrests the commotion of the city. However, what is underlined in the previous quote is the phantasmagorical quality of such an experience. Through the figure of the *passante*, the appearance of a woman’s body dramatically conceals her subjectivity along with any individuality. As Bowlby notes, the *passante* is often no more than an embodiment of an essentialist idea of the feminine which the fictional male observer projects. From the start, the *passante* thus embodies a promise of the ideal female body which is simultaneously belied by the formulaic side of the *passante* which suggests an endless replication: “one *passante* is like another in that she can be replaced, that another and another will figure in the same way, without there

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<sup>169</sup> Rachel Bowlby. *Still Crazy After All These Years: Women, Writing & Psychoanalysis*. New York: Routledge. 2010. p. viii.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6.

<sup>171</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 46.

being any constitutive event, even in retrospect.”<sup>172</sup> Her fugitive nature highlights the unreliability of such a representation of the body which is simultaneously exalted and consumed.

In “Toward a Definition of Ekphrasis in Literature and Film” Laura Sager Eidt writes that ekphrasis “refers to works of poetry and prose that talk about or incorporate visual works of art.”<sup>173</sup> More broadly, she draws upon Theon’s definition of ekphrasis as a rhetorical device, an “expository speech which vividly brings the subject before our eyes.”<sup>174</sup> Murray Krieger, Leo Spitzer and Wendy Steiner have equally drawn attention to the spatial dynamics of the ekphrastic device, which has the effect of “interrupt[ing] the temporality of discourse” with the aim to “freeze it during its indulgence in spatial exploration” and which derives from the art of painting and sculpture a concern with the representation of spatiality.<sup>175</sup> For Spitzer, ekphrasis aims at producing an object of art which speaks to the senses. He defines the process as “the poetic description of a pictorial or sculptural work of art, which description implies [...] the production through the medium of words of sensuously perceptible objets d’art...”<sup>176</sup>

Such a paradox of ekphrastic representation marks Joyce’s and Woolf’s representation of the female body, which at significant moments is informed by its potential status as an object of art. In *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses*, the use of *ekphrasis* acknowledges the lingering influence of the fetishizing and objectifying discourses surrounding women in Victorian culture. For the same reason, although one might speak of a residual ekphrastic fascination which can be found specifically in the portrayal of young women such as Elizabeth and the *passante* Peter Walsh pursues in *Mrs Dalloway* or Gerty MacDowell, the “sea-side girl” in *Ulysses*, its uses in these texts are fundamentally subversive, constituting a dead-end in the representation of the body as an aesthetic object. In fact, in Baudelaire’s

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<sup>172</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 11.

<sup>173</sup> Laura M. Sager Eidt. *Writing and Filming the Painting: Ekphrasis in Literature and Film*. New York: Rodopi. 2008. p. 9.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.* qtd p. 11.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.* qtd p. 12. Murray Krieger. *Ekphrasis: The Illusion of the Natural Sign*. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press. 1992. p. 14.

<sup>176</sup> Leo Spitzer. “The ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’, or Content vs. Metagrammar.” In *Comparative Literature*, vol. 7, no. 3 (1955). pp. 203-225. p. 207.



poem, the *passante*'s body could be said to have been dematerialized at the expense of representing the persona's experience of aesthetically enjoying it.

## 1.2. The Passante's Glamourous Mirage

*The bridge between the words glamour and grammar is magic. According to the OED, glamour evolved through an ancient association between learning and enchantment.*<sup>177</sup>

One could intuitively grasp how Peter's pursuing of the *passante* in *Mrs Dalloway* could qualify as an aesthetic consumption experience. If anything, in this sequence Woolf highlights the *passante*'s modernity through her affiliation to mass production and commodity objects displayed in high street shop-windows, which can be defined as glamorous. Glamour surrounds figures of the *passante* in *Mrs. Dalloway* and sets them apart from many of the women in *Ulysses*, whose earthy organicity makes them seem close and approachable, part of the texture of Dublin city life. Woolf's portrayal of the *passante*'s glamorous figure does not increase her body's legibility but rather shrouds it in a veil of objects.

As Peter Walsh's pursuit of the *passante* unfolds, it becomes more and more obvious to the reader that Woolf does not portray his attempt to see the passing woman, but rather his projection of an ideal female form behind which she is shown to disappear. The production of glamour which this vanishing act relies on is intriguing as the concept is a duplicitous one, pointing to a deceitful form of artistry, the entrancing spectacle, as well as to a creative experience of imaginative intensity. The *passante* in

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<sup>177</sup> Roy Peter Clark. *The Glamour of Grammar: A Guide to the Magic and Mystery of Practical English*. New York: Little, brown and company. 2010.

*Mrs Dalloway* thus retains the same quality as Baudelaire's *passante* of enabling an aesthetic consumption experience through artistic production.

In *Glamour in Six Dimensions: Modernism and the Radiance of Form*, Judith Christine Brown seeks to answer the need for an in-depth study of the concept of glamour, arguing that glamour is equally relevant to “the shallow world of consumer pleasure and high fashion” and to “a wide range of modernist aesthetics”:

Glamour is both a formal category and an experiential site of consumer desire, fantasy, sexuality, class, and racial identity; it thus uniquely frames the pleasures that drive the art and culture of modernism [...] Glamour is not just an effect of the entertainment industry; it is also part of a complex aesthetic network that binds high modernism with a range of phenomena that might include the film vamp, the Charleston, the Cotton Club's “jungle music,” and even such popular 1920s hairstyles as the Eton Crop or Marcel Wave. Glamour appears both as commodity [...] and also as something distinctly modernist, formal, and tied to less material concerns than the production and packaging of goods.<sup>178</sup>

The duplicitous nature of the concept which Brown underlines may be traced back to its etymology. Both “glamour” and “grammar” are thought to share roots in the term “gramarye” which designates an ancient form of occult science and witchcraft.<sup>179</sup> For Carol S. Gould glamour's ambiguity or “enigma” is “what leads Kathleen Higgins, in one of the few philosophical discussions of glamour, to speak of it as a “mirage” arising only from exterior props.”<sup>180</sup> From Peter Walsh's perspective, the *passante* in *Mrs Dalloway* could indeed be termed a form of mirage, a mirage being

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<sup>178</sup> Judith Brown. *Glamour in Six Dimensions: Modernism and the Radiance of Form*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press. 2009. p.1.

<sup>179</sup> Colbey Emmerson Reid. *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. vol. 89. no. 3/4 (Fall/Winter 2006). pp. 301-309. “Glamour and grammar converge in an 18<sup>th</sup>-century Scottish form of witchcraft called gramarye, the root of both words. Otherwise known as “the glamour”, gramarye was the art of deceit believed to be practiced by gypsies, who were thought to be shapeshifters who could pose as anyone because they were no one in particular; a race of wanderers who belonged nowhere, they possessed no Volk characteristic to anchor their identities.” pp. 301-302

Carol S. Gould. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. vol. 63, no. 3 (Summer, 2005). pp. 237-247. “‘Glamour’ is associated with darkness, witches, the occult, that is, the hidden. Etymologically, it shares Greek and Latin ancestors with ‘grammar’, at one time considered a recondite branch of knowledge. According to some, however, its more direct progenitors are the Scottish ‘gramarye’ and the Anglo-Norman ‘glomerie’, both designating occult knowledge and magic spells. Glamour belongs to one inclined to bewitch or to enchant.” p. 238

<sup>180</sup> Carol S. Gould. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. vol. 63, no. 3 (Summer, 2005). pp. 237-247. pp. 238-239.

(1) “an optical illusion caused by atmospheric conditions” as well as (2) “an unrealistic hope or wish that cannot be achieved” (*OED*). Deriving its meaning both from the French “se mirer” (‘to be reflected’) and the Latin “mirare” (‘look at’), the term equally connotes the interloping of a subject gaze and the reflections of an object.

The sequencing of the passage adds to the mirage-like quality of the *passante*. Peter Walsh’s pursuit of the *passante* forms a narrative sequence or passage which functions as a momentary interruption or interlude. Peter encounters the *passante* immediately after he has left Clarissa’s after seeing her for the first time since he left for India and having relived the disappointment of his failed romance with her. Immediately after his encounter with the *passante*, Peter declares his fun “over” and, taking comfort in the “admirable” spectacle of civilization which London presents, finds a seat in Regent’s Park where he drifts to sleep. The framing of the passage with Peter’s disillusion and departure on the one hand, his sleep and the visions which follow on the other, lends the escapade a dream-like quality allowing the body of the *passante* to be viewed as a spectacle where the material opens up onto the imaginary, emphasizing the *passante*’s role in the entrancement as well as her fictitiousness.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf emphasizes the irony of Peter Walsh’s encounter with the *passante*, by contrasting his use of abstractions to portray her in his mind’s eye with the lack of any particular description of the woman’s body. Following a young woman through the city streets, all Peter Walsh actually perceives of her is her back and the items of clothing which conceal her from his view, such as her cloak or gloves. Even the eye contact which is the climax of Baudelaire’s poem is denied in Walsh’s encounter with the *passante*, as Woolf underlines with irony: the only look the *passante* finally throws in Walsh’s direction before disappearing behind her front door is rather pointedly described as “not at him.”

In Peter Walsh’s “adventure” the woman becomes the embodiment of the essential ideas which form “the very woman he had always had in mind.” The ideal woman is a sum of contradicting

absolutes strung together: “young, but stately; merry, but discreet; black, but enchanting.” That the woman corresponds to an idea is emphasized by the use of a noun to qualify her: “this excitement,” and the use of the neutral possessive pronoun “its” (“with its back turned to shed on him a light which connected them”). The juxtaposition of a neutral possessive pronoun with a body part (“back”) stresses the odd conflation of the flesh and bone woman with Peter’s disembodied idea of her. Furthermore, the terms in which Peter envisions the woman connote youth, beauty, style, and excitement. Here the colour “red” is used in its conventional, symbolic sense, but also to showcase Peter’s eager, almost amateurish construction of character. At the same time, a certain sharp aloofness is conveyed by the woman’s supposed dignity, her “cool waiting wit,” “darting wit,” her “lizard’s flickering tongue,” as well as the “mockery in her eyes.” The portrayal of the woman responds directly to Peter Walsh’s thirst for excitement and adventure. These terms also suggest a quest for glamour which is equally conveyed by the glamorous objects which surround the *passante* and make up the only glimpses Peter Walsh and the reader have of her.

The whisper Peter Walsh imagines, the sensuality of the woman’s “thin long cloak which the wind stirred as she walked past Dent’s shop,” the migration of the red of the “carnation he had seen her wear” to her lips, along with her “white gloves and her shoulders,” metonymically convey an impression of glamour which derives from consumer objects which act as external props promoting sexual desire through distancing. This impression culminates in the conflation between the woman’s clothing and the objects on display in the shop windows, which are designed to illicit the consumer’s desire:

On and on she went, across Piccadilly, and up Regent Street, ahead of him, her cloak, her gloves, her shoulders combining with the fringes and the laces and the feather boas in the windows to make the spirit of finery and whimsy which dwindled out of the shops on to the pavement, as the light of a lamp goes wavering at night over hedges in the darkness.  
(*MD* p. 46)

Here the body of the young woman is glamourized, idealized, through its replacement by a number of objects for sale which connote an eroticized femininity and luxury, highlighting the link between the *passante*'s glamorous appearance and the commodification of her body. In Peter's fantasy, the *passante*'s body harkens toward the perfect body of the object which, unlike flesh, is finite, impenetrable and does not know death.

As Brown reminds us, glamour has equally been theorized by thinkers such as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer as a "vehicle of capitalist, colonial, or fascist ideology" for such reasons.<sup>181</sup> This is possibly one reason why Joyce's portrayal of female walkers such as the nextdoor servant girl in "Calypso" harkens back to the *passante* while attacking the standards of aloofness and glamour which are instrumental to this portrayal of women in the city. In *Ulysses*, whether wanting to pursue the servant girl when leaving Duglacz's, angling to check the anatomical accuracy of the statues of goddesses in the National Library, trying to catch a glimpse of a woman's stocking while she boards the tram, or even eyeing the barmaids in "Sirens", Joyce recurrently portrays Bloom in a failed attempt to eye the female body which ironically brings his own sense of embodiment to the fore.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, the glamorous, youthful display of the passing woman sheds an ironic light on the social construction of femininity but also on Peter Walsh's delusions and potential regrets. In contrast to Bloom's aforementioned acts of voyeurism, Woolf's portrayal of the *passante* exposes fantasies of power, albeit failed ones. If anything, it recalls Peter's own ageing, his return to England after several years in colonized India, his failure to secure a position in high society, as well as his failed love affair with Clarissa, who is ageing too.

In her book on glamour and modernity, Judith Brown takes the cigarette as an example to broach upon the wider issue that the production of glamour is sought in order to allow a shift in identity which momentarily empowers its subject. Her description of glamour casts an interesting light on Woolf's

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<sup>181</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 12.

depiction of the *passante* in *Mrs Dalloway* as a moment in which the female body is foregrounded only to better show its subjection to an objectifying social discourse which dematerializes it. In this sense, Brown theorizes glamour as an essentially negative aesthetics:

Glamour is cold, indifferent, and deathly; it relies on abstraction, on the thing translated into idea and therefore the loss of the thing itself, curling away from earthly concerns as if in a whiff of smoke. [...] Glamour chills, then, even as it promises the impossible. Here we find another connection to the modernism that favors blankness, the polished surface, the stance of impenetrability (as true in architecture and design as it is in literature), the suspicion of the nothing behind it all – yet somehow, this blankness is transmuted into something that is seductive, powerful, and often simply gorgeous.<sup>182</sup>

Interestingly, one might read Baudelaire's *passante* as similarly glamorous. Furthermore, the glamorous elements which make up the woman's portrayal are those which contribute to the impression that the woman is in part the poet's own aesthetic creation, at the same time as they convey the distance through which the creature escapes her creator. In the poem elements of the sublime which could be found in nature ("ciel livide", "l'ouragan") contribute to the awe-inspiring aura of the woman who seems at an unremovable distance from the persona who admires her. This distance can be attributed to the woman's status as an object of art, but also to the deathly connotations of the descriptive elements of the poem, which link her to pleasure, death and destruction through the metaphors of the irate storm ("ciel livide", "ouragan") and deadly – masochistic? – pleasure ("le plaisir qui tue").

As Brown notes, "the late-nineteenth-century discourse of aestheticism stands out as the most direct antecedent to glamour."<sup>183</sup> I suggest that Woolf adopts the fundamental elements of this discourse in order to subvert it, whereas (as I will demonstrate further on) Joyce renews the aesthetic

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<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.* p. 5

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7.

terms for eyeing the *passante*'s body beyond the appeal of glamour. In *Mrs Dalloway*, through the use of glamour, this distance becomes a "central, structuring emptiness" determining Woolf's depiction of the *passante*, so that "veil after veil" the figure of the woman is not so much dramatically revealed as abstracted, lost in its becoming the site of the concealed absence of the body. Reviewing Laura Mulvey's analysis of Hollywood as the "democracy of glamour," Brown argues that what is implicit in the "fantasy space" produced by glamour is a fear of the "organic and particularly female body," which glamour masks. In some ways, the deathly beauty of the *passante* also spells out the death of the living, organic, female body. In her view, it also "offers us a new dimension, one tied up in aesthetic value and a move away from the pressing realities of the flesh."<sup>184</sup>

In "Beauty and its Kitsch Competitors" Kathleen Higgins indicts glamour and the production of it on the basis of three main vices: (1) its fantasy-enticing quality which relies on the glamorous person's inaccessibility for the spectator; (2) its superficial foregrounding of the observer's beliefs and desires to the detriment of the glamorous person's subjective experience; and (3) its resulting objectification of the glamorous person, who is solely perceived from a third-person perspective.<sup>185</sup>

Yet, however ephemeral and phantasmagorical the consumption experience, in Woolf's text it is given another more positive value through its narrative impact: the episode with the *passante* casts a sardonic light on Peter Walsh's self-serving fantasies, but it is simultaneously represented as "half made up" and in fact "quite true." This consideration hints at the episode bearing greater narrative weight than to portray Peter Walsh as a delusional middle-aged man acting out on his illusions.

Though I believe that in this passage Woolf also depicts the almost inescapable harassment of women in the street by men who ironically misconstrue their role in the narrative, this irony points to another element of equal interest. In Woolf's portrayal of the *passante*, and to some extent in

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<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.* p. 12.

<sup>185</sup> Kathleen Higgins. "Beauty and Its Kitsch Competitors". In *Beauty Matters*, ed. Peg Brand. University of Indiana Press. 2000. pp. 87-111.

Baudelaire's poem, viewing the latter's body as a spectacle for aesthetic or erotic consumption entails an equal awareness of the possibility of a salutary reversal of the third-person perspective to a first-person one, which may serve as a metaphor for the transferal of authorship or penmanship from the one to the other.

In this reversal, the poet/persona or spectator is ironically sent back their own reflection as imagined if the woman-as-spectacle were to become a woman-spectator. Baudelaire's poem hints at this reversal in the final line "ô toi qui le savais", implying that the woman's passing is a conscious refusal of the poet/persona's romantic overtures. Another possibility would be that the poet is hinting at the persona's delirious self-denial in the face of a threat to his ego: grasping at straws, he cannot accept the possibility that he may have escaped the woman's notice entirely. Either way, Baudelaire's *passante* is denied a voice in the narrative.

Woolf takes this reversal further by opening up the description of the *passante*'s body language and facial expressions to a double reading. In this hypothetical space, the woman's subjectivity and individuality are allowed a potential for expression. Indeed, the amusement of the *passante* who, as Peter Walsh notes, has "colour in her cheeks; mockery in her eyes" echoes his own thirst for adventure and recklessness, making her seem complicitous in his seduction game and the chase a consensual affair. The adjectives "laughing and delightful" equally qualify her manner as being frivolous and compliant, an accessory in Peter Walsh's quest for (mock-)heroic adventure.

However, the irony of the anti-climax – Peter's abrupt dismissal – is carefully prepared, increased by the repetition of "now" ("and now, and now, the great moment was approaching, for now she slackened"), which delays the resolution of the adventure while conveying the building of suspense for Peter, setting him up for a greater ridicule. As Peter's lead is confirmed to be a false one, the red herring that the *passante* inherently is, the adverb "triumphantly", which qualifies the woman's dismissal of Peter, offers the reader an opportunity to re-read the woman's "mockery" from her own



perspective. In this way the glamorous spectacle which the *passante* presents operates a reversal which relies on the possibility of its double reading from either a third-person (Peter) or a first-person (the *passante*'s) perspective.

And yet this is no final resolution, as transpires in the bittersweet overtones which conclude the passage:

Well, I've had my fun; I've had it, he thought, looking up at the swinging baskets of pale geraniums. And it was smashed to atoms – his fun, for it was half made up, as he knew very well; invented, this escapade with the girl; made up, as one makes up the better part of life, he thought – making oneself up; making her up; creating an exquisite amusement, and something more. But odd it was, and quite true; all this one could never share – it smashed to atoms. (p. 46)

The aftermath of Peter's excitement is anti-climactic. The moment is drained of all its color: the enticing "red" of the *passante*'s lips and flower has left in its place a few "baskets of pale geraniums." Yet, the tragic element which the passage aims to represent trumps the mock-tragedy of Peter's pursuit of the *passante* and his subjection to the irony of life. It concerns the transient truth of the experience, a moment of heightened existence which is lost through its miscommunication: all of which "one could never share – it smashed to atoms."

The pursuit of the *passante* foregrounds the objectification of the *passante*'s body furthered by the processes of mass consumption and production. And yet it seems that Woolf hints that it is equally a sensorial and erotic experience, a form of self-creation and recreation which is portrayed as fundamentally liberating and which shifts the boundaries of self-identity.

This may be one reason why Woolf's portrayal of the *passante* more directly addresses a late-nineteenth-century aesthetic than Joyce's and *passantes* in both works are located at opposite ends of a spectrum ranging from glamorous to trivial, possibly even animalistic. I believe the *passante* in *Mrs. Dalloway* exacerbates the dematerialization of the female body which is characteristic of the trope and

reflects with irony on the woman's role in the creative process. This is why, contrary to Joyce's *passante*-like figures, Woolf's *passante* is disembodied, glamorous, phantasmagorical, perhaps most prominently metafictional. She serves an ironic function, enlightening both Peter Walsh's state of consciousness and the fictional process through which Woolf opens up a space for female authorship, subverting the traditional trope of the female muse and empowering the passing woman with a perspective in the narrative. To do so, Woolf re-appropriates the archetype and her *passante* thus retains an archetypal, disembodied dimension.

Joyce's *passante*, on the other hand, confronts the archetype. She is not really a *passante* in that she is integrally individualized: she is an identifiable woman who could not be imagined to exist in another setting. Woolf's *passante* is admittedly upper-class and urban – but so is Baudelaire's archetype – whereas Joyce's servantgirl, for instance, is a nextdoor neighbour with an identity and a social role, tightly imbricated in the Dublin scene and in Bloom's daily life. In addition, although on some level both are reflections on the female figure's role as an object of art and commodification, they operate through diverging processes of eroticization. The one luxurious, setting the body at a distance to empower the feminine; the other bringing the body into close focus, desecrating the ideal body to elicit empathy.

One might go back to Peter's description of the *passante* as "young, but stately; merry, but discreet; black, but enchanting" and read it not as a definition of attributes which sum up the *passante* but as a nod to the self-defeating quality of definition. Each term which Peter chooses to define the *passante* is followed by a term which contradicts this definition or opens up a far-reaching spectrum bridging seemingly opposed notions such as from "young" to "stately" or from "merry" to "discreet". The body is given here as part of a creative process which relies on its constant recreation.

Furthermore, Peter's description of his adventure as "making oneself up; making her up; creating an exquisite amusement, and something more" (p. 46) closely recalls Clarissa's description

of life at the beginning of the novel as an enigmatic process of fiction-making in which the immense material processes of mass production and industry seem to play some part: “for Heaven only knows why one loves it so, how one sees it so, making it up, building it round one, tumbling it, creating it every moment afresh” (p.4).

In contradistinction to Kathleen Higgins’ negative view of the processes of glamour, Carol Gould argues for a distinction between “false” glamour and “true” glamour. In her terms, the latter would:

[arise] from a disposition to project, often without conscious intention, an imagined range of possible, not yet (or perhaps ever) actual experiences and lives. It inspires the fantasies of others by implicitly suggesting a promise of interesting, which is not to say extravagant or salacious, experiences.<sup>186</sup>

For Gould, true glamour is a first-person posture whose essence lies in “a curious magnetism that cannot be explained by logical or artistic soundness alone” and which implies a “special presence.” It is also, she argues, a mystery-inducing quality which by contrast with other forms of magnetism such as charisma, is “associated with darkness, witches, the occult, that is, the hidden” and which encourages the onlooker to project fantasies and interpretations.

Gould disagrees with Higgins’ view of glamour as relying on “exterior props” arguing that glamour is an expression or embodiment of transmutations of an imaginative identity or a complex psyche. For Gould, in other terms, it is a mode of self-embodiment which articulates personality as an enigma: “an embodied articulation of one’s particular turn of imagination.”<sup>187</sup> This is why Woolf’s portrayal of the *passante* opens up the possibility of interpreting the latter as a display of fictitiousness and as an avatar of authorship. In this sense it is a fictional process which does not irremediably

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<sup>186</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 240.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.* p. 240.

distance the subject-spectator from the object-spectacle but unites them in an interloop of imagined possibilities which imply the reversibility of these positions. She thus conceptualizes “the first-person element of glamour as an imaginative, aesthetic mode of self-projection.”<sup>188</sup>

One might suggest that if the sight of the *passante*’s glamorous figure fits the description of an aesthetic consumption experience, it also gives way to a moment of aesthetic and artistic production in which Peter and Clarissa connect beyond the image of the body through the fictions of the body. However, if the glamorous *passante* may be said to depict a possible mode of self-presentation, that mode of presentation remains nonetheless outside of her control, a fleeting fantasy of agency, the flipside of which is portrayed in Elizabeth’s growing awareness of the burden of being a woman in the street, attracting gazes: “people were beginning to compare her to poplar trees, early dawn, hyacinths, fawns, running water, and garden lilies; and it made her life a burden for her...” (p. 114).

Nonetheless, in this instance as well, the reversibility of perspectives allows for Elizabeth’s body to be perceived on a mode of self-presentation which conveys an equal thirst for freedom and enjoyment of it on the city streets: the absurd comparisons that Elizabeth imagines, more than defining her physique, mark out a certain deflection of the image – possibly even its re-appropriation – through its many metamorphoses. As Elizabeth “competently” boards the omnibus “in front of everybody” she stands at the prow and figures the omnibus beneath her to be “a pirate [...] reckless, unscrupulous, bearing down ruthlessly, circumventing dangerously, boldly snatching a passenger, or ignoring a passenger, squeezing eel-like and arrogant in between, and then rushing insolently all sails spread up Whitehall” (p. 115).

It is as if the physical form of the omnibus offered a vehicle for Elizabeth’s desire for a ruthless physicality. What the reader grasps here is Elizabeth’s thirst for an unrestrained experience of velocity and vitality. The open space between perceiver and perceived is thus a vital space for the re-ordering

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<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.* p. 245.

of gendered perspectives, where the young woman has the possibility to experience the freedom which she is otherwise denied, taking on the role of a “rider” on a pirate ship, expanding space from that of the urban outdoors to that of the country and finally the sea:

She was delighted to be free. The fresh air was so delicious [...] it was like riding, to be rushing up Whitehall; and to each movement of the omnibus the beautiful body in the fawn-coloured coat responded freely like a rider, like the figure-head of a ship.” (p. 115)

As Brown notes, although glamour may be a negative aesthetics it is equally productive, reflecting the *passante*’s ability to pass in-between:

Glamour inheres in neither object nor subject, but is produced, most intangibly, in the space between them, in their interrelation. The difficulty of defining glamour, then, is explained here, in the space between subject and object, object and effect, materiality and immateriality.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 9.

### 1.3. Passing the Veil of Words

Glamour and distance are two properties of a stereotyped feminine ideal which Joyce more radically takes to task in *Ulysses*. It is with this caveat in mind – the undermining of glamour – that the reader might look for avatars of the *passante* in Joyce's text. From this perspective, two figures strike me as intriguing potential candidates for the part of the *passante* in *Ulysses*, although there are others: Gerty MacDowell and “the nextdoor girl” whom Bloom encounters at the butcher's Duglasz while buying his famous pork kidney in “Calypso”.

They are unlikely *passantes* – which, given Joyce's attitude to literary conventions in *Ulysses*, would be the point. For one, Gerty's passing does not consolidate the ideal as with the *passante*, but revives the organic female body. Gerty cultivates glamour, as her knowledge of the many wiles featured in women's magazines illustrates. In some ways her responsiveness to Bloom may be read in the context of a cult she devotes to glamour and standards of beauty which demand being validated by an onlooker. However, it is the discrepancy between the pursuit of glamour and the glamorous which receives attention in “Nausicaa” and which produces much of the humour of the episode. One might even say that it is by rejecting glamour that Joyce manages to impress upon the reader the organicity and mundanity of the body. In sum, Gerty's passing deals a deathly blow to the ideal female form. When she does walk by Bloom solves the enigma (“Tight boots? No. She's lame! O!”): she no longer fits the conventional profile of the impenetrable *passante* who simultaneously embodies a physical ideal and an unfulfilled fantasy, and yet *Ulysses* carries further into meta-textual territory the ironic reversal of subject and object which the passing of the *passante* operates.

The “nextdoor girl”, as she is labelled by Bloom in “Calypso”, is not exactly unknown to Bloom, whereas anonymity is another hallmark of the *passante* which contributes to the aura of mystery surrounding her. Nonetheless, she too bears connections to the literary figure to the extent that

Bloom encounters her in a public space and she significantly catalyzes Bloom's pursuit of pleasure. Both figures may offer interesting alternatives to the model of embodiment associated with the *passante* yet they are fundamentally at odds, both in the relation of their figures to the ideal body beautiful and through their role in the intertextual processes at work.

The servant girl Bloom runs into at Duglasz's recalls a *passante* to the extent that Bloom tries to follow her down the street, that there is no actual exchange between him and her but rather his own fantasized ones. The focus on her body momentarily arrests the flow of the narrative and her inaccessibility contrasts with Bloom's fantasizing and reflects his own unfulfilled desire. Although the working-class nextdoor girl appears very different from the lofty, cynical *passantes* of Woolf and Baudelaire, who at times seem cruelly self-aware, she is no less the product of an aesthetic process linking her body to consumption through intertextuality.

The nextdoor girl appears in an episode which in Terence Brown's words "is clearly about appetite, consumption and waste, about desire and failed fulfilment, about images and commodity fetishism."<sup>190</sup> Brown argues that the predatory sexual and economic appetites which "Calypso" delves into, as well as the relationship between (re)production and destruction, constitute a critique of a liberal capitalism bred by imperialism:

The result is the economics of over-production and the exploitation through advertising of appetitive, irrational impulses that cannot be satisfied – a political economy of imperialist predators, of desire, consumption and evacuation so that the market may voraciously sustain its uncontrollable growth.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Terence Brown. "Calypso: myth, method, moment". *Studies on Joyce's Ulysses* [online]. Caen: Presses universitaires de Caen. 1991. consulted September 18 2018. <http://books.openedition.org/puc/233>. (9)

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.* (9)

Brown convincingly shows how predatory appetites prevail throughout the chapter, whether through the sensuous depictions of Bloom's craving for innards, or through Bloom's interest in advertising and its reliance on an underlying consumer culture. In "Calypso", unlike in *Mrs Dalloway* where the irony of the passage reverses the dynamics of onlooker-predator and *passante*-prey, the body of the *passante* becomes the focus of the gaze as it is commodified and mediated, not by the production of glamour, but by advertising and popular culture in which pictorial codes intersect with texts.

Like the young woman in *Mrs Dalloway*, whose body is made up of the items on display in the shop windows, the nextdoor girl's body is a product of her immediate commercial environment. However, the woman's lack of glamour and swiftness are emphasized. If Woolf's *passante*'s swift movements are in keeping with the velocity of the technologies of the modern city, the languorous passing of the nextdoor girl signals a more accessible, organic, yet no less entrancing materiality. Rather than the deathly cool sheen which coats the advertised object, the girl's figure recalls the warmth of flesh and blood.

Before Bloom encounters the young woman, it is a desire for flesh which has led him to Dlugacz's to buy meat for his breakfast. Looking at sausage links in the butcher's window, the economic figures Bloom had been preoccupied by fade from his mind, blotted out by the allure of "shiny links packed with forcemeat" (*U* 4.2595). Desire and satisfaction are encompassed in the description of the links of meat which "fed his gaze" and the warmth of the meat which "he breathed in tranquilly." The verbs and adjectives used to describe the meat on display ("a kidney oozed", "the lukewarm breath") convey a slowness and temperance which is in keeping with the slow stride of the servant girl and Bloom's carnivorous reveries will carry over to his lustful appreciation of her body.

The observation of the *passante*'s body in the "Calypso" episode calls attention to her everyday activities and humourously tends towards the nextdoor girl's disqualification from the category of the *passante*. As a participant in the daily activities of the city, the nextdoor girl is fundamentally different



from the *passante*, whose everyday existence remains a mystery which excites the male voyeur's curiosity. On the contrary, Bloom's appraisal of the young woman takes place in a mundane context, shopping for basic necessities, and those details which lead to erotic fantasies for him are closely connected to mundane and everyday occupations.

The "whack" of the woman's "crooked" skirt, which suggests to him a sado-masochistic flagellation fantasy, is inspired by her whacking the laundry at home in the yard and her "sodachapped hands" are a testimony to her role in society just as her "crusted toenails" are an indication of social class and daily occupations. These elements of description in fact counter the conventional portrayal of the ideal woman to the extent that one might wonder whether the nextdoor girl is not in fact an *anti-passante* of sorts, her depiction offering a critique of the aesthetics underlying the figure of the *passante* and its romanticizing impulse.

The commerce of meat clearly influences Bloom's perception of the young woman; he seems momentarily blind to anything else. This is emphasized by his picking up a pamphlet advertisement for a farm in Kinnereth and dreaming up a lowbrow version of a pastoral, even rural, scene featuring reproduction: "those mornings in the cattlemarket the beasts lowing in their pens" (*U* 4.2615-6). Bloom uses the pamphlet to disguise the fact that he is ogling the woman and the advertisement thus frames his gaze as well as it directs his thoughts.

The two visions commingle as Bloom observes "sound meat there like a stallfed heifer," a comment which could apply either to the fat oxen of Bloom's imaginings or to the young woman standing before him (*U* 4.2608). For the same reasons, Bloom's daydream is clearly erotic, playing upon the coarse association between a woman's body and cattle bred for reproduction to eroticize the passing woman. Like the display window advertising links of "forcemeat" Joyce's metonymic depiction of the woman through a focus on individual body parts calls attention to the commodification

of her body as well as to Bloom's fetishistic and animalistic fantasies. It also mocks the use of metonymy to idealize the female body part by part in the tradition of blazon poetry and courtship.

Other than her hips and behind, Bloom tends to focus on parts of the woman's body which are less easily sexualized and objectified. While she is paying her meat at the counter, Bloom notices the woman's "thick wrist," her "sodachapped hands," and "crusted toenails" (*U* 4. 2637-8). Although hands and feet fit the conventions of the blazon which aimed to idealize the body of the female object of affection, these descriptive elements in no way conventionally celebrate the *passante's* beauty, glamour or sex appeal. In Bloom's farm-based fantasy the body appeals through its bestiality: "the breeders in hobnailed boots trud[ge] through the litter, slapping a palm on a ripemeated hindquarter" (*U* 4. 2617-8).

However, through this fantasy, which stems from Bloom's commercial environment, the reader begins to perceive how Bloom's perception of the young woman draws upon the texts which surround her, begging the question to what extent she herself is the flesh and bone duly advertised ("vigorous hips," "strong pair of arms", Bloom notes) rather than a textual or intertextual product. What occurs in the process of Bloom's gazing is the divorce of desire from the aesthetics of the ideal body or the institution of an alternative ideal as reference point. In typical Bloomean itinerance the *passante* offers an escape from the most attractive body of the text – Molly's – which leads back to Molly, hinting at a process of citation which is internal to the work.

The animalistic elements which inform Bloom's perception of the nextdoor girl's body resonate with Bloom's perception of Molly later on in the episode and throughout *Ulysses*. This is apparent in the first glimpse of Molly which the reader is given as Bloom carries her breakfast up to the bed where she is lying:

He looked calmly down on her bulk and between her large soft bubs, sloping within her nightdress like a shegoat's udder. The warmth of her couched body rose on the air, mingling with the fragrance of the tea she poured. (*U* 4. 2810-2813)

Bloom's agricultural reverie, inspired by the pamphlet of the planter's company he picks up also links back to Molly. Bloom's thoughts of "orangegroves and immense melonfields north of Jaffa", of "olives, oranges, almonds or citrons" bring up memories of Molly: "Olives [...] Molly spitting them out. Knows the taste of them now. Oranges in tissue paper packed in crates. Citrons too" (*U* 4. 2666-78).

In Bloom's mind, citrons and melons mingle with the form, feel and perfume of Molly's body: "Molly in Citron's basketchair. Nice to hold, cool waxen fruit, hold in the hand, lift it to the nostrils and smell the perfume. Like that, heavy, sweet, wild perfume" (*U* 4. 2680-2). In "Ithaca" Molly's body is even more explicitly described as "the land of promise," which is also in Biblical terms a fertile land, a land of abundant harvests. In latinate terms which somewhat disguise the description of her body, Molly's "mature animality" is expressed and her curves metaphorically referred to as melons:

Satisfaction [...] of adipose posterior female hemispheres, redolent of milk and honey and of excretory sanguine and seminal warmth, reminiscent of secular families of curves of amplitude [...] expressive of mute immutable mature animality. (*U* 17. 30462-9)

He kissed the plump mellow yellow smellow melons of her rump, on each plump melonous hemisphere, in their mellow yellow furrow, with obscure prolonged provocative melonsmellonous osculation. (*U* 17.30478-80)

Emphasis on the organic, vegetable, and bestial qualities of the woman's physique, while a departure from the disembodied ideal which the *passante* might present, only serves to better drive through the connection between sense, sex and text in the chapter. Similarly to Woolf's *passante*, Joyce's servantgirl challenges aesthetic discourses surrounding the female body and investigates the overlap of sexuality and textuality. Like the commercial advertisement, the *passante* "arrests

involuntary attention.” One observation could be that Bloom’s attention is arrested by the striking imperfections of the *passante*’s body, rather than her ideal qualities. Although the curvaceous female bodies of *Ulysses* may be thought to harken further back to 17<sup>th</sup>-century aesthetic ideals, the focus equally seems to be on a certain deviance itself and a play on standards of beauty and femininity which asserts a gap between the sighted body and the cited body.

Looking closely at the portrayal of the woman, the reader might note Bloom’s sensuous celebration of her body is equally an appreciation of its deviance from the female body beautiful ideal. Several times Bloom notes the crooked line of her skirt, she is described as “strong”, extends her “thick wrist” while “smiling boldly” (*U* 4. 2628). Bloom’s fantasy is also triggered by his memory of the nextdoor girl whacking the laundry repeatedly, a fantasy which depicts the young woman’s body as empowered and active. Bloom on the other hand appears to be the coy one, his gaze “soft” as he hides behind the slip of paper he has picked up. Such elements of gender bending in the scene, in keeping with Bloom’s tendency to empathize with others, hint towards the fact that Bloom might fancy himself the passive one in this sado-masochistic fantasy.

As Terence Brown has pointed out in his reading of the episode, the textual source of this fantasy may be found later on within the episode in connection to Molly. When Bloom returns home, he carries her breakfast to his wife Molly who is lying in bed. She asks him to hand her a book which lies on the floor “sprawled against the bulge of the orange-keyed chamberpot” (*U* 4. 2852). Though Molly claims “there’s nothing smutty in it,” the reader soon understands that the licentious connotations of the description of the book’s position reflects the book’s licentious nature. Looking up the term “metempsychosis” which Molly is struggling with in order to explain it to her, Bloom comes across an image of flagellation: “Fierce Italian with carriagewhip. Must be Ruby pride of the on the floor naked. Sheet kindly lent.” (*U* 4. 2879-80). Here is another example of the network of texts which inform Bloom’s fantasies of the *passante*. These textual references, although they do point to aesthetic

discourses surrounding the portrayal of women, do not reference an ideal body so much as link back to Molly's body which stands in as the referential body of the text.

From a wider perspective, the nextdoor girl/*passante* ties into the economy of the episode in which various media outlets money depictions of women based on the aesthetic and erotic expectations of a specific consumer base or audience. Adaline Glasheen in *Calypso in James Joyce's Ulysses* sums up such an aesthetic hierarchy as "the configuration of rival queens: Calypso over, Penelope on, Circe under the bed – virgin goddess, earthly wife, hellish whore."<sup>192</sup> Bloom's pursuit of a passing woman in 'Calypso' is contextualized by many other feminine figures which receive passing mention and help to frame the physical ideal to which the nextdoor girl's body objects.

The first of these appears in the "Bath of the Nymph", a print which hangs above the Blooms' bed because Molly took a liking to it. As Terence Brown points out:

[t]he nymph is an image of that purity and idealized sexuality, without the risks of marital congress with its pregnancies, pains and dead child, which has kept Bloom from full, procreative sexual intercourse with his wife for a span of years, just as Odysseus was kept from Penelope by the nymph on her island.<sup>193</sup>

This image of the nymph contrasts with the pornographic image of flagellation which Bloom runs across in the smutty novel which Molly is reading by Paul de Kock. As Brown notes "what is striking about this configuration [...] is that two of the images here are commercial products," so that from the start Bloom's rapport to the *passante*'s body is not only determined by its commercialization but also by its intertextual dimension, a dimension which articulates idealizing and desacralizing as well as high-brow and low-brow aesthetics and discourses.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Adaline Glasheen. *Calypso in James Joyce's Ulysses*. eds. Clive Hart and David Hayman. London, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 1974. pp. 51-70. p. 62.

<sup>193</sup> *Op. cit.* (10).

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.* (16).

The materiality of the nextdoor girl is in this sense a disavowal of the ideal, disembodied woman of highbrow anglophone literature. In this sense, it contrasts starkly with the aforementioned figure of the *passante* in *Mrs. Dalloway*, but resonates more closely with the female vagrants of Woolf's text. It is also a manifestation of the female body which through its animalistic imagery sends the reader back to Molly's body, as if the latter were the referential female body of the novel. The *passante* sequence in 'Calypso' thus articulates a reverie in which the female body is portrayed as close to the animal body, to heighten its sensuality and materiality. This stratagem allows Joyce to divorce the erotic potential of the *passante* from the disembodying aesthetics of the body beautiful and from any notion of purity, to underline its grotesque quality and sensuous vitality.

With her portrayals of female vagrants such as the "battered old woman" singing her "ancient song [...] opposite Regent's Park Tube Station," Woolf underlines a similar grotesque and sensuous vitality, however, she separates such vitality from the erotic potential of the female body, asexualizing the body in the very act of foregrounding the materiality of the voice, in order to emphasize the connection between the woman's body, the organic quality of music and artistic creation. The disfigured old woman, compared to a "rusty pump", is first reduced to "a sound" which interrupted Peter Walsh's thoughts, then "a frail quivering sound, a voice bubbling up without direction" (p.69). She produces a song "with an absence of all human meaning" which is nonetheless firmly materialized through a stream of natural imagery and sound effects:

still, though it issued from so rude a mouth, a mere hole in the earth, muddy too, matted with root fibres and tangled grasses, still the old bubbling burbling song, soaking through the knotted roots of infinite ages, and skeletons and treasure, streamed away in rivulets over the pavement and all along the Marylebone Road, and down towards Euston, fertilizing, leaving a damp stain. (p.69)

In this passage, naturalistic imagery insists upon dirt, orifices, age, contamination and impurity, which are all elements expressive of a grotesque aesthetic in opposition to the ideal of the pure integral body. The materiality of Woolf's female vagrant responds in part to the grotesque aesthetics through which Joyce equally challenges the notion of a pure, ideal body.

Although the familiarity and organic qualities of the Joycean nextdoor girl offers an alternative to the glamour of the *passante*, she nonetheless invites a symbolic reading which connects her to the economy of the episode which establishes a connection between the body and the text. Letters circulate within "Calypso" from the letter hidden in Bloom's "high grade ha" – which, incidentally, has dropped the letter "t" – to the letter which Molly receives from her lover Boylan, or the postcard which Bloom's daughter Milly has sent. Bloom's advertiser's eye notices opportunities for advertising in print. He picks up pamphlets, Molly's book, the mail, and reflects on the print on the wall. The episode ends with Bloom's reading the paper while he relieves himself in the outhouse, drawing a firm connection between reading and digestion. Indeed, the nextdoor girl is part of the larger economy of Bloom's textual preoccupations within the episode, which show the circulation of texts – discourses – on women, of which Molly seems to constitute the epicenter: whether it be Bloom's masochistic fantasies inspired by the book which Molly is reading, which resurface in his portrayal of the nextdoor girl, or the print of a nubile nymph hanging over the bed which somewhat resembles Molly, representing a desacralized ideal.

## 2. 'Art thou real my ideal'? (Dis)Figuring the Body Beautiful

### 2.1. Pygmalion and the Body as Copy of a Copy

The well-known myth of a Cypriot sculptor who fell in love with the statue of a woman he had created can be read as a parable for the fascination which the body beautiful has exerted on the pictorial arts, which is sustained through art. On a meta-artistic level, the Pygmalion myth seems to consecrate the reversal of the relationship between “copy” and “model” to which mimetic representation aspires. Pygmalion in this sense mythologizes the wish that art may have the power to answer ‘yes’ to a question which dramatizes the limits of its powers of representation and which surfaces as the title of a poem in the “Nausicaa” chapter of *Ulysses*: “art thou real my ideal?”

That Pygmalion was granted his wish to see his artefact come to life is perhaps less significant than the reason which is given for his deciding to craft a perfect image of a woman in the first place. Although Pygmalion’s beloved statue is presented as an *ex-nihilo* creation, devoid of a model, it has in fact an anti-model of sorts – the sight of the bodies of those prostitutes who according to the myth filled Pygmalion with such disgust that he sought to exorcise it by giving form to a perfected body. Hence, the dark side of the Pygmalion myth would be revulsion at the sight of the naked body of the model which the artistic copy – the nude – seeks to eclipse.

This distinction – fundamentally a distinction between the naked body and the nude – is at the heart of Kenneth Clark’s seminal study of the history of the representation of the nude. In *The Nude* Clark argues that the naked body is a pretext for the nude which has been progressively erased in the



search for an ideal form.<sup>195</sup> In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Pygmalion's statue has no model, confirming the ideal status of the sculpted body as a pure work of art.

In *The Pygmalion Effect*, Victor Stoichita labels the myth of Pygmalion the "founding myth" which established the idea of the simulacrum. He mentions Plato's distinction between the "art of the copy (*eikastikê*) and the art of the simulacrum (*phantastikê*)" as a key moment in conceptualizing the simulacrum, or "the image perceived as something which exists" and its fearful opposition to the essence of the thing.<sup>196</sup> Similarly, in Gilles Deleuze's terms, the simulacrum is precisely not a copy of a real-world model but a projection which exists independently from the model which it replaces.<sup>197</sup> However, in *The Pygmalion Effect* Victor Stoichita points out that in an earlier source of the myth, Philostephanus' *Cypriaca*, "Pygmalion is the king of Cyprus and the object of his love is a statue of Venus." Furthermore, Christian commentators such as Clement of Alexandria "connected the story of Pygmalion with the legends woven around the Cnidian Aphrodite by Praxiteles."<sup>198</sup>

Clark's extensive analysis of the evolution of Venus in painting and sculpture shows that the ideal female form progressively took shape through the collective efforts of generations of artists who copied the work of their predecessors. In this narrative, Pygmalion's creation neither springs from the genius of imagination nor does it attest to the power of art to reproduce nature; it is a simulacrum which may also be the unacknowledged copy of a copy of a copy.

The process of citation is very closely connected to the representation of the body in the visual arts. Indeed, this is the basis of Walter Benjamin's claim in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction": that certain modern mediums such as photography defeat the notion of authenticity

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<sup>195</sup> Kenneth Clark. *The Nude*. Ringwood: Penguin Books. 1956. rptd 1970.

<sup>196</sup> Victor I. Stoichita. *The Pygmalion Effect: From Ovid to Hitchcock*. Trans. Alison Anderson. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press. 2008. p. 1.

<sup>197</sup> Gilles Deleuze. "Plato and the Simulacrum". Trans. Rosalind Krauss. In *October*. vol. 27 (Winter). The MIT Press. 1983. pp. 45-56.

<sup>198</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 8.

because “one can make any number of prints; to ask for the ‘authentic’ print makes no sense.”<sup>199</sup> Benjamin argues that mechanical reproduction is responsible in particular for destroying the “aura” of the mass-produced object of art.

Yet, arguably, the practice of replicating sculptures is one which is constitutive of the notion of an “original” at the same time as it defeats it. In *Original Copy*, Robert Macfarlane traces the history of the concept of originality, from its consecration in “so-called ‘Romantic’ theories of literary creation” to the commemoration and exploration of “indebtedness, borrowedness, textual messiness and overlap” in the artwork of “the second half of the Victorian period.”<sup>200</sup> MacFarlane thus reaffirms that originality is “a cultural convention” which gains its relevance from a specific artistic, historical and ideological context.<sup>201</sup>

What Krauss suggests in “The Originality of the Avant Garde and Other Modernist Myths” is that, depending on the context of the viewing, an art form with antique origins such as sculpture can lead to similar conclusions. For example, asking for the authentic sculpture of Rodin’s *Gates of Hell* or *The Thinker* would be equally nonsensical. Because the supposed “original” status of classical sculpture has been constructed *a posteriori*, both Kenneth Clark and James Hall insist on the treacherous notion of the ‘original’ particularly as it applies to the representation of the body in classical sculpture. The marble sculptures the average 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>-century museum goer has come to associate with the ‘original’ are most often copies and most often were not produced by the sculptors themselves. For example, Clark writes: “no sculptures by Polyclitus have come down to us in the

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<sup>199</sup> Rosalind Krauss. *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*. MIT Press. 1986. Consulted online September 7 2018: <http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/kraussoriginality.pdf>. p. 2. Walter Benjamin. “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.” Trans. Harry Zohn. In *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt. London: Random House. pp. 211-244. p. 218.

<sup>200</sup> Robert Macfarlane. *Original Copy: Plagiarism and Originality in Nineteenth-Century Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press. 2007. p. 9.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.* p. 4.

original, and to judge of their effect from the existing copies is almost impossible. As usual they were in bronze and the surviving full-size copies are all in marble.”<sup>202</sup>

As Krauss argues, the increased mechanical production which Benjamin analyzes should be considered alongside evolving discourses on originality, from the celebration of notions of genius and imagination by the Romantics to the renewed recognition of the creative force of imitation and repetition of the *fin-de-siècle*. It is this context, Krauss concludes, that allows us to see that “a vital conceptual element of aesthetic modernity” is more particularly its “extreme self-consciousness about origin” and auto-referentiality.<sup>203</sup>

## 2.2. Gerty, Galatea and the Citational Loop

“Art Thou Real My Ideal?” is the name of the poem which in the “Nausicaa” chapter of *Ulysses* Gerty MacDowell wishes she could imitate to the point that she “ha[s] copied it out of the newspaper she found one evening round the potherbs” for it “appealed to her so deeply” (*U* 13. 17368-70). In Gerty’s mind, which is informed by romance novels, cosmetic ads and women’s magazines, this question expresses a tenacious desire to bridge the gap between her “real” body and the “ideal” image of the female body. The question implies that embodying the ideal goes hand in hand with the destruction of the real. In other terms, the illusion of embodying an ideal must be so complete that as a result her reality becomes questionable: in Gerty’s book being unreal – or too good to be true – is the ultimate compliment.

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<sup>202</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 32.

<sup>203</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 12.

“Art Thou Real My Ideal?” does not just humorously cast Gerty in the role of the naïve ingenue whose body is put to use in the quest for a romantic ideal. It raises the more meta-textual question of the origin of the body and its representation as a process of citation. Applying Krauss’s reasoning to the depiction of the body, the dream of reproducing a “real” body would give way to the endless replication of its pictorial signs:

If modernism’s domain of pleasure is the space of auto-referentiality, this pleasure dome is erected on the semiological possibility of the pictorial sign as nonrepresentational and nontransparent, so that the signified becomes the redundant condition of a reified signifier. But from our perspective, the one from which we see that the signifier cannot be reified; that its objecthood, its quiddity, is only a fiction; that every signifier is itself the transparent signified of an already-given decision to carve it out as the vehicle of a sign – from this perspective there is no opacity, but only a transparency that opens onto a dizzying fall into a bottomless system of reduplication.<sup>204</sup>

Krauss’s “dizzying fall into a bottomless system of reduplication” recalls in semiological terms Barthes’ thoughts on representing beauty, the body beautiful and the body in realism in *S/Z*. In *S/Z* Barthes argues that the representation of beauty is inseparable from the process of citation for, in a similar way to the reproduction of the Venus model in sculpture, it can only be expressed through reference to a prior model: “beauty is referred to an infinity of codes: lovely as Venus? But Venus lovely as what? As herself?”<sup>205</sup> In this somewhat fearsome view of the representation of the body as a self-enclosed system of codes, the body being coded into the text through reference and response to anterior models, the only escape from replication would be the exposure of the system of codes: to “hide” the body or, in Barthes words, escape “to silence, to the ineffable, to aphasia, refer the referent back to the invisible.”

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<sup>204</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 10.

<sup>205</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 34.

Reading Woolf's *passante* alongside her depiction of the vagrant woman allows us to see how both Joyce's and Woolf's *passantes* deride the traditional function of the female body as a muse. Woolf contrasts the pictorial codes which constitute the elusive *passante*, resulting in an erasure of the materiality of the body, with the sonic materiality of the vagrant woman's song, which suggests a form of embodiment beyond pictorial codes. In *Mrs Dalloway*, the encoded image of the social body is the mark against which the reader measures the value of the body as a site of emancipatory perceptive experiences.

In *Ulysses* representations of the body are equally ambivalent because the body suggests both material and sensorial experiences and a restrictive system of codes. Going back to Barthes' account of the body's problematic auto-referentiality, one might re-envision the tension in *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses* between embodiment and disembodiment not as a contradiction but as part of representing the body as well as acknowledging a particular link between body, self and text.

Once the infinite circularity of codes is posited, the body itself cannot escape it: the real body (fictionally given as such) is the replication of a model set forth by that code of the arts, so that the most "natural" of bodies [...] is always only the promise of the artistic code from which it has previously issued [...].<sup>206</sup>

This would mean in other words that the text offers the reader on the one hand a glimpse at the artistic coding of the body through which the body disappears and on the other the experience of the shifting of artistic codes through which the body is expressed. It would also mean exploring how pictorial codes which reference the body in art feed into a reflection on origin, copy and representation.

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<sup>206</sup> Roland Barthes. *Op. cit.* p. 55.

### 2.3. Gerty Exposed? From Posing to Passing... “her plaster cast cracking”

Joyce’s Gerty Macdowell’s superficiality is designed to be scrutinized. The answer to the question “Nausicaa” asks – “who was Gerty?” – although followed by a detailed and explicit portrayal, is left unresolved, as Gerty’s “reality” comes to form an ever-receding reference point. Bit by bit, Gerty is exposed and yet Bloom’s overriding presence in “Nausicaa” suggests that the whole of the episode may be nothing more than a fantasized projection. The suggestion of an “original” underlying Gerty’s self-conscious posing and intertextual transposing of her body haunts “Nausicaa” and determines debates around the viewpoint from which to assess Gerty – Bloom’s or her own? For Suzette Henke, Gerty “has been psychologically cut up into a panoply of fetishistic images, then re-assembled as a bizarre simulacrum of female desire mimicking the mutoscope temptress – a body without organs, a statue, a fake.”<sup>207</sup>

The intertextuality in “Nausicaa”, the many sources drawn upon to portray elements of Gerty’s physique and mindset, makes it impossible not to see Gerty to some extent as figure or figuration: an image, an icon, a male-made projection, or possibly a simulacrum of sorts. Thus, Henke calls her out as a “fantasized icon of male desire projecting a phallic image of female desirability onto a sculpted figure of virginal lack,” suggesting also that she is a body which has been emptied out of its subjective affirmations to become “a malleable object of scopophilic projection.”<sup>208</sup>

Looking at “Nausicaa” through the lens of Luce Irigaray’s feminist theories, Henke provides a valid counterpoint to the idea that Gerty is simply complicit in her objectification as a male fantasy and that there is an equal exchange of pleasure and sexual gratification. “Nausicaa” certainly resonates with Irigaray’s claim that woman “is only a more or less obliging prop for the enactment of man’s

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<sup>207</sup> Suzette Henke. “Joyce’s Naughty Nausicaa: Gerty MacDowell Refashioned.” In *Papers on Joyce 10/11*. 2004-2005. pp. 85-103. p. 87.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 87-90.

fantasies. That she may find pleasure there in that role, by proxy, is possible, even certain. But such pleasure is above all masochistic prostitution of her body to a desire that is not her own.”<sup>209</sup> In this sense, Gerty’s stance contrasts starkly with that of Elizabeth Dalloway, whose sculptural qualities emphasize a certain impenetrability and deflection of others’ perceptions of her body. In stark opposition to Joyce’s eroticization of statues throughout *Ulysses*, Woolf stresses the “innocence of sculpture” and stone figures in *Mrs Dalloway* deflect the pleasurable objectification of the female body – a point which I will return to further on.

Like Suzette Henke, who notes Gerty’s statue-like posing, both Katherine Mullin and Vicki Mahaffey point out how the young woman “imaginatively turns herself into a Greek statue like the ones Bloom so admires.” Austin Briggs sees Gerty’s “posing (and exposing)” as hinting at the sculpture of The Nymph of the Yews which, “like many an academic nude, plays that role – exciting desire but forbidding even fantasies of fulfillment.”<sup>210</sup> Katherine Mullin has analyzed the “intertextual relationship between mutoscope erotica and ‘Nausicaa’” as a way of further understanding Gerty’s self-exposure.<sup>211</sup> The mutoscope, a moving-picture device which was a novelty at the time, allowed the viewer to view a sequence of stills – in erotica, stills of women posing more or less naked – by actioning a hand-crank. In a previous publication, Henke has described Gerty as a composite of “fashion pages of the *Lady’s Pictorial*, the heated prose of Victorian sentimental novels, and the advertising pages of the *Irish Times*.”<sup>212</sup>

Gerty’s narrative viewpoint shows a heightened awareness of pictures, photographs, moving-picture devices, depictions, painting and *tableaux*. “Nausicaa” opens with an exposition of setting which is reminiscent both of the Victorian sentimental novels which Henke mentions and of the

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<sup>209</sup> Luce Irigaray. *This Sex Which is Not One*. Trans. Catherine Porter & Caroline Burke. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 1985. p. 25.

<sup>210</sup> Austin Briggs. “Joyce’s Nymph of the Yews: Debates About the Nude in Painting and Sculpture”. *Dublin James Joyce Journal*. vol. 2. 2009. pp. 39-63. p. 46.

<sup>211</sup> Katherine Mullin. *James Joyce, Sexuality and Social Purity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2003. p. 150.

<sup>212</sup> Suzette Henke. “Gerty MacDowell: Joyce’s Sentimental Heroine.” *Women and Joyce*, eds. Suzette Henke & Elaine Unkeless. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 1982. p. 132.

illustrations or paintings which might accompany them: “far away in the west the sun was setting and the last glow of all too fleeting day lingered lovingly on sea and strand [...]” (U 16332-3). The description of Gerty’s face and hands mingles references to classical Greek sculpture as well as blazon poetry, commercials and beauty rituals:

The waxen pallor of her face was almost spiritual in its ivorylike purity though her rosebud mouth was a genuine Cupid’s bow, Greekly perfect. Her hands were of finely veined alabaster with tapering fingers and as white as lemon juice and queen of ointments could make them though it was not true that she used to wear kid gloves in bed or take a milk footbath either. (U 16739-16744)

Her “delicate hands and higharched instep” (U 13.16751) are similarly intertextual, as the instep is reminiscent both of the *contrapposto* pose of Greek sculpture, the delicacy of the more affected poses of French mannerist painting, and the eroticization of the ankle and foot. Gerty’s eyes of “the bluest Irish blue, set off by lustrous lashes and dark expressive brows” seem to be directly drawn from a commercial for Madame Vera verity’s eyebrowline in the Woman Beautiful page of the *Princess novelette*, as well as referencing the blue of the Virgin Mary and the glamourized image of the Irish heroine advertised by the Celtic Revival (U 13.16762).

Gerty dresses to replicate the images in the *Lady’s Pictorial* and imagines a picture-perfect home with “a beautifully appointed drawingroom with pictures and engravings and the photograph of grandpapa Giltrap’s lovely dog Garryowen” (U 13.16895). Likewise, Gerty sees Bloom as a replication of “the image of the photo she had of Martin Harvey, the matinée idol” (U 13. 17114). Gerty equally frames pictures of the other women on the beach in her mind’s eye, such as Cissy Caffrey who in Gerty’s jealousy-induced fantasy is pictured making a display of herself:

It would have served her just right if she had tripped up over something accidentally on purpose with her high crooked French heels on her to make her look tall and got a fine



tumble. *Tableau!* That would have been a very charming exposé for a gentleman like that to witness. (U 17. 17187-90)

This proliferation of snapshots and *tableaux* blurs the divide between Gerty's and Bloom's perspectives, strengthening the possibility that the first section of the "Nausicaa" chapter may be a portrayal of Gerty's thoughts as Bloom would envision them. Picturing two women who had been close until marriage running into each other "once in a blue moon" Bloom snapshots the moment thinking "*Tableau!*" and echoes Gerty's thoughts (U 17. 17564).

The *tableau* is reminiscent of painting and photography but also of the more ambivalent practice of the *tableau vivant*, which was a popular form of entertainment in the fashionable British parlors of the nineteenth century. In *Striking a Historical Pose* Monika M. Elbert discusses the practice of *tableaux vivants* as both contributing to the practice of "exhibit[ing] women as sexual objects intended simply for the pleasure of men's viewing" in theatres, but also as a means for women to "[learn] how to integrate their identities as public and private figures."<sup>213</sup> Elbert dates the emergence of the *tableau* as an art form in Europe to the 18<sup>th</sup> century when "the French playwright Denis Diderot developed a theory of dramaturgy that promoted the use of *tableaux* sequences."<sup>214</sup> The *tableau* in itself is a fundamentally intertextual device: participants of the *tableau* "elicited an emotional response from the audience by impersonating historical and classical personages, often drawing their subjects from paintings or statuary."<sup>215</sup>

Although Gerty aspires to the perfect pose of classical Greek sculpture, this aspiration is turned to ridicule. Gerty's use of euphemisms in speaking of bodily functions and her idealistic self-portrayal, her romanticized features, recall the art historian Winckelmann's discussion of the ideal beautiful body

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<sup>213</sup> Monika M. Elbert. "Striking a Historical Pose: Antebellum Tableaux Vivants, "Godey's" Illustrations, and Margaret Fuller's Heroines." In *The New England Quarterly*. vol. 75. no. 2 (June). 2002. pp. 235-275. pp. 235-6.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.* p. 236.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.* p. 237.

in classical art as “‘matter’ purged so it takes on the ‘unity’ and ‘indivisibility’ of an abstract idea.”

Alex Potts gives the following account of Winckelmann’s aesthetic theories in *Flesh and the Ideal*:

[The ideal human figure] should be so emptied of sensual particularity that it is ‘like the purest water taken from the source of a spring, that the less taste it has, the more healthy it is seen to be, because it is cleansed of all foreign elements’. Taken to its extreme, the ideally beautiful human figure is a radical negation of any bodily substance, a crystal-clear nothing, formless and transparent.<sup>216</sup>

On the contrary, the portrayal of Gerty’s body is corruptible, contradictory, and if anything foregrounds the inception of desire as a fundamental aspect of experiencing the body as a work of art. Any abnegation of the body and sexual desire which this association might suggest is contradicted by the more fitting comparison of Gerty’s posing to moving-pictures erotica. The ideal of the impregnable body is turned to ridicule and yet Gerty’s body remains entirely impregnable as the image, unlike the statue, is beyond touch.

Furthermore, the multiplication of pictorial codes and intertextual references allow for a sighting/citing of Gerty’s figure which belies early twentieth-century social purity narratives around marriage, sexuality and women’s image in society. However, if one is to accept the claim that “the copy is the underlying condition of the original,” it also leads into a reflection on how the chapter more broadly highlights the issue of Gerty’s “original” body which the multiplication of contradictory narratives both suggests and denies.

The chapter builds up to a moment of post-ejaculatory revelation, when Bloom realizes that Gerty’s body surpasses and alters his prior perception of it: “She walked with a certain quiet dignity characteristic of her but with care and very slowly because Gerty MacDowell was... Tight boots? No.

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<sup>216</sup> Alex Potts. *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the origins of art history*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press. 2000. p. 164.

She's lame! O!" (U 17. 17512-6). In this instance, rather than being portrayed as constituted by Bloom's narrative, Gerty's body changes the course of the sentence – of what could be perceived as Bloom's fictionalizing about her: the "certain quiet dignity" is first perceived and presented as "characteristic of her" until her limp is revealed as the true explanation and the focus becomes Bloom's surprise. Thus, the crux of "Nausicaa" is not solely the sexual climax but the confrontation between display and disguise, between the idealizing discourses surrounding the body, which are portrayed as fake, and the intimation of a covert reality, which is in the subtext.

What is more, "Art thou real my ideal?" resurfaces in the mouth of the plaster cast of a Greek statue in "Circe", who repeats the question in one of the many instances in which the Joycean text quotes itself. The plaster cast of a nymph – of which Gerty is one avatar – links this question to the representation of the body in art and the ideal of an original or finite form which would represent an ideal.

Sculpture is a unique form of art, in terms of its connection to state and establishing hierarchical principles, as well as in terms of its relation to an ancient classical aesthetic. This is what James Hall explains in *The World as Sculpture: The Changing Status of Sculpture from the Renaissance to the Present Day*.<sup>217</sup> In "The Art of Auguste Rodin", C.R. Morey argues that it is only with Auguste Rodin that Western sculpture began to break with the state and its institutional function. For such reasons, he explains, sculpture "fed itself upon tradition, and spent its powers in mere decoration [...] labor[ing] under the incubus of the classic."<sup>218</sup>

Morey shows how sculpture and classic conceptions of beauty have been bound together, arguing that sculpture is informed by a "conception of the classic which has never been entirely shaken

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<sup>217</sup> James Hall. *The World as Sculpture: The Changing Status of Sculpture from the Renaissance to the Present Day*. London: Chatto and Windus. 1999.

<sup>218</sup> C.R. Morey. "The Art of Auguste Rodin." In *The Bulletin of the College Art Association of America*. vol. 1. pp. 145-154. p. 145.

off, – namely the theory of Winckelmann and the Neo-classics: that Greek art was not in principle expressive but decorative, i.e. strove to realize in the figure not character or significance, but the embodiment of preconceived ideas of abstract beauty.”<sup>219</sup> Morey makes a distinction between the aim to express physicality, being, or a modern zeitgeist and the aim to replicate a “decorative ideal which was supposed to be “Greek”.” In this sense, he sees even sculpture’s late 19<sup>th</sup>-century attempts to respond to a “demand for realism” through its recourse to living art models and muses, as a mere recasting of classic forms: “the models must perforce assume the attitudes of Dianas, Venuses, and Psyches, or Mercuries and Apollos...”<sup>220</sup> The aim is the consecration of an aesthetic ideal in the representation of the body as a perfected, finite surface.

In this sense, Gerty’s citations may attempt to dissimulate a real, disabled body, or as Bloom’s/the narrator’s dramatization of the body as a “made artefact.” As Rachel M. Brownstein notes of visual performances such as the *tableau vivant*, it “pointed up the emphasis on display and disguise of the female body in social life, and the habit of hypocrisy. Ladies, gender-bound to role-playing, were obliged to present smooth, objectified public selves, concealing and misrepresenting – and broadly hinting at – their hidden selves.”<sup>221</sup>

It is through the prominence of this process of citation that Joyce elaborates a connection between posing and passing, between the uncited disabled body and the suggestion of its reality. In “Circe” the plaster nymph is veiled, highlighting the act of concealment, giving the impression that the copy is in fact the model, and concealing the fact that the plaster nymph is hollow. When Bloom tears off the nymph’s veil, she “with a cry, flees from him unveiled, her plaster cast cracking, a cloud of stench escaping from the cracks,” suggesting both the unpalatable materiality of the body and the hypocrisy of figuring the body as a perfect form. Here the plaster cast functions as an ironic comment on the

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<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 145-6.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.* p. 146.

<sup>221</sup> Rachel M. Brownstein. *Tragic Muse : Rachel of the Comédie Française*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995. p. 177.

physical ideal through which the body is transformed by art into a highbrow aesthetic experience which disembodies it (*U* 15. 23623-4).

The cracking of the plaster cast recalls Baudrillard's description of the simulacrum in *Simulacra and Simulation* in that it "is never what hides the truth – it is the truth that hides that there is none. The simulacrum is true." In some sense, the representation of the body in "Nausicaa" seems to resonate with Baudrillard's concept of the simulacrum: the body is "reduced to the signs which attest [its] existence" in a chain of references which empties the body of meaning.<sup>222</sup>

However, the intertextuality of the episode does not allow for the establishment of one, static image of femininity – whether "real" or ideal. Through the acknowledgement of a breach in the perfect body, through Gerty's limping moment of passing, a sense of dissimulated reality prevails. The mediated quality of the body is foregrounded rather than concealed to an extent that the process of mediation itself becomes inseparable from the portrayal of the body. Not that her disabled body is the hidden reality which citation aims to suppress, but that the *passante* in passing arrests the flow of codified images which constructs the female body to draw attention to the process of citation which is under way. Looking for the original Gerty in an attempt to look past the simulacrum is part of the dynamics of reading the chapter, in which what is articulated is the simulation of the female body codified as living pictures.

In her analysis of Gerty's disability in the "Nausicaa" chapter, Dominika Bednarska takes examples from Fritz Senn's, Richard Ellmann's, Suzette Henke's, Marilyn French's and other notable Joycean's readings of the episode and reaches the conclusion that "Joyce studies has focused on the ways in which Gerty is disempowered by it." Although Bednarska recognizes that in more recent analyses of the chapter by Barbara Leckie, John Bishop, Katherine Mullin, Kimberley Devlin or Jen

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<sup>222</sup> Jean Baudrillard. *Selected Writings*, ed. Mark Poster. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 1988.

Shelton, “Gerty has been recognized as having a more performative and active role in the encounter” she also notes that her disability is not looked into as a significant part of her agency.<sup>223</sup>

Bednarska argues that “the text destigmatizes Gerty [...] by framing the limp in a way that minimizes the exceptionality of disability.”<sup>224</sup> Through its association with ordinariness and its opposition to the ideal body depicted in Gerty’s masquerade, Gerty’s limp creates a reality effect which links the walking, disabled body to imperfect, dynamic form. The limp exposes the ideological framework on which the mimetic interchange between model and copy relies.

What distinguishes the simulacrum from mimesis may be the notion of the original which mimesis preserves. In *Refiguring Mimesis*, Jonathan Holmes and Adrian Streete explain that “the assumption that mimesis stands for an epistemologically transparent ‘reflection of reality’ remains almost unconsciously ingrained in much critical discourse.”<sup>225</sup> In this volume, the editors seek to address the presumption that mimesis entails “imitation as an accurate and recognizable depiction of a subject.”<sup>226</sup> Indeed, they underline that “pictorial art as we understand it did not exist in classical Athens” when mimesis was first addressed by Plato and then Aristotle:

Both Aristotle and Plato [...] emphasize behavioral or in some sense performative mimesis, applicable more to drama, poetry and music (and later the novel) than to so-called fine art. Once this has been grasped, the claim that much modernist or postmodernist art is non-mimetic because it does not literally resemble something, or because it does not start from an ontological premise becomes less tenable.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Dominika Bednarska. “Ability Underneath: Bodies in the Literary Imagination.” PhD Dissertation. 2011. p. 16.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.* p. 17.

<sup>225</sup> Jonathan Holmes & Adrian Streete (eds.). *Refiguring Mimesis: representation in early modern literature*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press. 2005. p. 3.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6.

If “Nausicaa” derides and undermines the illusion of an ideal body, through its citational dynamics it surpasses pictorial mimesis to resonate with a form of performative mimesis which, as Holmes and Streete argue “calls into question the subject’s relationship between artefact and world,” forcing us “to confront those ideological structures that produce and mediate the phenomenon that we clumsily, if not inaccurately, call ‘reality’.”<sup>228</sup>

#### 2.4. What is the “staring, incredible innocence of sculpture”?<sup>229</sup>

If through Gerty’s self-conscious posing Joyce reworks the artifice of pictorial codes into the citational process which informs the dialectic of “real” versus “ideal” bodies, in a passage in *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf collapses the notion of artifice through an intriguing correlation between the gaze (“staring”), innocence, and sculpture. If “Nausicaa” connects the seer and the seen through a dynamic of artifice and disclosure, Woolf’s portrayal of Elizabeth as a *passante* disconnects the seer and the seen through the notion of a “staring” “innocence”.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, Elizabeth Dalloway experiences a moment of freedom as she “wan[ders] off alone”, against her mother’s wishes, down the Strand, a place where “no Dalloways came [...] daily” (*MD* p. 117). Throughout her rebellious rambling she pictures herself “a pioneer, a stray, venturing, trusting.” As Elizabeth embarks upon her adventure, she is portrayed as captured by a camera-eye in a descriptive passage which focuses on her response to the motions of the omnibus and simultaneously highlights her emancipation and the potential looked-at-ness of her body:

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<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6.

[...] to each movement of the omnibus the beautiful body in the fawn-coloured coat responded freely like a rider, like the figure-head of a ship, for the breeze slightly disarrayed her; the heat gave her cheeks the pallor of white painted wood; and her fine eyes, having no eyes to meet, gazed ahead, blank, bright, with the staring, incredible innocence of sculpture. (*MD* p. 116)

The description of Elizabeth narrows down to the bust and face and, although it begins with an emphasis on freedom and animation (“responded freely like a rider”, “for the breeze slightly disarrayed her”), it describes a progressive petrification and ends with an impression of absolute, timeless stasis.

Indeed, Elizabeth is successively compared to a free “rider”, then to the “figure-head of a ship”, a fixed element on a moving vehicle, nonetheless maintaining the capacity to be disarrayed by the breeze, to a carving or a sculpted figure of “white painted wood” whose cheeks are oxymoronicly infused with “pallor” by the heat, and finally to a staring “sculpture” with “blank, bright” eyes. The “innocence of sculpture” being in some way linked to Elizabeth’s escape from identity on the city streets as well as to the passive gaze of a stone figure, an object of beauty designed for contemplation, is a phrase which merits investigation.

One starting point would be the textbook definition of “innocence” as purity from corruption. The sculptural form would then be one which reforms the body, purged from carnal sin, base desire and its trivial functions. The ultimate stasis which Elizabeth’s body seems to acquire recalls that formulated by Stephen Dedalus in *Ulysses* which is the condition for the perception of the art object: “beauty expressed by the artist cannot awaken in us an emotion which is kinetic or a sensation which is purely physical. It awakens, or ought to awaken, or induces, or ought to induce, an esthetic stasis” (*P* V.1147-52). In his study of Victorian sculpture, Michael Hatt explains that classical sculpture “transforms the body, disavowing all the messy interiority of the human form. [...] The removal of



bodily processes is matched by the absence of psychic processes, such as sexual desire, carnal appetites or violent emotions.”<sup>230</sup>

Stone figures in *Mrs. Dalloway* often seem to convey civilizing forces through which the body is transfigured into a symbol to pass on a sense of unity, tradition and continuity. For instance, Richard Dalloway emphasizes this aspect of Buckingham Palace and the memorial to Queen Victoria, noting their symbolic function and their role in uniting the nation:

you can't deny it a certain dignity, he considered, nor despise what does, after all, stand to millions of people [...] for a symbol, absurd though it is; a child with a box of bricks could have done better, he thought; looking at the memorial to Queen Victoria (whom he could remember in her horn spectacles driving through Kensington), its white mound, its billowing motherliness; but he liked being ruled by the descendant of Horsa; he liked continuity; and the sense of handing on the traditions of the past. (p. 99)

Here Richard's admiration for the British Empire is tinged with irony as he cannot help remarking that, however admirable queen Victoria's memorial is symbolically, it is also technically bad art. The matronliness of the monument also contrasts with the depictions of the London population which immediately precedes it – those who people the grounds around Buckingham Palace. Richard remarks how “in the shade of the trees whole families, poor families, were sprawling; children kicking up their legs; sucking milk; paper bags thrown about.” The kinetic dimension of the description contrasts with the rigidity and dignity of the statue with its “billowing motherliness.” The mother of the Nation stands in opposition to the “poor mothers of Westminster and their crawling babies,” her matronliness contrasting with the lax attitude of “female vagrants like that poor creature, stretched on her elbow (as if she had flung herself on the earth, rid of all ties, to observe curiously, to speculate boldly, to consider the whys and wherefores, impudent, loose-lipped, humorous)” (p. 99). This contrast

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<sup>230</sup> Austin Briggs. *Ibid.* qtd p. 50.

hints at the liveliness of bodies being subsumed by the orderliness of civilized society, emblemized by the stone effigy.

Statues in Joyce's *Ulysses* act as counterpoints to Stephen's theory of aesthetic stasis, highlighting the hypocrisy of the ethereal transformation of the body into a figure of stone which both suggests and denies desire. In "Joyce's Nymph of the Yews" Austin Briggs analyzes how Joyce tackles this dichotomy through his equivocal depictions of statues in *Ulysses* whose sexuality "calls attention to the presence of the viewer" and more particularly through the figure of the Nymph of the Yews which stands for the "art nude" which, "whether 'masterpiece' from *Photo Bits* or classical goddess from the rotunda of the National Museum, leaves a man like Leopold Bloom in a double bind," for "she invites sexual response at the same time that she forbids it."<sup>231</sup>

For Bloom, the blank, innocent stare of the statues of goddesses in the National Museum legitimates a sexual response: "shapely goddess, Venus, Juno [...] Can see them library museum standing in the round hall, naked goddesses. Aids to digestion. They don't care what man looks" (*U* 8. 920). In "Circe" naked statues of Venus and plaster nymphs resurface, shakily poised on the lorry of the keeper of the Kildare museum: "Venus Callipyge, Venus Pandemos, Venus Metempsychosis, and plaster figures, also naked, representing the new nine muses" (*U* 15. 1703). They taunt Bloom and castigate him for not recognizing their belonging to a superior realm which demands the abnegation of the body along with desire. The nymph in "Circe" proclaims: "we immortals, as you saw today, have not such a place and no hair there either. We are stonecold and pure. We eat electric light." Later in the episode the nymph is portrayed in a nun's clothing with "remote eyes" which echo her denial of the corruption of the body: "No more desire. (She reclines her head, sighing). Only the ethereal. Where dreamy creamy gull waves o'er the waters dull" (*U* 15. 23585-7).

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<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.* p. 51.

However, in *Mrs Dalloway*, the “innocence of sculpture,” although potentially ambiguous, nonetheless conveys a positive emancipatory force which is at odds with the way it is decried in *Ulysses* as part of a hypocritical social purity narrative. Elizabeth’s turning to stone stands out as a moment of escape from gendered identity against a backdrop of monumental London statuary which attests to imperial, patriarchal, and military might. In “*Mrs Dalloway and the First World War*”, David Bradshaw identifies moments in which *Mrs Dalloway* “makes its own contributions to the proliferation of war memorials, military statuary and commemorative monuments that sprang up in the 1920s across the United Kingdom.”<sup>232</sup> As Bradshaw makes clear, references to the monumental figures of the war abound.

One of these is “the description of the ‘giant figure’ of the grey nurse in Regent’s Park” which he sees as a possible “ghostly allusion to Edith Cavell, the nurse executed by the Germans in October 1915 for helping to save the lives of Allied soldiers.” However, other examples show how the boundaries between the commemorative statues of post-war London and the city’s flesh-and-blood inhabitants are blurred through a metaphorical petrification. The same rigidity qualifies the physical descriptions of the characters, lending their bodies the pallor and monumental quality of sculpture, with its intimations of beauty and ideal form. Bradshaw notes for instance that “as a spectral Evans approaches Septimus in Regent’s Park,” he envisions himself “with legions of men prostrate behind him” (p. 60) and “raises his hand ‘like some colossal figure’”(p. 69).

Other figures momentarily adopt the postures and stateliness of stone effigies, such as Doris Kilman, who is perceived by Clarissa Dalloway as standing “with the power and taciturnity of some prehistoric monster armoured for primeval warfare” (p. 106); or Elizabeth Dalloway who stands at the head of the omnibus her “cheeks the pallor of white painted wood; and her fine eyes, having no eyes to meet, gazed ahead, blank, bright, with the staring, incredible innocence of sculpture” (p. 115). Peter

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<sup>232</sup> David Bradshaw. “*Mrs Dalloway and the First World War*” [online]. Consulted September 7 2018: <https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-literature/articles/mrs-dalloway-and-the-first-world-war>.

Walsh imagines that “old Miss Parry [...] would always stand up on the horizon, stone-white, eminent, like a lighthouse” (p. 138).

Through a network of leitmotifs which reference stone, sculpture and monuments, the reader may understand to what extent the pervasive references to pallor and rigidity reflect both the specter of the war which haunts Londoners in *Mrs. Dalloway* and an ideal of pallor and finite form which go hand in hand with the beautification of the body through death and the subsequent enshrining of identity in a stone figure memorial.

When Richard Dalloway returns from lunching with Lady Bruton he is described as “bearing his flowers like a weapon”, with his mind on “the war, and thousands of poor chaps, with all their lives before them, shoveled together, already half forgotten” (pp. 98-99). His conquering stance is explicitly military but the gesture also momentarily transfigures Richard into an effigy of a monument of war, while the roses deflate his chivalric impulses and heroic stance. The portrayal of the body in *Mrs. Dalloway*, in the sense of descriptions of the physical appearance of characters, bears signs of death and hints at the execution of the subject as well as at the desacralization of the hero.

In heroic accounts, however, the pallor of sculpture is as much a reference to death as a desired effect of subliming the body through death. Likewise, a certain idealization of the blank rigidity of the body in sculpture amplified by art critics such as Winckelmann, resonates with the stoicism which the Londoners in *Mrs Dalloway* must portray as a form of civic heroism (a test which the war veteran Septimus fails). The pallor and immobility of war statues erected as an example resonate with what Winckelmann believes to be the “essence of the Greek ideal,” i.e. “a noble simplicity and a calm grandeur (eine edle Einfalt und eine stille Grösse)”.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Alex Potts. *Op. cit.* p. 1.

Alex Potts addresses this paradox, stating that “it is one of the clichés of our culture that the cold marble forms of the pure classical nude, supposedly embodying an ideal beyond the measure of time and mortal alteration, is redolent of a deathly coldness.”<sup>234</sup> Potts further elaborates:

in his account, the blankness identified with the ideal figure, the stilling of emotion and desire in its perfected marble forms, is coupled with an intense awareness of the kinds of erotic and at times sado-masochistic fantasy that could be woven around such representations of the body beautiful.<sup>235</sup>

Prior to the nineteenth century in Western sculpture, colourlessness had been associated with morality.

As James Hall notes:

During the nineteenth century, sculpture’s colourlessness came increasingly to be associated with frigidity, sterility and a kind of moral rigidity. Not only did sculpture represent unchanging ideals, but its style, subject-matter and medium (white marble) were also perceived to be unchanging. The point about colour was that it suggested and stimulated vitality.<sup>236</sup>

The “innocence of sculpture” expresses the existence of the timeless object of contemplation, with its deathly pallor and blank stare, supposedly beyond desire. In such terms, this innocence may connote Elizabeth’s need to abnegate sex and sexuality to exist. Even in her moment of adventurous exploration of the city, her rambling is thwarted by sex and social class. Elizabeth’s view of the city streets is couched in domestic terms as if she were trapped by a viewpoint which cannot escape seeing the city as a metaphorical interior, a house:

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<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2.

<sup>236</sup> James Hall. *Op. cit.* p. 139.

She walked just a little way towards St Paul's, shyly, like someone penetrating on tiptoe, exploring a strange house by night with a candle, on edge lest the owner should suddenly fling wide his bedroom door and ask her business, nor did she wander off into queer alleys, tempting by-streets, any more than in a strange house open doors which might be bedroom doors, or sitting-room doors, or lead straight to the larder. (*MD* pp. 116-7)

In "The Construction of Identity: Virginia Woolf's City," Barbara Penner argues that London "is an active agent which positions [the characters] within the patriarchal order." She synthesizes Jeremy Tambling's analysis of Peter Walsh's itinerary after visiting Clarissa Dalloway noting that it takes him:

down Victoria Street, past Westminster Abbey, the Houses of Parliament, and up Whitehall (where he glares at the statue of the Duke of Cambridge and contemplates his own former socialist leanings). He is overtaken by marching boys in uniform going to lay a wreath at the Cenotaph (which, like the tomb of the Unknown Warrior contemplated later by Miss Kilman, is a new monument to the War) and goes on to Trafalgar Square, facing statues of the war heroes Nelson, Gordon and Havelock.<sup>237</sup>

As Peter Walsh's itinerary and the symbolic significance of the statues he encounters make clear, "the spaces through which he passes represent and glorify imperial state power." Furthermore, Penner sees Walsh's subsequent encounter with the figure of the *passante* and his pursuit of the young woman down the city streets as directly linked to the prior assertion of an imperial, patriarchal and masculine military might. She notes: "it is clearly no coincidence that this sexual pursuit takes place just after Walsh has been contemplating the most potent symbols of Britain's military might."<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Barbara Penner. "The Construction of Identity: Virginia Woolf's City." In *Intersections: Architectural Histories and Critical Theories*, eds. Iain Borden and Jane Rendell. London & New York: Routledge. 2000. p. 274.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.* p. 275.

It is perhaps no more of a coincidence that Elizabeth takes a similar route on the “reckless” omnibus, whose recklessness recalls Peter Walsh’s qualification of his pursuit of the *passante*, the omnibus “rushing insolently all sails spread up Whitehall,” “rushing up Whitehall” (*MD* p. 115). Elizabeth offers the reader a glimpse into the interiority of a *passante*, should such a figure allow for the expression of interiority.

In this context, Elizabeth takes on the role of the marauder, while fleeing the role of the *passante* in which the onlookers of a patriarchal society would cast her: “people were beginning to compare her to poplar trees, early dawn, hyacinths, fawns, running water, and garden lilies” (p. 114). Should one broaden the nominal group, the “innocence of sculpture” refers to an escape or a retreat from the relationship which binds the seer and the seen to specifically gendered roles: “the staring, incredible innocence of sculpture” is associated to the blankness, but perhaps also the resolve, of eyes which “having no eyes to meet, gazed ahead.” Here sight eludes the social constraints of the gaze and attains to the realm of vision, or an absolute material blindness which is represented as Elizabeth’s experience of freedom. Elizabeth’s gaze turns inward in a moment of abandon to the sensations of the city which recalls Clarissa Dalloway’s drifting through the city, as if on a parallel plane to the people surrounding her.

In this sense, the “innocence of sculpture” connected to the gaze designates a detachment of the seer from her visible state. One is reminded of the one-way gazing which is celebrated in Woolf’s 1927 essay “Street Haunting” as being a condition of the suspension of personal identity which wandering the city allows:

The shell-like covering which our souls have excreted to house themselves, to make for themselves a shape distinct from others, is broken, and there is left of all these wrinkles and roughnesses a central oyster of perceptiveness, an enormous eye.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Virginia Woolf. “Street Haunting.” *A Bloomsbury Group Reader*, ed. S. P. Rosenbaum. Oxford: Blackwell. 1993. p. 318.

One might note, however, that although the eye is impervious to the gaze, having discarded the “shell-like covering” which made it distinguishable, it remains nonetheless a receptive center of perception. At the head of the omnibus, the impressions Elizabeth receives, her perceptive experience of the city, is unencumbered by others’ impression of her as an aesthetic object. Through a reversal of “staring”, Woolf intimates that being seen dispossesses a woman of her faculties of perception.

Penner suggests that whereas Woolf often represents the city “as being the place where women are forced to confront the patriarchal nature of the public realm” the title “Street Haunting” “evokes the image of a disembodied, gender-neutral presence which hovers above the corporeality of city life.”<sup>240</sup> In *Vision, Intermediality, and Spectatorship in Mrs Dalloway and the Hours* Claudia Olk establishes a connection between modes of perception in Woolf’s writing and modes of artistic creation. Drawing upon Hermione Lee’s comment that “in every novel we find consistent and energetic presentation of perception and experience, which invites analogies between the conditions under which her characters feel and live, and their creator’s idea of the nature of fiction,” she develops the idea that in “rendering ways of seeing and using analogies to visual perception, Woolf presents ways of constituting the text as an aesthetic object.”<sup>241</sup>

The “innocence of sculpture” may in fact imply suspending the body’s connection to the visual through a temporary dissociation of the eye from the fictional process. In Olk’s words, “any form of visual representation without appealing to the intellect or emotion must, in Woolf’s view, remain shallow and superficial.”<sup>242</sup> This detached gaze is associated with the visual and with a pictorial kind of realism which Woolf connects with the camera-eye. In “The Cinema/The Movies and Reality” she notes that the cinema encourages “see[ing] life as it is when we have no part in it.” On the contrary,

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<sup>240</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 272.

<sup>241</sup> Claudia Olk. “Vision, Intermediality, and Spectatorship in *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Hours*.” In *Amerikastudien / American Studies*. vol. 49. no. 2. (2004). pp. 191-217. pp. 192-3.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.* p. 195.



Elizabeth's moment of absence is a momentary triumph. It posits a counterpoint to the figure of the *passante* in celebrating the existence of the female body emancipated from the gaze and its individuating powers.

The unseeing gaze suggests a gender-blind exploration of the city, and further ties into the portrayal of perception and its role in the process of fiction-making. In Claudia Olk's words, the question is "is to think thus always to see, and to see always to think"? Elizabeth's moment of disconnection from the gaze and from a relationship to public space through sighting highlights a sensuous apprehension of the moment through touch. The sculpted "figure-head of a ship," more than a fanciful simile representing Elizabeth's position at the head of the omnibus, emphasizes emotion and sensation.

The comparison conveys the notion that Elizabeth is embarking upon the omnibus as a pirate on a ship set out to conquer London. However, it also concords with an extended impression of Elizabeth navigating the streets of London like a stream which is conveyed through metaphor but also through physical sensations: "eel-like" the omnibus is said to be "rushing insolently all sails spread"; Elizabeth notes several times the "delicious" sensation of "the fresh air" and the "breeze" which "slightly disarrayed her"; the churches are "breasting the stream of the Strand", "military music" is connected to a voice which "pouring endlessly [...] would take whatever it might be" and life to a procession. Ultimately, life is described as a "procession" which "would wrap them all about and carry them on, as in the rough stream of a glacier the ice holds a splinter of bone, a blue petal, some oak trees, and rolls them on" (*MD* p.117).

In this passage the passive stance of the sculpture is belied by the tangible materiality of a stream of sensations, which seem to course through Elizabeth as she stands upon the omnibus, mingling the sensation of "fresh air" the sound of music and the velocity conveyed by the "rough stream" and the quick juxtaposition of visual elements in an almost imagistic fashion, such as the

“splinter of bone, a blue petal, some oak trees.” This suggests that the blankness of Elizabeth’s stare could be interpreted in some other way than as a sign of her impassivity. One might think of her in this moment as an empty vessel whose blankness is a sign of her openness to receiving the stream of sensations which ties her to her natural environment. Similarly to Lily Briscoe’s artistic quest in *To the Lighthouse*, Elizabeth stands on the brink of a precipice which is the edge of perception, her gaze a blank canvas waiting to embody nature through artistic creation.

Sensual references to wind and water, mingling sound and touch with a visionary quality, convey the complexity of Elizabeth’s response to the danger and elation which she experiences being swept up in the stream of London while sensing that her freedom is fragile and momentary. This aspiration to creative or recreative freedom culminates in the contemplation of “mountainous white” clouds in the sky. The image of the clouds gives way to an image of a creator sculpting marble forms “hacking hard chips off with a hatchet” (p.118). Images such as “a block of pyramidal size .... at rest in perfect unanimity,” or of “a solemn assemblage” or “the grave fixity, the accumulated robustness and solidity” suggest the monolithic volumes of stone figures.

From another perspective, the scene also suggests the possibility of moving the grave mountainous blocks in an act of aesthetic recreation through varying modes of perception. In this passage, Woolf aligns “a perpetual movement” with the constant interchanging of “signs” through the effects of lighting on the sighting of the clouds:

Fixed though they seemed at their posts, at rest in perfect unanimity, nothing could be fresher, freer, more sensitive superficially than the snow-white or gold-kindled surface; to change, to go, to dismantle the solemn assemblage was immediately possible; and in spite of the grave fixity, the accumulated robustness and solidity, now they struck light to the earth, now darkness. (*MD* p. 118)

The emphasis on freshness and freedom is this time explicitly linked to sensitivity and the surface, suggesting the perception of the skyscape. The passage thus moves from the blank apercipitiveness of the sculpted face with its unseeing gaze to the ability to recast fixed forms through the mutability of perception.

This is in keeping both with the evolution of sculpture, which, at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, favored the breaking down of monolithic forms through the use of the effects of light and darkness, and with Woolf's impressionist, multi-perspective approach. I would argue however that the "staring, incredible innocence of sculpture" articulates a dead-end in the symbolic interpretation of the body by the viewer, which Woolf sets aside in favor of an emphasis on the body as a site of creative perceptive agency.

In *The Body Beautiful Symbolism and Agency in the Social World*, Erica Reischer and Kathryn Koo synthesize the distinction between the symbolic body such as it is theorized by Mary Douglas in *Natural Symbols* (1970) and the agentic body, a concept which draws on the theories of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Pierre Bourdieu as the distinction between "the body's symbolic capacity to reflect the social world" versus "the body as an active agent in the social world."<sup>243</sup>

As Crawford puts it "the body is not only a symbolic field for the reproduction of dominant values and conceptions; it is also a site for resistance to and transformation of those systems of meaning."<sup>244</sup> *Mrs Dalloway* showcases the body's agency in a departure from the constraints of the symbolic body and the body beautiful by representing modes of perception which deviate from the norm and inform the creative processes of the book. Similarly, in *Ulysses*, the symbolic body is

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<sup>243</sup> Erica Reischer & Kathryn Koo. "The Body Beautiful: Symbolism and Agency in the Social World." In *The Annual Review of Anthropology*. vol. 33. no. 1 (2004). pp. 297-317. p. 308.

<sup>244</sup> Robert Crawford. "A cultural account of "health": control, release, and the social body." In *Issues in the Political Economy of Health Care*, ed. J.B. McKinlay. New York: Tavistock. 1984. pp. 60-103. p. 95.

mockingly exposed as a crumbling façade of over-used citations which is threatened by the focus on bodily agency as well as the self-referentiality of the text.

### 3. The Figure in the Mirror

#### 3.1. The Ambivalence of the Self-Composed Figure

In *The Common Reader*, Woolf writes about the “extravagant laughter, poetry, and splendor” of Elizabethan drama, while noting that there is nonetheless something missing. She articulates what is missing as the exploration of a private existence beyond the public figure:

It is solitude. There is no privacy here. Always the door opens and someone comes in. [...] Meanwhile, as if tired with company, the mind steals off to muse in solitude; to think, not to act; to comment, not to share; to explore its own darkness, not the bright-lit-up surfaces of others.<sup>245</sup>

Here Woolf associates the public figure with a visibility and surface appeal which is at odds with private meandering contemplations of emotion, memory and sensations. In *Mrs Dalloway*, subterranean depths, “the privacy of the soul” in Clarissa’s words, show a comparable contrast with the body’s existence in the public world through the maintaining of a social body which takes the form of the figure in the mirror.

In *Word of Mouth: Body Language in Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf*, Patricia Moran stakes the claim that Woolf’s “successful contestation of patriarchal devaluations of femininity” in her

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<sup>245</sup> Virginia Woolf. “Notes on an Elizabethan Play.” In *Collected Essays I*. ed. Leonard Woolf. 1925. London: Hogarth Press. 1966a. p. 61.

work should not detract from what she reads as a concomitant “revulsion for the female body’s materiality.” Moran argues that there is a “tension between [Woolf’s] self-conscious uses of artistry to contest patriarchal devaluations of femininity and what we might call “symptomatic” self-presentations – metaphors and even patterns of imagery that attest to underlying conflict about, or even belief in, those same devaluations.”<sup>246</sup>

There are many examples of a fraught relationship to the figure in the mirror in Woolf’s fiction. On the other hand, as Leena Kurvet-Käosaar has pointed out, the body is most conspicuous by its absence in Woolf’s early non-fictional writings and diary entries, with the notable exception of various descriptions of states of illness.<sup>247</sup> One year after the publication of *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf released her well-known essay “On Illness” in which she emphasized the impossibility of escaping the body, while presenting the body as something nonetheless external to a “creature within”:

all day, all night the body intervenes [...] the creature within can only gaze through the pane-smudged or rosy; it cannot separate off from the body like the sheath of a knife or the pod of a pea for a single instant.<sup>248</sup>

In her later autobiographical writings Woolf would expand upon the ambiguity toward the body expressed in *A Passionate Apprentice* and “On Illness”. An oft-quoted passage from “A Sketch of the Past” describes her encounter with her image in the looking-glass at Talland House:

There was a small looking-glass in the hall at Talland House. [...] When I was six or seven perhaps, I got into the habit of looking at my face in the glass. But I only did this

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<sup>246</sup> Patricia Moran. *Word of Mouth: Body Language in Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf*. Charlottesville and London. 1996. pp. 2-3.

<sup>247</sup> Leena Kurvet-Käosaar. “Claiming and Disclaiming the Body in the Early Diaries of Virginia Woolf, Anaïs Nin and Aino Kallas.” In *Feminismo/s*, 4 (December 2004). pp. 69-84.

<sup>248</sup> Virginia Woolf. “On Being Ill.” In *The Essays of Virginia Woolf, Volume IV*. 1925-28. London: The Hogarth Press. 1994. p. 318.

if I was sure that I was alone. I was ashamed of it. A strong feeling of guilt seemed naturally attached to it.<sup>249</sup>

Here Woolf expresses a fascination with the image of her body as well as a certain revulsion at the sight of her body. It is hard to deny that in such instances Woolf seems to oppose subjectivity and the image of the body, attesting perhaps to a degree of somatophobia. Although it would be rash to transpose Woolf's representation of her own relation to her body in her autobiographical essays to her representation of the body in fiction, in *Mrs Dalloway* and in other works, the encounter with the figure in the mirror often conveys female characters' deep-seated fears concerning the body and more particularly its image.

In *Word of Mouth* Patricia Moran points out the necessity to qualify Woolf's representation of female embodiment, which is indeed ambiguous at times. However, I wonder to what degree such traces of somatophobia in Woolf's work can be seen as directed against female embodiment or even the body in a broad sense. They seem to address one aspect of embodiment in particular. In a following section from "A Sketch of the Past," Woolf elaborates on the guilt she feels when gazing into the mirror. She writes:

My natural love for beauty was checked by some ancestral dread. Yet this did not prevent me from feeling ecstasies and raptures spontaneously and intensely and without any shame or the least sense of guilt, so long as they were disconnected with my own body. I thus detect another element in the shame which I had in being caught looking at myself in the glass in the hall. I must have been ashamed or afraid of my own body. (*Moments* p. 68)

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<sup>249</sup> Virginia Woolf. *Moments of Being: a collection of autobiographical writing*, ed. Jeanne Schulkind. New York: Harcourt. 1985. pp. 67-68.

If the body is a source of guilt, then it is equally presented as a source of “ecstasies and raptures.” Woolf’s use of these terms highlights the ambiguity of her conception of embodiment. Both terms are somewhat equivocal, suggesting either a near out-of-body experience or, on the contrary, a heightened awareness of embodiment. Rapture and ecstasy respectively connote spiritual, religious experiences referring for the former to Christianity and the latter coming from Ancient Greek.

According to the Oxford Classical Dictionary, ecstasy refers to a moment in which the mind or body is removed “from its normal place of function.” However, it can also signify the subject’s total absorption by an object of consciousness on an emotional level. As for rapture, the word originally refers to the return of Christ and the moment when Christian followers will be released from their bodies and carried off to heaven. However, in layman’s terms rapture equally designates being carried away by one’s emotions in a moment of exquisite pleasure. As Woolf puts it, ecstasies and raptures fundamentally pertain to the intersecting domains of spirituality and “feeling”, and thus to embodied experience. Woolf presents this “feeling” as an experience of disembodiment, “disconnected from my body,” which may lead us to wonder what such a body without feeling might designate.

In her essay “Virginia Woolf’s Two Bodies,” Molly Hite reaches the conclusion that what Woolf expresses here is a division, which can also be seen in embryo in *Mrs Dalloway*, between embodiment as a source of exquisite feeling, sensation and emotion, and the body as the troubling – indeed, alienating – figure in the mirror. For Hite, this discrepancy is the result of Woolf’s efforts to depart from “the gendered body constituted by the dominant social order” through the elaboration of a female “visionary body” which “enabled Woolf to create passionate and sensuous female characters without embroiling them in the societal consequences of female eroticism that had shaped the romance plot.”<sup>250</sup> She sees this as a potential cause for Woolf having been perceived as “preoccupied with transcendent and unworldly things and correspondingly alienated from or overtly hostile to everyday

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<sup>250</sup> Molly Hite. “Virginia Woolf’s Two Bodies” [online]. *Genders 1998-2013*. 2000. p. 3. Accessed on September 18 2018: <https://www.colorado.edu/gendersarchive1998-2013/2000/01/10/virginia-woolfs-two-bodies>.

social life, especially the sloppy region of sensual and sexual experience.”<sup>251</sup> Hite’s reading allows us to better understand the ambivalence behind some of Woolf’s representations of the body and to assess the diverging representations of embodiment in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *Ulysses*. It is such an ambivalence which Patricia Moran equally senses when she notes for instance that “although Woolf attempts to demarcate a “pure” space anterior to representation that privileges unspoken modes of communication, images of a corrupt and contaminating corporality persistently encroach upon it.”<sup>252</sup>

There are several significant instances of mirror-gazing which exemplify this in *Mrs Dalloway*. If the figure in the mirror can be seen as an avatar of Hite’s concept of “the social body” it may allow us to grasp the importance of these instances for the representation of the body in *Mrs Dalloway*. One argument which tends to confirm Woolf’s rejection of the social body is that in *Mrs Dalloway*, those characters who are the most at ease with society’s perception of their bodies are those who Alex Zwerdling notes as being most securely connected to the political and social establishment: among these are Hugh Whitbread, Lady Bruton, Richard Dalloway and Dr. Holmes. Figures of aristocratic London such as Lady Bexborough who, as Clarissa reports, “opened a bazaar [...] with the telegram

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<sup>251</sup> Hite gives the following account of how criticism has constructed and then revised Woolf’s relation to the body: “Although the idea that Woolf feared and despised the corporeal was part of the early attacks on her class (and gender) standing as a “lady” mounted by F.R. and Q.D. Leavis and by Wyndham Lewis, the most influential statements of this position are in Quentin Bell’s 1972 biography. Bell pronounced his aunt “sexually frigid” and hypothesized that her lesbian relationships were unconsummated “affair(s) of the heart.” See F.R. Leavis, “Keynes, Lawrence and Cambridge,” *The Common Pursuit* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1952), p. 257; Q.D. Leavis, “Caterpillars of the Commonwealth Unite!” *The Importance of “Scrutiny*, ed. Eric Bentley (NY: NYU Press, 1964), pp. 382-091; and Wyndham Lewis, *Men Without Art* (London: Cassell and Co., 1934). Much of the sense of Woolf as shrinkingly anti-corporeal also came from her comments that James Joyce’s *Ulysses* was “indecent” (e.g. “Modern Fiction,” p. 162). The most memorable feminist version of this attack came from Elaine Showalter, who wrote, “Woolf’s vision of womanhood is as deadly as it is disembodied. The ultimate room of one’s own is the grave.” *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1977), p. 297. Critics who challenged the notion that Woolf’s writing was alienated from the world of bodies emphasized the politics of this writing, its immersion in the everyday and its concern with multiple sexualities. See especially Alex Zwerdling, *Virginia Woolf and the Real World* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: U of California Press, 1986), Jane Marcus, *Virginia Woolf and the Languages of Patriarchy*, Rachel Bowlby, *Feminist Destinations and Further Essays on Virginia Woolf* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1997), Gillian Beer, *Virginia Woolf: The Common Ground* (Ann Arbor, MI: U of Michigan Press, 1996) and Joseph Allen Boone, “Virginia Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway: Representing “The Unseen Part of Us Which Spreads Wide,” *Libidinal Currents: Sexuality and the Shaping of Modernism* (Chicago and London: U of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 172-203.”

<sup>252</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 22.



in her hand, John, her favourite, killed” in the war, exemplify the civic stoicism expected by the post-war establishment and expressed by the body.<sup>253</sup>

Dr. Holmes’ embodiment of the tyrannical powers of instituted authority is evident in his arrogant appraisal of his own “large”, wholesome image outweighing the significance of Septimus’s psychological trauma: “Dr. Holmes came again. Large, fresh coloured, handsome, flicking his boots, looking in the glass, he brushed it all aside – headaches, sleeplessness, fears, dreams – nerve symptoms and nothing more, he said” (*MD* p. 77). The violence of Dr. Holmes’ judgment of Septimus is conveyed by his large, robust body and hands-on approach. On his last visit to the Smiths, Holmes is described as overcoming Resia by sheer physical force to get to Septimus, “putting her aside (Holmes was a powerfully built man)” (p. 126).

In a way, the body of the medical corps, represented by the figures of Holmes and Bradshaw – “men who never weighed less than eleven stone six, who sent their wives to court, men who made ten thousand a year and talked of proportion” – represents a bullying force intent on reducing the individual’s experience of their body to a well-functioning social image. Conversely, many of the characters in *Ulysses*, such as Gerty, Molly or Bloom, manage to embrace this aspect of embodiment and even find pleasure in fashioning their image through various modes of posing, self-observing and impersonations. In *Mrs. Dalloway* the social image is almost entirely oppressive, which is suggested in the final depiction of the body as a dark figure which concludes the scene of Septimus’ suicide. In the verbal equivalent of a visual still, Dr. Holmes himself is reduced to a terrifying figure, a dark mark on the glass, a pure physical form which embodies the impetus or “must” of a social order:

They were carrying [Septimus] away now. Ought [his wife Rezia] not to be told? Married people ought to be together, Mrs Filmer thought. But they must do as the doctor said.

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<sup>253</sup> Alex Zwerdling. “Mrs. Dalloway and the Social System.” In *PMLA*. vol. 92. no. 1 (January). 1977. pp. 69-82.

‘Let her sleep,’ said Dr Holmes, feeling her pulse. She saw the large outline of his body dark against the window. So that was Dr Holmes. (*MD* p. 128)

Hugh Whitbread is figured enjoying a unity of self and body, intimacy and externality, which is expressed by his decorous appearance as well as by his using his body to express his meaning, “intimating by a kind of pout or swell of his very well-covered, manly, extremely handsome, perfectly upholstered body [...] that his wife had some internal ailment” (p. 4). Hugh’s satisfaction with his body appears more clearly in contradistinction with Clarissa’s unease at her own appearance in his presence. Speaking with Hugh, she is aware of feeling “very sisterly and oddly conscious at the same time of her hat.” Worrying that she might not have chosen “the right hat for the early morning” Clarissa remarks that “Hugh always made her feel, as he bustled on, raising his hat rather extravagantly [...] she always felt a little skimpy beside Hugh; schoolgirlish” (p. 5).

Paradoxically, in *Mrs. Dalloway* the impersonality of the body can express a sense of being out of place, which connects Peter Walsh to Clarissa Dalloway. In his hotel room, Peter’s sense of alienation is emphasized through the impersonality and economy of the objects surrounding him, the looking-glass being one prop in a *décor* which emphasizes the cool efficiency of civilized society and in which the aseptized interior of the hotel reflects the alienating process of aseptizing the body. This transpires in the ways in which the objects described by Peter in the hotel room respond with surgical precision to the body’s needs:

These hotels are not consoling places. Far from it. Any number of people had hung up their hats on those pegs. Even the flies, if you thought of it, had settled on other people’s noses. As for the cleanliness which hit him in the face, it wasn’t cleanliness, so much as bareness, frigidity; a thing that had to be. Some arid matron made her rounds at dawn sniffing, peering, causing blue-nosed maids to scour, for all the world as if the next visitor were a joint of meat to be served on a perfectly clean platter. For sleep, one bed; for sitting

in, one armchair; for cleansing one's teeth and shaving one's chin, one tumbler, one looking-glass. Books, letters, dressing-gown, slipped about on the impersonality of the horse-hair like incongruous impertinences. (p. 131)

What is more, Clarissa aspires to the stately corpulence of the women who evolve in political spheres, such as Lady Bexborough or Lady Bruton. From Clarissa's perspective, it is a physical affair and it is her body which on some level first betrays her disconnection from the establishment she brushes shoulders with. Thus, for Clarissa, reliving her life successfully begins with the ability to change her appearance, to have a new body: "she would have been, like Lady Bexborough, slow and stately; rather large; interested in politics like a man; with a country house; very dignified, very sincere."

This body contrasts sharply with her own, which is a source of frustration. Clarissa's description of her physical appearance contains a certain amount of loathing for her "narrow pea-stick figure" and "ridiculous little face, beaked like a bird's" (p. 9). Her desire to control her body and to make an impression in society transpires in her conceding that "she held herself well," "had nice hands and feet; and dressed well, considering that she spent little." However, she soon writes the whole of her body off as a costume-like accessory, an envelope or a mask, "this body she wore," and finally as "nothing at all." In her description of her body, Clarissa's distress at losing herself to an invisible form of existence, in which being seen is paradoxically being "unseen; unknown" or known as Mrs. Richard Dalloway, is apparent.

The descriptions of Clarissa's figure throughout the novel contrast strongly with the propensity for feeling and ecstasy which characterizes her perception. They often recycle the same motifs of rigidity, pallor and light. For Katerina Kitsi-Mitakou, Clarissa Dalloway's fleshly image bears

Christian undertones and is meant to be reflective of “her monastic attitude in life.”<sup>254</sup> Kitsi-Mitakou goes further in associating this image with the model of the body in fifteenth-century Flemish paintings, such as the “Dutch picture” which Clarissa stops to look at while thinking about her body.

Kitsi-Mitakou draws a connection between this passing reference and the representation of the body in Dutch painting, with its insistence on “severity, plainness, and asceticism.” In his study of the evolution of the nude in painting and sculpture, Kenneth Clark contrasts the Gothic nude of 15<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch painting with the body beautiful ideal which the classical nude aspires to, labelling this model of the body “the alternative convention.” In “The Alternative Convention” he explains that the Gothic model differs profoundly from the Greek model in its insistence on a fleshliness which has relinquished the “energy and control” of the classical body:

The curve of the stomach is created by gravity and relaxation. It is a heavy, unstructural curve, soft and slow, yet with a kind of vegetable persistence. It does not take its shape from the will but from the unconscious biological process which gives shape to all hidden organisms.<sup>255</sup>

For Clark, the “bulb-like,” elongated figure of the Gothic convention, of which Van Eyck’s Eve in the Ghent is emblematic, insists on the flesh in its vegetable state to emphasize the “embodiment of humility and shame.”

In the case of *Mrs Dalloway*, Kitsi-Mitakou links this more explicitly to the weight of Christianity and patriarchy in molding the image of women’s bodies: “Dutch painting and Christianity at this point converge, and echo Clarissa’s dichotomized body: both take the body away only to give it back defined

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<sup>254</sup> Katerina K. Kitsi-Mitakou. “Clarissa Dalloway’s Body: Transformations of Christian Concepts of Femininity and Materiality in Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*.” In *Gamma: Theory of Literature and Culture*, 1 (1993). pp. 86-104. p. 89.

<sup>255</sup> Kenneth Clark. *Op. cit.* p. 312.

through patriarchy.”<sup>256</sup> Clarissa’s implied frigidity, along with moments of asceticism such as her nun-like retreat into her attic room at the beginning of the novel and her guilt at “having failed” Richard, show that in spite of Clarissa’s agnosticism some part of this patriarchal religious discourse finds its way into the reflection of her image and her rejection of it:

... she paused by the open staircase window which let the blinds flapping, dogs barking, let in she thought, feeling herself suddenly shriveled, aged, breastless, the grinding, blowing, flowering of the day, out of doors, out of the window, out of her body and brain which now failed. (*MD* p. 26)

Clarissa expresses pride at her own ability to compose her appearance into a significant whole and in this sense is partially complicit with the stoic decorum which oppresses her, while recognizing the difficulty of maintaining the illusion of a unified self. Her composing her face in the looking-glass occurs as a reaction to her fears about being betrayed by her body. Clarissa wonders whether Peter Walsh will notice “that she had grown older” as “since her illness she had turned almost white” (p. 31). The body in the mirror is called upon in this moment in the attempt to arrest the passage of time: “as if to catch the falling drop, Clarissa (crossing to the dressing-table) plunged into the very heart of the moment, transfixed it [...] collecting the whole of her at one point (as she looked into the glass)” (p. 31).

Here the composure of the self into a semblance of unity is qualified as both a “contraction”, an act of will, and a “diamond”, a luminous “point” of “radiancy”. The image of the diamond conveys the idea of the ultimate refinement of matter and of character through the selective presentation of the self as unvariegated, “never showing a sign of all the other sides [...] – faults, jealousies, vanities, suspicions.” Bearing in mind the association between Clarissa and light or radiance in the novel,

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<sup>256</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 89-90.

Clarissa's acts of composure express both a salutary creativity through which Clarissa regains a form of agency as a woman-composer and the sacrifice of her ideals to the veneer and brilliant refinement of high society. Here the self-composure which looking into the glass entails – forming a luminous point – echoes the compositional nature of Clarissa's role as a hostess: Clarissa resists the alienating social body by retrieving some measure of control over her reflection.

### 3.2. Doubling (1): the Alien Body

In “Vision, Intermediality, and Spectatorship in *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Hours*”, Claudia Olk interprets Woolf's use of the mirror as sharing the same function as other visual frames such as the window, namely that of “a unifying frame of self-projection” which “serves to stabilize boundaries.”<sup>257</sup> It seems to me that although Clarissa relies on the mirror-image to create the illusion of a unified self, the mirror points to the variegation of the self by emphasizing the alienating force of the social body. Looking at the wider portrayal of the body in the mirror through the figure of the double, doubling and mirror effects, may allow us to consider Woolf's use of reflections of the body to destabilize the boundaries of the self.

Virginia Woolf acknowledged her use of the double motif, having famously decided to introduce the character of Septimus Smith as Clarissa Dalloway's double, so as to present “the world seen by the sane & the insane side by side”.<sup>258</sup> The symmetrical structure of *Mrs Dalloway* as well as Woolf's tunneling technique, emphasize the interconnections between characters which reflect or distort each other's image. The passionate antagonism between Clarissa Dalloway and Doris Kilman,

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<sup>257</sup> Claudia Olk. *Op. cit.* p. 200.

<sup>258</sup> Virginia Woolf. Diary entry for October 14, 1922. *A Writer's Diary*. London: The Hogarth Press. 1953. p. 52.

which hinges on the latter's rejection of the codes which control the image of the female body in high society, makes her a plausible double for Clarissa.

In "The Double as the "Unseen" of Culture" Milica Živković explores the history of the figure of the *doppelgänger*, which "can be traced not to a single authority, but to ancient myth, mysticism, folklore, fairy tale and romance".<sup>259</sup> Although she locates the first appearance of the term in a footnote by the novelist "Jean Paul" or Johann Paul Friedrich Richter in 1796, she also notes that the author provides only the most elusive of definitions: "so heissen Leute, die sich selbst sehen" (thus are called people who see themselves).

Živković defines the figure as "an imagined figure, a soul, a shadow, a ghost or a mirror reflection that exists in a dependent relation to the original" but concedes that "in the broadest sense of the idea, "double" can mean almost any dual, and in some cases even multiple, structure in the text." What seems an intrinsic feature of the double however is its use in narratives "concerned with revealing and exploring the interrelations of the "I" and the "non-I", of self and other."<sup>260</sup>

Živković explains that the double has historically been cast as an evil or demonic figure. For this reason, Frederic Jameson in "Magical narratives: romance as genre" sees the double as having an ideological function: it is "at one with the category of otherness itself: evil characterizes whatever is radically different from me, whatever by virtue of precisely that difference seems to constitute a very real and urgent threat to my existence."<sup>261</sup>

In the wake of Freudian psychology, the double became synonymous with the representation of the unconscious, the repressed or instinctual drives. For instance, in *The Literature of the Second Self*, Carl Francis Keppler writes:

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<sup>259</sup> Milica Živković. "The Double as the "Unseen" of Culture: Toward a Definition of Doppelgänger." In *Facta Universitatis. Linguistics and Literature*. vol. 2. no. 7 (2000). pp. 121-28. p. 123.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 122-24.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.* p. 140.

Often the conscious mind tries to deny its unconscious through the mechanism of “projection”, attributing its own unconscious content (a murderous impulse, for example) to a real person in the world outside; at times it even creates an external hallucination in the image of this content.<sup>262</sup>

As Živković points out, readings of the double have consequently been conditioned by a psycho-analytical bias which, although justifiable on the basis of the undeniable imbrication of the figure of the double with questions of identity, self and desire, nonetheless has the questionable effect of associating otherness with its representation as “foreign, irrational, “mad”, “bad”. According to Živković it is for these reasons that “the double has constantly been dismissed by critics as being an embrace of madness, irrationality, or narcissism and it has been opposed to the humane and more civilized practices of ‘realistic’ literature.”<sup>263</sup>

Živković turns to Jung’s theory of the Self as a complex of opposites to highlight an alternative reading of the double. She underlines the double’s main function which is the violation of unity and more particularly that of “character”: “it is the central power of the double to interrogate the category of character – that definition of the self as a coherent, indivisible and continuous whole which has dominated western thought for centuries.”<sup>264</sup> Here she echoes Helen Cixous’ critique of the notion of “character” in “The character of ‘character’”:

The ideology underlying the fetishization of “character” is that of an “I” who is a whole subject, conscious, knowable; the enunciatory “I” expresses himself in the text, just as the world is represented complementarily in the text in a form equivalent to pictorial representation, as a simulacrum.<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Carl Francis Keppler. *The Literature of the Second Self*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press. 1972. p. 25.

<sup>263</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 126.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.* p. 126.

<sup>265</sup> Hélène Cixous. “The character of ‘character’.” trans. Keith Cohen. *New Literary History*. vol. 5, no. ii (Winter). 1974. pp. 305-307.



This resonates with the subversion of “the fetishization of “character”” which Woolf employs in *Mrs Dalloway*. Like the mirror which suggests the viewer’s sense of alienation from her body image, doubling serves to further the variegation or corruption of the simulacrum of self which the representation of the body as an image of the self implies.

The character most preoccupied by the intersection of image and flesh is perhaps Miss Doris Kilman, with whom Clarissa entertains an impassioned rivalry. Doris Kilman’s ostentatious figure forms an obsession for both herself and Clarissa Dalloway. For Clarissa, who seeks to control the body in the mirror, Doris Kilman represents a nightmarish manifestation of the uncontrollable fleshly body rejected by high society. However, Clarissa’s aversion cannot fully disguise the fact that Doris Kilman reflects many of her own issues with her body. Miss Kilman’s homosexuality, her rejection of normative femininity, her dislike of her body in society resonate with Clarissa’s increasing awareness of the danger and vacuity of her existence along with her growing sense of mortality.

Miss Kilman embodies the female body abjected by society, a grotesque and monstrous manifestation of the body which does not conform to the accepted image. Miss Kilman is a tragi-comic figure who nonetheless fully conveys the inescapable power of the body in the mirror to validate or abnegate self-worth:

... the world [...] had scorned her, sneered at her, cast her off, beginning with this indignity – the infliction of her unlovable body which people could not bear to see. Do her hair as she might, her forehead remained like an egg, bald, white. No clothes suited her. She might buy anything. And for a woman, of course, that meant never meeting the opposite sex. Never would she come first with anyone. Sometimes lately it had seemed to her that, except for Elizabeth, her food was all that she lived for; her comforts; her dinner, her tea; her hot-water bottle at night. (*MD* p. 109)

Miss Kilman's bitterness at Clarissa's appearance and social status and her contempt at the vanity and triviality of Clarissa's idle existence is ironically qualified by her inability in her own words to "master [...] the flesh." In her desperation, Miss Kilman finds solace in the capitalist system of desire and commodity production of which she is a victim. Having been humiliated by Clarissa's contempt at her appearance she enters the Army and Navy Stores with Elizabeth and decides to shop for petticoats. The description of Miss Kilman guided through the commodities of the gallery store by Elizabeth desexualizes and defeminizes her by presenting her first as childlike, then as "an unwieldy battleship" connoting a stereotypically masculine belligerence. In contrast, her browsing through "the petticoats, brown, decorous, striped, frivolous, solid, flimsy" seems an act of desperation (p. 110).

In this passage, Miss Kilman is reduced to a monolithic embodiment of basic desires, a grotesque simplification of the body as a manifestation of "want". She displays a gargantuan appetite: "eating, eating with intensity, then looking; again and again, at a plate of sugared cakes on the table next them" (p. 110). Kilman progressively is reduced to an emblem of want. Feeling that she is losing Elizabeth, who is about to leave the stores, her desperation takes the form of a gesture through the metonymic focus on "her large hand" which "opened and shut on the table" (p. 111). In a moment of desperate disconnection, her hand is shown "fingering the last two inches of a chocolate éclair." Images of eating show Miss Kilman devoured by the desire which consumes her in what is meant to be a repulsive projection of unpalatable physicality: "Miss Kilman opened her mouth, slightly projected her chin, and swallowed down the last inches of the last chocolate éclair, then wiped her fingers, and washed the tea round in her cup" (p. 112).

Silenced by the agony of her self-loathing, what is left is the image of her "thick fingers cur[ling] inwards." The image of the hand ("the great hand opened and shut") is the external manifestation of a visceral feeling which extends to "the very entrails of her body" which she feels Elizabeth is "stretching" in leaving, "as she crossed the room, and then, with a final twist [...] went."

Miss Kilman's escape from the Army and Navy Stores is almost comically obstructed by hoards of commodities. These commodities link the construction of femininity to Empire and trade in an overwhelming enumeration. The phrasal verbs which describe Miss Kilman's movements along with the complexity of the syntax in the passage which describes her exit from the stores, convey her emotional distress and physical disorientation:

She got up, blundered off among the little tables, rocking slightly from side to side, and somebody came after her with her petticoat, and she lost her way, and was hemmed in by trunks specially prepared for taking to India; next got among the accouchement sets and baby linen; through all the commodities of the world, perishable and permanent, hams, drugs, flowers, stationery, variously smelling, now sweet, now sour, she lurched; saw herself thus lurching with her hat askew, very red in the face, full length in a looking-glass; and at last came out into the street. (*MD* p. 113)

Miss Kilman's confrontation with her image in the looking-glass thus expresses her opposition to an entire capitalist ideology built upon desire and commodities. Reading Alex Zwerdling's assessment of Doris Kilman in "*Mrs. Dalloway* and the Social System", one is tempted to link the grotesque, gargantuan or excessive physicality of the character to the repression which the social body requires and the resurgence of repressed emotion: "the lid of convention is heavy and firmly in place in the world around her; and so her intense emotional life must be lived entirely in her own mind, where it takes on a nightmare quality comparable to that of Septimus. She, too, is alone."<sup>266</sup> In Zwerdling's terms she might represent the body's objection to the "containment of emotion" and "the fundamental inertia in human nature and institutions" that constitutes the "anesthesia of the governing class." The mirror thus expresses the social body's alienating capacity.

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<sup>266</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 76.

### 3.3. Doubling (2): “mirrors of the reciprocal flesh” and the Anxiety of Reproduction

The first episode of *Ulysses*, ‘Telemachus’, foregrounds the mirror’s role in the dispossession of the self. The episode focuses on Stephen Dedalus, the former exiled artist who has returned to Dublin and is struggling to find his place in colonized Ireland. Instructed by Buck Mulligan to look at himself in a mirror, Stephen eyes with suspicion and revulsion a body which is alien to him, which he refuses to recognize as his own, since it is the sign of his dispossession as a son, an artist, and a colonized subject: “as he and others see me. Who chose this face for me? This dogsbody to rid of vermin. It asks me too” (*U* 1. 196-7). Intent on forging himself anew through exile and self-creation, Stephen’s rejection of the body in the mirror expresses his struggle with colonization and paternity, and his subsequent desire to reject all origins, whether filial or national.

Throughout *Ulysses*, auto-genesis is the main preoccupation of Stephen Dedalus, who is consistently linked to the character of Hamlet, for example through the comparison in “Telemachus” of Dublin Bay to the “cliffs of Elsinore”, or through Stephen’s lengthy theorizing of *Hamlet* and the question of paternity in “Scylla and Charibdis”. In “Shakespeare’s Hamlet and Joyce’s Stephen” Emilia Chodorowska analyzes the links between Stephen and Hamlet, noting a number of similarities which corroborate Stuart Gilbert’s claim that “the mystery of paternity, in its application to the First and Second Persons of the Trinity, to King Hamlet and the Prince, and, by implication, to the curious symbiosis of Stephen and Bloom, is ever in the background of Stephen’s Shakespearian exegesis.”<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> Emilia Chodorowska. “Shakespeare’s Hamlet and Joyce’s Stephen: Breaking free from parental authority” [online]. Accessed on September 7 2018: <http://literateur.com/shakespeare%E2%80%99s-hamlet-and-joyce%E2%80%99s-stephen-breaking-free-from-parental-authority/>. “Stephen arms himself with words, ‘Unsheathe your dagger definitions’, just as Hamlet asserts before going to visit his mother: ‘I will speak daggers to her, but use none’ (III. ii. 404). The two protagonists also share a feeling of frustration and inertia [...] Stephen, in perhaps what could be seen as a vein of arrogance, views himself as an undiscovered Shakespeare.”

Stuart Gilbert. *James Joyce’s Ulysses*. London: Faber & Faber. 1930. p. 19.

“Circe” features another scene in which Stephen looks into a mirror only to see the reflection of another: “(Stephen and Bloom gaze in the mirror. The face of William Shakespeare, beardless, appears there, rigid in facial paralysis, crowned by the reflection of the reindeer antlered hatrack in the hall.)” (*U* 15.3820-24). In the mirror, Shakespeare’s face in the glass is both “beardless”, connoting a youth which Stephen still possesses, and “antlered”, connoting Bloom’s cuckoldry.

In *Hamlet* questions of paternity and authority are complicated by the fact that the paternal figure of the ghost may be a *doppelgänger*. The reflection in the glass, essentially neither that of Stephen nor of Bloom, can nonetheless be envisaged as a figure of doubling, sending the reader back to the ghost of origin and patriarchal authority which haunts Stephen. At the same time, Stephen also finds an occasion for reconciliation with the figure in the glass through the mediation of Shakespeare by Bloom. “Beardless” and “antlered” Bloom is an anti-authoritative paternal figure who counters to an extent Stephen’s sense of alienation through the possibility that the self may be reflected in the other without subordination.

In this instance the figure in the mirror does not embody a phantasmagoric avatar of the self, or the manifestation of a psychic self-division through the resurgence of repressed instinctual drives. “Ithaca”, with its rigid pattern of questions and answers, presents Bloom and Stephen as figures which reflect each other with distortions. “Ithaca” describes both characters as on a parallel course and systematizes their differences within a common experience. Thus, for instance, the simple bodily necessity of urinating becomes a ritual through the systematization of the body’s commonality:

At Stephen’s suggestion, at Bloom’s instigation both, first Stephen, then Bloom, in penumbra urinated, their sides contiguous, their organs of micturition reciprocally rendered invisible by manual circumposition, their gazes, first Bloom’s, then Stephen’s, elevated to the projected luminous and semiluminous shadow. (*U* 17. 29100-104).

In “Ithaca”, in silent gazing, Bloom and Stephen are pictured “contemplating the other in both mirrors of the reciprocal flesh of theirhisnothis fellowfaces,” suggesting a phenomenological version of the double, in which the mirror is the image of the body in the mirroring gaze of the other (*U* 17. 29096). Doubling may express the fracture of the self through the phenomenological duality of the flesh.

In “Eye and Mind” Maurice Merleau-Ponty conceptualizes the ability for one body to reflect another as part of the reversibility of perceptions of the body:

The mirror’s ghost lies outside my body, and by the same token my own body’s “invisibility” can invest the other bodies I see. Hence my body can assume segments derived from the body of another, just as my substance passes into them; man is mirror for man. The mirror itself is the instrument of a universal magic that changes things into a spectacle, spectacles into things, myself into another, and another into myself.<sup>268</sup>

In this light, the figure of the body is inscribed with an intermingling of “I” and “not-I”: “reciprocal flesh” would enable the slippage of the self beyond its bounds. In “What’s in a Mirror? James Joyce’s Phenomenology of Perception,” Gerald Bruns argues that Joyce’s mirrors function as phenomenological encounters which “defeat logical notions of identity (I=I) in favor of the idea that relations of self and image are unstable and excessive.”<sup>269</sup>

The phenomenological notion of “reciprocal flesh” provides insight into Woolf’s use of mirroring motifs and doubling in *Mrs Dalloway* as well. Woolf resorts to framing devices to articulate the disconnecting force of the body image with the communion of bodies through connecting

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<sup>268</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty. “Eye and Mind.” In *The Primacy of Perception and Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History, and Politics*, ed. James M. Edie. trans. Carleton Dallery. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. 1964. p. 168.

<sup>269</sup> Gerald L. Bruns. “What’s in a Mirror: James Joyce’s Phenomenology of Perception.” *James Joyce Quarterly*. vol. 49. no. 3/4. Special Double Issue (Spring-Summer). 2012. pp. 573-88. p. 573.

impressions, emotions and perceptions. Two of these framing devices are the mirror, along with mirror motifs, and the window. It is my impression that these devices are not to be understood in isolation, for Woolf seems to rely on the metaphorical value of the mirror to extend that of the window: mirroring effects allow for a reading of the window as a framework through which Clarissa in particular encounters mirroring selves. The intertwining of these motifs thus allows Woolf to explore the reciprocal nature of flesh and the opposition between the body as a figure or image and the body as “reciprocal flesh”.

Throughout *Mrs Dalloway*, images are recycled, surfacing in one consciousness and resurfacing in another, such as Peter Walsh’s description of Elizabeth: “this morning, for instance, in came Elizabeth, like a long-legged colt, handsome, dumb,” which is a reflection through Peter’s perspective of a prior depiction of Elizabeth which can be attributed partly to an omniscient narrator, partly to Elizabeth herself: “like some dumb creature who has been brought up to a gate for an unknown purpose, and stands there longing to gallop away, Elizabeth Dalloway sat silent” (p. 112).

Other images resurface in a similar manner, so that through the recurring image one character seems to reflect another. Clarissa’s feelings about her failed romance with Peter Walsh are glossed over in free indirect speech at the beginning of *Mrs Dalloway*: “she had borne about her for years like an arrow sticking in her heart the grief, the anguish.” The metaphor of the “arrow sticking” through the core translates Clarissa’s grief. Rather surprisingly, it resurfaces several pages later in Clarissa’s antagonistic portrayal of Miss Doris Kilman as a person whose past has made her bitter: “all her soul rusted with that grievance sticking in it” (p. 10). This detail significantly alters the reader’s understanding of Clarissa’s hatred of Miss Kilman, for it seems that on an intimate level the two are connected and possibly Clarissa feels this connection.

It is through such a mirroring effect that Woolf builds the connection between Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Smith which is central to the novel’s exploration of the slippage of the self.

The window is connected to the mirror in *Mrs Dalloway*, through parallel moments of gazing which are in turn linked to Clarissa Dalloway's party. In the first instance, before the party, Clarissa composes her face in the looking-glass, to form a "diamond" or a "meeting-point". In the second instance, nearing the end of the party, Clarissa gazes out of a window at the figure of an old woman who lives across from her. In this moment, she experiences a connection between herself, the old woman, and Septimus Smith who she has just learnt committed suicide:

She walked to the window. [...] She parted the curtains; she looked. Oh, but how surprising! – in the room opposite the old lady stared straight at her! She was going to bed. [...] She was going to bed, in the room opposite. It was fascinating to watch her, moving about, that old lady crossing the room, coming to the window. Could she see her? It was fascinating, with people still laughing and shouting in the drawing-room, to watch that old woman, quite quietly, going to bed alone. She pulled the blind now. The clock began striking. The young man had killed himself; but she did not pity him, with all this going on. There! the old lady had put out her light! The whole house was dark now with this going on, she repeated, and the words came to her, Fear no more the heat of the sun. (MD p. 158)

The window is a framing device which sets Clarissa in the position of a voyeur looking into the private life of her neighbor. The emphasis on Clarissa's fascination shows her withdraw from the bustle of the party for a moment to reflect on ageing and death. However, the disconnected view which the window offers her equally features a moment of connection, as the juxtaposition of the old woman's "going to bed alone" with the striking of the clock recalls the passing of time and the ominous description of Clarissa's own coffin-like bed at the beginning of the novel. Through these recurring motifs the reader is given to understand that the "old lady" "in the room opposite" is in some way a reflection of Clarissa. One can perceive how through these mirroring effects Woolf systematizes doubling throughout the novel, without rigorously casting any characters into the role of the double. These reflections increase the instability of the notion of self and further the divide between image and



flesh, all the while constructing a counter-force to the alienating capacities of the body-image. This is possibly what Clarissa means when with the vision of Septimus' dead body in mind she has the following intuition: "there is an embrace in death."

That the window acts as both a narrative device and a motif which suggests a mirroring of the self through the other becomes clearer in the way in which Septimus's defenestration links back to Clarissa's plunge through "the French windows [...] at Bourton into the open air" (p. 3). Immediately following Septimus' death, Dr. Holmes gives the latter's wife Rezia a sleep syrup, triggering what may be a recollection or a hallucinatory impression. In this moment, Clarissa's memory of her youth resurfaces in Rezia's thoughts as the involuntary memory of an event which she cannot place.: "it seemed to her as she drank the sweet stuff that she was opening long windows, stepping out into some garden. But where?" (p 122). Here also the window motif is accompanied by the striking of a clock: "The clock was striking – one, two, three" which echoes Big Ben striking the hour, materializing the threat of time at the beginning of the novel.

In the "Nausicaa" episode of *Ulysses*, the image of the mirror also reflects the lability of the body. It is likened to an unstable surface, like the sand on the beach, which undoes whatever is inscribed upon it in its incessant remodeling of forms. Bloom attempts to leave a message on the beach but gives up and erases the message before it is completed because just as his face, reflected in the water, is erased by the ripples of the tidepool, his message will be erased by the rising tide or trampled on by "some flatfoot":

Mr Bloom with his stick gently vexed the thick sand at his foot. Write a message for her.

Might remain. What?

I.

Some flatfoot tramp on it in the morning. Useless Washed away. Tide comes here. Saw a pool near her foot. Bend, see my face there, dark mirror, breathe on it, stirs. All these rocks with lines and scars and letters....

AM. A.

No room. Let it go.

Mr Bloom effaced the letters with his slow boot. Hopeless thing sand. (*U* 13. 1256-66)

Bloom's inscription reads as an attempt to define himself in an essentialist way. However, the attempt is cut short as Bloom realizes he has "no room." Bloom's failure to name his cuckoldry – an abortive attempt at writing – reflects his impotence. Yet, the open-ended definition also suggests that Bloom is too many things, and that it would be impossible to write an exhaustive definition. Like the rocks with lines and scars and letters bearing a myriad of signs which can be endlessly added to, read, and re-read, Bloom's image is like an inscription which remains partially indecipherable – a "dark mirror" encompassing shifting forms.

The moment is also colored by Bloom's feeling of despondency. His inability to write seems to stem from his questioning the point of self-expression: the use of modality ("might remain") and the question "what" signal his uncertainty. A slight bitterness tinges the phrase "some flatfoot" and the verb "tramp" suggests that what Bloom predicts is a coarse disregard for his self-representation. The slowness of his movements, along with the emphasis on the "useless" outcome of a potential message drawn on "hopeless" sand, contribute to this impression.

Bloom ends up by signing his unfinished message with his "wooden pen": "He flung his wooden pen away. The stick fell in silted sand, stuck." The image of the stick stuck in the sand tragically suggests Bloom's impotence through its ostentatious phallic imagery, the well-known association of the phallus with the pen and reproduction with artistic creation. Sand being used as a metaphor for creation and procreation also recalls Genesis 22:17 when Abraham is promised a

descendance as numerous as the grains of sand on the shore: “That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.” Thus, Bloom’s inability to articulate what he is also suggests that he is stuck, at a dead-end, through his inability to create and to recreate a son in his own image. The profusion of signs on the beach “all these rocks with lines and scars and letters” sends the reader back to Stephen’s deciphering of the beach in “Proteus” in a way which recalls Stephen’s association between sign-reading, auto-genesis and genealogy. The reflection of Stephen in Bloom amplifies the impression that Bloom’s embrace of his image is not fully unmitigated – it is potentially taunting.

Bloom’s contemplation of his body similarly suggests a mixture of pleasurable sensing and sorrowful impotence at the end of “Lotus Eaters”. After roaming the streets of Dublin, Bloom reflects on the transiency of all things: “always passing, the stream of life.” In a characteristic turn of thought which takes him from the symbolic to the material, Bloom dreams of enjoying a bath in the “gentle tepid stream”:

Enjoy a bath now: clean trough of water, cool enamel, the gentle tepid stream. This is my body.

He foresaw his pale body reclined in it at full, naked, in a womb of warmth, oiled by scented melting soap, softly laved. He saw his trunk and limbs riprippled over and sustained, buoyed lightly upward, lemonyellow: his navel, bud of flesh: and saw the dark tangled curls of his bush floating, floating hair of the stream around his limp father of thousands, a languid floating flower. (*U* 5. 3873-81)

On the surface, Bloom’s contemplation of his own body floating in the bathwater seems to deny the conflict of embodiment. In Bloom’s gazing, Stephen’s or Clarissa’s wariness gives way to a

seductive embrace of the body-image, melding the perceiver and perceived. “This is my body,” Leopold announces in a Christ-like moment of incarnation (*U* 5. 3874). But the cataphoric function of the deictic “this” heralds the apparition of the body, perhaps a little too strongly, hinting at a mock annunciation of sorts, as the representation of Bloom’s body is a phantasmagorical image which never truly materializes.

What we have here is in fact a vision bodied forth by Bloom’s mind’s eye in an episode the general economy of which is to foreground a seductive but illusory retreat into sensuality. Earlier in the episode Bloom had anticipated the pleasure of masturbating in the bath; at the back of his mind is Molly’s perfume, a scented memory materialized by the token of the lemon soap and inside his pocket Martha’s letter. Bloom’s body language betrays a desire to lose himself in physical satisfaction which is consistently thwarted by his material surroundings, to the extent that the minor frustrations he experiences become symptoms of his embodiment.

The final image of Bloom’s body borne by the waters of the bath, a mock Cabanel – Venus emerging in flowers from the waves – suggests the fantasy of a return to the womb as well as that of a moment of uninterrupted navel-gazing. Nonetheless, Bloom’s body as it thus appears in his mind’s eye bears the mark of his own confabulating: the floral imagery which has found its way from the letter to his lover Martha to the body in the bath confuses any stereotypical expression of Bloom’s masculinity while hinting at his impotence; the lyrical quality of the passage which relies strongly on alliteration, rather than being solely sedating, also points to the more disturbing lifelessness of the body which corpse-like floats in its ointments, Bloom’s limp member no longer the anointed issue of life (the perpetrator of Abraham’s promised generations) but setting a disappointing end to the stream of life.

Through the flowery prose of an almost pre-Raphaelite description, Joyce toys with the codes of femininity, challenging a gendered depiction of Bloom’s body at the same time as he conveys Bloom’s

impotence. Joyce's depiction of Bloom is almost baroque in its motifs and Woolf's depiction of Clarissa Dalloway's "monastic attitude" may set her in opposition to Leopold Bloom, yet she similarly subverts a gendered representation of Clarissa's body when she describes her "narrow pea-stick figure" and "ridiculous little face, beaked like a bird's" (p. 9). Through motifs of frailness, rigidity and pallor we are given to understand that Clarissa is barren, too. In both cases, sterility serves as an opportunity to undermine traditional representations of the gendered body while transitioning from the anxiety of physical (re)production to the question of textual production and the body's role in the creative process.

Although Bloom takes pleasure in his body and in the material, sensual and perceptive texture of his existence, his image is potentially cadaverous. The "pale body reclined in [the water] at full, naked" hints at either life or death. In "Nausicaa" the dark waters of the mirror and the stuck stick are equally death-bearing omens whether in terms of aesthetic creation, reproduction or self-expression. It is perhaps for such reasons that Bloom's awareness of the body can also be interpreted as escapism, as for instance when Bloom becomes preoccupied with the soap he is carrying so as to avoid thinking of Boylan. Bloom's enjoyment of his body is in some way linked to his sacrificial acceptance of its image.

In Gerald Bruns terms, the body in the mirror is enigmatic because it expresses the fundamental duality of embodied being:

My face is not the locus of my self-identity: it is my shadow, a surplus me, an alter ego that exposes me to the world – to myself and to others in it [...] This explains why there is something cadaverous about me, since what I inhabit is the intransparent distance between myself and my shadow.<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 585.

Bruns draws a connection between Joyce's use of mirrors to express a phenomenological view of being which articulates the perceptive body and the body image and Emmanuel Levinas' essay "Reality and Its Shadow". The "picturesqueness" of a person is expressive of their duality: through the reflection of the body in the mirror being is always partly "a stranger to itself": "that which reveals itself in its truth, and, at the same time, it resembles itself, is its own image."<sup>271</sup>

### 3.4. Molly's Reflections

*Ulysses* revolves with some degree of obsession around the figure of Molly Bloom. Figuring Molly (out) is an obsession which the book encourages in its readers and critics. In 1992 Valérie Bénéjam demonstrated in her PhD dissertation "Cherchez la femme" that before the reader reaches the final episode, "Penelope", Molly's body has been pieced out of the preoccupations of Bloom, her husband's, consciousness and the small talk of the gossip-hungry inhabitants of Dublin. By "Penelope", if Joyce has succeeded as the extensive body of criticism on "Penelope" suggests, Molly has become the reader's own obsession.

As Bénéjam details, earlier criticism of "Penelope" tended to sustain the association between the feminine and the flesh which the portrayal of Molly invites, by casting Molly into the roles of the prostitute, the bearer of original sin, or the Earth-mother. For example, Robert M. Adams writes in 1968: "She is a slut, a sloven, and a voracious sexual animal as conceived by one of those medieval minds to whom the female can never be anything but a *saccum stercoris*" and Philip Toynbee in 1948 sees her as "the anima, the female image in the mind of the male, sensual, intuitive, submarine."<sup>272</sup> To

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<sup>271</sup> Emmanuel Levinas. "Reality and Its Shadow." In *Collected Philosophical Papers*. trans. Alphonso Lingis. Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers. 1987. p. 6.

<sup>272</sup> Robert M. Adams. *James Joyce: Common Sense and Beyond*. Oxford University Press. 1966. p. 166.

the possibility that Molly may represent the archetypal feminine as necessarily associated with the flesh, Joyce opposed the possibility that she may represent the flesh as “sane full amoral fertilizable untrustworthy engaging limited prudent indifferent *Weib*. ‘Ich bin das Fleisch das stets bejaht!’.”<sup>273</sup>

Over the past decades, the growing influence of phenomenology on our conception of “flesh” as including subjective perceptive experience has led critics to increasingly question Molly’s embodiment in “Penelope”, exploring the dimension of disembodiment within the episode. In many ways, “Penelope” prepares the reader for an exploration of interiority which may be found lacking. Molly, alone in the dark, lets her thoughts wander, replicating in our imaginations the stream of her menstrual flow, suggesting a close tie between physicality and interiority. Nonetheless, it can be argued that Molly is more figure than flesh. For example, in “Shape and Satisfaction” Christine Boheemen-Saaf argues that “Molly’s portrayal lacks [...] interiority – as in attention to her visible, rather than felt, menstruation”:

Molly’s corporeality seems lacking in interiority. She is not rendered from the inside – especially not when we compare her experience of menstruation to the extremely intimate sensations given to Leopold Bloom on the jakes. Instead, Molly is staged in the very moment when her femaleness makes itself visible as the flow of menstrual blood out of the body into the chamberpot. Molly’s sex is doubly exteriorized. It is made into a flow to be seen, not a sensation to be felt.<sup>274</sup>

Richard Pearce examines Laura Mulvey’s concept of “the male gaze” as it may apply to the “Penelope” episode, which leads to the idea that as an object of desire Molly has to contend with the denial of her subjectivity.

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Philip Toynbee. “A Study of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*.” *James Joyce: Two Decades of Criticism*, ed. Seon Givens. New York: Vanguard. 1948. p. 282.

<sup>273</sup> James Joyce. Letter to Frank Budgen 16 August 1921. In *Selected Letters of James Joyce*, ed. Richard Ellmann. New York: Viking Press. 1975. p. 285.

<sup>274</sup> Christine Van Boheemen-Saaf. “Shape and Satisfaction: The Figure of the Aged Penelope in Dickens and Joyce.” In *Papers on Joyce 10/11* (2004-2005). pp. 45-56. pp. 46-47.

Increasingly, critics have discarded the view that Molly may be the “real” body of the Ulyssean text to explore ways in which “Penelope” presents a “masquerade” or a “performance”. For Cheryl Herr in ““Penelope” as Period Piece” for instance “Penelope” projects a theatrical performance:

I can no longer find it in myself to grant the Molly of “Penelope” any reality-value whatsoever – not as Earth Mother, not as Celtic goddess, not as ordinary Dublin Hausfrau. None of the terms that describe Molly in the Joyce criticism with which I am familiar, from Tindall to, say, Unkeless, discovers the Molly that I detect. For me, “Penelope” projects simply an actor reading a script, a star singing an aria. If I had to guess what play the speech is in, I would say that it is a composite opera-problem play, a formal sign of Joyce’s times.<sup>275</sup>

In a way which resonates with Herr’s argument, Kimberly Devlin envisages “Penelope” in light of “the concept of the female masquerade, formulated initially by Joan Riviere.”<sup>276</sup> She draws a distinction between masquerading which, in Mary Ann Doane’s definition, would be “a hyperbolisation of the accoutrements of femininity” and what she terms “female mimicry”:

The mimic as performance artist denaturalizes ideology by questioning the terms in which she is produced and circulated as commodity, calling attention to the conventions that encode her as woman, representing representation and so unmasking through a conscious masking (mimicry) the masquerade of (woman’s) nature as nature, as what precedes cultural construction.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> Cheryl Herr. ““Penelope” as Period Piece.” In *James Joyce, Irish Writers in Their Time*, ed. Sean Latham. Dublin: Irish Academic Press. 2010. pp. 63-79. p. 69.

<sup>276</sup> Kimberly J. Devlin. “Pretending in “Penelope”: Masquerade, Mimicry, and Molly Bloom.” In *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*. Vol. 25, n°1 (Autumn 1991). pp. 71-89. p. 71.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.* p. 80.



In “Joyce’s Answer to Philosophy” Christine van Boheemen-Saaf questions Molly’s belonging to “the same ontological order as flesh”. Boheemen-Saaf quotes “Ithaca”’s description of Molly as “the counterattraction in the shape of a female” noting that “shape” is particularly fitting “because Molly Bloom is never a living, breathing, embodied woman. She is always already a shape, a figure, an image, a simulacrum.”<sup>278</sup>

For Valérie Bénéjam in “Molly Inside and Outside “Penelope”,” the “dissimulation and replacement of Molly’s body through synecdochic fragmentation and metonymic fetishism” is part of the strategy through which Molly’s body is constituted as an object of desire which the reader pursues.<sup>279</sup> In ““Penelope” Without the Body” Maud Ellmann explicitly “challenges the critical consensus that “Penelope” identifies woman with the body.” For Ellmann, the textuality of the episode presents Molly as a discourse, “a form of disembodiment, in which her flesh is rewoven into words.”<sup>280</sup> Sophie Corser has equally argued that the episode illustrates “an intertextual relationship between her role and a Barthesian understanding of textuality and reading”:

Molly provides some of the most self-referential lines of the novel – ‘I dont like books with a Molly in them’, ‘O Jamesy let me up out of this’, and ‘they all write about some woman in their poetry’ – and this, along with her misreading of ‘metempsychosis’, gives Molly an arguably metatextual position in the novel: as one who responds to texts (U, 707, 719, 725, and 62).<sup>281</sup>

I would argue that the way in which “Penelope” builds up this metatextual position depends not only on metatextual self-referentiality but also on the narratological framework of the episode which posits Molly’s body as the supreme referent for her – autobiographical – text and intertextual self-representations. Molly’s reflections are indeed a discursive *bric-à-brac* which reflects or mirrors back fetishized images of femininity which in part eclipse her subjective experiences of her body.

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<sup>278</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 41.

<sup>279</sup> Valérie Bénéjam. “Molly Inside and Outside “Penelope”.” In *Joyce, “Penelope” and the Body*, ed. Richard Brown. *European Studies*. eds. Fritz Senn & Christine Van Boheemen. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 2006. pp. 63-74. p. 65.

<sup>280</sup> Maud Ellmann. ““Penelope” Without the Body.” In *Joyce, “Penelope” and the Body*, ed. Richard Brown. *European Studies*. eds. Fritz Senn & Christine Van Boheemen. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 2006. pp. 97-108. p. 97.

<sup>281</sup> Sophie Corser. “Against Joyce: *Ulysses*, authorship and the authority of the reader.” Doctoral thesis, Goldsmiths, University of London. 2018. p. 142. <https://doi.org/10.25602/GOLD.00023673>

However, Molly's reflections, her meandering thoughts as she lays and then sits in the darkened room, although they roam from the present to the past, do not wander beyond the bounds of her own body. Molly's reflections (thoughts) are reflections (mirror-images) which take her body as their reference point.

Or rather, through the narrative self-referentiality of "Penelope", Molly's "absent" body is fictionalized as central to the impression of a "realistic" text at the same time as it points to the act of narrating the body. Reflections of the body in "Penelope" figure the representational loop through which narrative articulates embodiment and disembodiment. In other words, "Penelope" seems to fulfill the promise implicitly made to the reader of delivering the full view of Molly's body while exposing her body's fictionally constructed originality.

Molly's image is greatly determined by quasi photographic accounts of other women's appearances. She contrasts her own youthful appearance with that of Mrs. Riordan for instance, lamenting "God help the world if all the women were her sort down on bathingsuits and lownecks of course nobody wanted her to wear I suppose she was pious because no man would look at her twice I hope Ill never be like her" (*U* 18. 30617-19). She compares herself to "the smutty photo" Bloom has of a nun and comments "shes as much a nun as Im not" (*U* 18. 30631). Molly frequently refers to herself as "a woman" implying that she is a representative of the entire sex: "at last he made me cry of course a woman is so sensitive about everything" (*U* 18. 30792). Molly draws a connection between Bloom's courtship of her and one of his affairs, commenting that "he might imagine he was [in love] and make a declaration with his plabbery kind of a manner to her like he did to me" (*U* 18. 30811-12). Finally she systematically fantasizes her likeness to female icons such as the nymph in the print which hangs over her bed: "he said I could pose for a picture naked to some rich fellow in Holles street when he lost the job in Helys [...] would I be like that bath of the nymph with my hair down yes only shes younger or Im a little like that dirty bitch in that Spanish photo he has" (*U* 18. 31195-99).

In this way, Molly's body is conflated with memories of iconography and images of women which either contrast or reflect her own, so that our impression of her is assembled out of likenesses and dissimilarities. Posited as the central, referential female body in the book, her image is derived and assembled from sources external to her, emphasizing Molly's existence as a text which the reader plays a role in assembling and a body which the reader's body responds to. Just as visuals reflect back upon the fleshly figure of Molly, her body equally serves as a reference point for the entire narration which forms "Penelope".

Made up of a mixture of Molly's spontaneous memories along with visual projections of her body and adumbrations of her likes and dislikes, "Penelope" begins with Molly's assessing Bloom's behavior in light of her memory of past events: "Yes because he never did a thing like that before as ask to get his breakfast in bed with a couple of eggs since the *City Arms* hotel" (*U* 18. 30609-10). The epistemological framework of "Penelope" is Molly's personal experience: "he never did a thing like that before." In "Penelope" knowledge is almost solely knowledge of events and their affective outcome: "theres nothing like a kiss long and hot down to your soul" declares Molly, based on prior personal experience (*U* 18. 30718-9). Molly's body thus forms the web out of which the narrative is spun, articulating it at the same time as the point of origin of fiction and fact.

"Penelope" seems to offer the reader a glimpse at Molly through the representation of a strictly bounded empirical reality – a personal history of sorts. Multiple references to Molly's physical intimacy fit the reality test and increase the impression of finding an answer to the enigma that is Molly. However, in "Penelope" Molly the "original" is pitted against the notion of Molly the "copy", duplicating her semblances, defining herself by contrast. The absolute self-referentiality of the chapter – all elements of the narration refer back to Molly's embodied experience, whether past or present – lends the impression that Molly is a mysterious creative force who is granted the ability for auto-genesis which other authorly figures such as Stephen Dedalus are denied.

The mimetic aspects of “Penelope” are thus closely bound to the representation of a self-referential narration which seems authorly and which draws attention to Molly’s performance or acts of spontaneous self-composition. Michael Boyd explains that self-referential fiction underscores “that the relationship between reality and its representation in fictional discourse is problematic.” In this way, he argues, it “seeks to examine the act of writing itself”.<sup>282</sup> Molly’s figures are a fountain of writerly self-recreation which recalls the fact that Joyce first designed “Penelope” as a series of letters, in which Molly would hold the pen. Molly, as opposed to Stephen, Bloom or Gerty, seems entirely in control of her narrative, especially as she is given the final word in an episode in which she is the sole focalizer.

The pen in “Penelope” describes acts of mimicry, yet it may also be said to mimic the self-referentiality of the entire textual operation which is *Ulysses*, drawing attention to Molly’s role in the process of creating herself through narratives of the body which piece together miscellaneous images, while equally pointing to the body of the work of fiction. As Dianne Guenin-Lelle notes in “Paradigm and Deviation” this aspect of self-referentiality is what Paul Ricoeur draws attention to in *Time and Narrative* as born of a deviation of the process of mimesis:

Essentially, what we have is mimesis of the process of literary creation, which can be opposed to the more traditional “mimesis of product,” or representation of empirical reality”.<sup>283</sup>

The endless duplication of the image of the body presents Molly’s body as part of a ring of insatiable desires. In “Molly Bloom’s Ad Language and Goods Behavior” Joseph Heiningier thus interprets the manufacturing of self-images in “Penelope” as part of the address of commodity culture. In his words,

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<sup>282</sup> Michael Boyd. *The Reflexive Novel: Fiction as Critique*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press. 1983. p. 7.

<sup>283</sup> Dianne Guenin-Lelle. “Paradigm and Deviation: The Role of *Vraisemblance* and Self-Referentiality in the Comic Novel.” In *Cahiers de la société d’études pluridisciplinaires du dix-septième siècle français*. vol. III, 1, ed. Francis Assaf. 1989. pp. 103-119. p. 104.

Molly “assimilates the images of women offered by the commodity system and tries to transform herself by its magic, rather than maintaining her body’s singularity and autonomy.”<sup>284</sup>

One might question whether Molly’s body truly has either singularity or autonomy as Joyce’s representation of embodiment in *Ulysses* goes against the idea of the body’s integrity entirely and opposes mimetic ideals pertaining to the “natural” body. The impression of externality which critics have noted in the chapter may, on the contrary, result from Molly’s derivative construction of her self-image. Although every thought is tied to her bodily existence, this invites reification through the internalization of an external cultural discourse. As Heininger notes: “in her thoughts of fashionable dresses, corsets, and “anti-fat” pills, Molly partakes in this culture’s symbolic imaging of the middle-class woman’s body as visible public property.”<sup>285</sup> Molly is so much on display that despite the many sexual acts she remembers or fantasizes, the reader continues throughout “Penelope” to search for the manifestation of her private self, for a moment in which she might express a vulnerability and an intimacy of emotion akin to that which characterizes Woolf’s female protagonist Clarissa Dalloway.

Reduplication and performance enhance Molly’s mystery by defeating the concept of an “original” voice and a “natural” body as opposed to the hearsay, gossip, metonymy and fetishism of the previous chapters, which finding Molly in “Penelope” would resolve. Kimberly Devlin notes that the externality of the chapter invests all aspects of Molly’s expression:

In Molly’s thoughts, identity is inextricably linked to signifiers in a variety of forms: appellative (names, or rather “parts” in the *dramatis personae*), verbal (statements, or rather “lines”), sartorial (clothing, or rather “costumes”), proprietorial (possessions, or rather “props”), and gestural (actions, or rather “poses,” stage-directed “stances”).<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> Joseph Heininger. “Molly Bloom’s Ad Language and Goods Behavior.” In *James Joyce, Irish Writers in their Time*, ed. Sean Latham. Dublin: Irish Academic Press. 2010. pp. 155-173. p. 165.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.* p. 161.

<sup>286</sup> Kimberly J. Devlin. “Pretending in “Penelope”: Masquerade, Mimicry, and Molly Bloom.” In *James Joyce, Irish Writers in their Time*, ed. Sean Latham. Dublin: Irish Academic Press. 2010. pp. 80-102. p. 81.

In this sense, there would be little distance between Molly's stage presence and the staged pretense which Devlin identifies as central to "Penelope". In the close association between "Penelope" and the "pen", the instrument of authorship, Joyce barely disguises the tension in the episode between intimacy and expression. One might think again of Joyce's first conception of the episode as a series of letters. The epistolary form is one which contains the paradox of being a very intimate form of writing, and being writing nonetheless, which is the communication of private thoughts to an addressee. Letter-writing entails the expression of a kind of self-defeating intimacy, a performed privacy.

The sense of intimacy which "Penelope" constructs, through the impression the reader may have of directly listening to Molly's private thoughts, is qualified by the variegated nature of the voice in the episode. Devlin notes for instance that:

[...] Molly's discourse posits a listener, but a listener, I would add, who is expected to hear her speaking internally her own listening. The ongoing parodic caricatures of others' voices rupture the ostensible flow of her thoughts, further rendering inaccurate the concept of a "monologue" or "soliloquy": her playful and various mimic vocalities are better described as a "polylogue" or "polyloquy".<sup>287</sup>

It might be necessary to conceive of Molly's penmanship as one which is incapable of fully escaping the male gaze and its control of textual form. In many ways, the punctuation and layout of "Penelope" notwithstanding, its writing recalls the mimetic portrayal of naturalistic fiction.

In "How Does Molly Bloom Look Through the Male Gaze?" Richard Pearce draws a connection between images of the body in "Penelope" and "traditional realistic fiction" in which "the male gaze is inscribed in the controlling and unifying point of view, in the education of writers, in the publishing industry, in advertising and the modes of distribution, and in the way people are taught to

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<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.* p. 95.

read.”<sup>288</sup> He contends that Molly deals with the othering of the male gaze, at times confirming her own reification and at times resisting and exposing it through cunning devices. Pearce quotes Mary Russo to argue that Molly uses her stupidity as a form of resistance to the repressions which surround the authoritative discourses of the body in Dublin society: “Molly as fool exposes the repressions fostered by priests, doctors, British colonizers, popular culture, and a generally patriarchal society.”<sup>289</sup>

In “The Female Body, Technology, and Memory in “Penelope,”” Ewa Ziarek argues that “Penelope” contrasts two rhetorics of the female body: “the pronounced rhetoric of organicism” which is linked to “the private space” and “the equally compelling, though much less frequently discussed, rhetoric of mechanical reproduction” associated with the public space.” For Ziarek “Penelope” expresses the opposition between the public and private “discursive position[s] of the female body.”<sup>290</sup>

“Penelope” writes a polymorphic discourse of the female body which builds upon a split between self-referential body and self-referential text to contrast the public with the intimate in a nostalgic encounter. For Ziarek, the eye of memory is opposed to the mechanizing operations of technology, and it is through the “union of eroticism and memory” that hope for “the possibility of an authentic subjective experience – experience which seems to be increasingly endangered in the technologized public sphere” is renewed.<sup>291</sup> Ziarek sees this as an explanation for the soothing hopefulness of the kiss between Molly and Bloom which concludes *Ulysses* and remedies some of the anxieties which haunt Bloom’s and Stephen’s experience of paternal relations:

Because of the materiality of the body and its possible link to natural reproduction, and because of the historical exclusion of women from the public sphere, female sexuality

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<sup>288</sup> Richard Pearce. “How Does Molly Bloom Look Through the Male Gaze?” In *James Joyce, Irish Writers in their Time*, ed. Sean Latham. Dublin: Irish Academic Press. 2010. pp. 40-60. pp. 43-45.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.* qtd. p. 55.

<sup>290</sup> Ewa Ziarek. “The Female Body, Technology, and Memory in “Penelope.”” In *James Joyce’s Ulysses: A Casebook*, ed. Derek Attridge. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2004. pp. 103-128. p. 103.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.* p. 105.

seems to limit the negative effects of technology and to promise the epistemic security of origins.<sup>292</sup>

*Ulysses* builds up Molly's iconicity persistently until "Penelope" in which Molly engulfs the reader in a staggering multiplicity of self-projections. Yet, "Penelope" performs a progressive departure from the duplication of poses which make up the brunt of Molly's self-fashioning. For this reason I would disagree with Van Boheemen-Saaf's claim that "Molly's sex is [...] made into a flow to be seen, not a sensation to be felt." On the simplest level, I think, "Penelope" seeks to draw the reader from an apprehension of the body as "a flow to be seen" to the perception of "a sensation to be felt." This transition is operated by Molly's "yes", which contrasts her voice with her image, resulting in a musical progression which floods out the visual. This is a strategy which Woolf employs consistently throughout *Mrs. Dalloway* to increase the reader's awareness of the body and which is central to her portrayal of the body beyond the scope of the visual.

As with Clarissa's sensorial recollections, such as the "kiss of the wave", the increasing prominence of the "yes" also suspends Molly's self-awareness and the reader's consciousness of it. The moment of the "yes" is a moment of absorption in the sensual existence of the body which may foreground a form of self-abandon which is a negation of the episode's prior externalizing. Molly's memories of Gibraltar show a focus on sensory experience which progressively expands and drowns out her prior display. Memory promises the resurgence of intimacy and through it a language of the body free from reification and reproduction.

As Ziarek notes, for this reason "the critics' defense of Molly's fidelity is often intertwined with admiration for her memory, which, according to Hayman, preserves both the texture of the experience" and the unity of time as "one continuous erotic present".<sup>293</sup> Richard Ellmann has likened

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<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.* p. 110.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.* p. 113. Ziarek's reference is to David Hayman's "The Empirical Molly". In *Approaches to Ulysses: Ten Essays*, ed. Thomas F. Staley & Bernard Benstock. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press. 1970. pp. 103-35.



the memory of the kiss shared on Howth Hill to the emergence of a paradise lost which invests *Ulysses* with a final, irrepressible yearning for the body which is not the image. Paradoxically, it is the fragmentation of the body, its lack of unity and its derivative dimension in the work, which results in the reader's aspiration to connect to this body affectively. In this nostalgic and salutary moment, the body is recast and foregrounded as the realm of inter-subjective experience. Drawing upon Ellmann's insight, Maria Tymoczko has researched the links between depictions of Gibraltar in "Penelope" and elsewhere and references to the Irish Otherworld.<sup>294</sup>

Tymoczko locates the main features of the Celtic underworld in "early Irish voyage tales including Immram Brain, "The Voyage of Bran", as well as other narratives such as Serglige Con Culainn, "The Sickbed of CuChulainn"" and defines them as follows:

The Irish otherworld is a land of youth in which people neither die nor wither. There is no sickness. The otherworld is a land of warmth and light where there are exotic colours and plants; blossoms coexist with fruit. It is a place of beauty, abounding in poetry and music. There is no work; it is a land of feasting and play. There is a limitless supply of food and drink [...] the otherworld is characterized primarily by peace and lack of conflict. The otherworld is a sensual land, where sexuality is sinless and innocent. It is a land of women [that] is frequently reached by a sea voyage. Once left behind, it is difficult to regain.<sup>295</sup>

As T.S. Eliot's famous misreading of *Ulysses* suggests, it would be unwise to set too much store by mythical readings of *Ulysses*, however there is a felicity, a timelessness and a freedom about Molly's memories which elevates the body through memory to a paradisiac place which suspends the threat of time. Tymoczko compares the "timelessness of Molly's thought" to "the time of the gods" which

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<sup>294</sup> Maria Tymoczko. "Molly's Gibraltar and the Morphology of the Irish Otherworld." In *Irish University Review*. vol. 20. no. 2 (Autumn). 1990. pp. 264-81. Edinburgh University Press.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 265-66.

“constitutes a reversion to “grand temps” as it were, where past, present, future are all equally accessible.”<sup>296</sup>

Through the intermingling of erotic sensations both present and past, Molly’s memories of Gibraltar are not subordinated to a present tense in which she would be using them to trigger her own sexual desire. The paradise lost mingles with an erotic present, progressively looming to the fore until it occupies the whole of space and time and elevates the body beyond the gaze which, turned inwards, communicates its intimacy.

Although purposing to deal with surfaces, with its insistence on performance, its ostentatious repetition of an autobiographical “I”, its graphic figures (“O”), “Penelope” stages a layering of the self which defeats the notion of a unified body and suggests the reader’s progressive access to an emotional sphere of intimate connection which is explicitly signaled through the increased repetition of “yes”. One might note the *mise en abyme* which Joyce operates through Molly’s remembrances in the final passage of “Penelope”: in thinking of Bloom’s proposal to her, Molly thinks of all the thoughts she had been thinking at the time, yet never expressed: “he asked me to say yes and I wouldn’t answer first only looked out over the sea and the sky I was thinking of so many things he didnt know” (*U* 18. 32269-71).

What follows is a staggering yet lyrical listing of Molly’s reflections contained in the few instants Molly must have taken to give her response. Molly’s thoughts mingle other memories such as romanticized glimpses of life in Gibraltar with “the poor donkeys slipping half asleep and the vague fellows in the cloaks asleep in the shade on the steps and the big wheels of the carts of the bulls and the old castle thousands of years old yes and those handsome Moors all in white and turbans like kings asking you to sit down,” memories of her lover and “how he kissed me under the Moorish wall”, and poetic landscapes : “the night we missed the boat at Algeciras the watchman going about serene with

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<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.* p. 273.

his lamp and O that awful deepdown torrent O and the sea the sea crimson sometimes like fire and the glorious sunsets and the figtrees in the Alameda gardens yes.”

The many natural elements which enter Molly’s thoughts as she looks “over the sea and the sky” lend a paradisiacal quality to the passage: “and the rosegardens and the jessamine and geraniums and cactuses and Gibraltar as a girl where I was a Flower of the mountain yes when I put the rose in my hair” (*U* 18. 32290-92). Turned inward, the gaze becomes synonymous with an inner voice which channels both Molly’s and Bloom’s memories of her past self. In the highly subjective framework of “Penelope”, Molly escapes the predominance of the individualizing “I”, in a moment of insight which elevates the gaze.

Yet, the exhaustive listing of Molly’s memories in this passage draws attraction to her rewriting of her past experiences and highlights her role in the composition. Equally notable is the syntactic pattern of the passage, which consists of a lengthy enumeration of noun groups connected by “and”. This accumulative syntax points to a creative process of auto-genesis. Through such a framing device, Joyce foregrounds both the fictional nature of this account and frames memory as a simultaneous resurgence of authentic emotion and as an act of rewriting which fictionalizes the body as its “natural” or empirical referent. The final “yes” thus carves out a space of intimacy which enfolds the book in a timeless affirmation of the body which re-invests the body of the reader through its re-written reflections of the sexual and the textual.

### III. THE BODY BEYOND BOUNDS

In this chapter, I explore the shifting boundaries of the body in *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway*, arguing that both authors use the trope of walking in the city to articulate an overlap between image, flesh and text. The modalities through which they explore the image of the body show a common interest in realizing the body beyond its pictorial codes, while expressing different relations to materiality and diverging conceptions of the link between materiality and the self. This chapter demonstrates that both works address the role of pictorial conventions in dematerializing the body and endeavour to retrieve the body's material dimension through a process of "texturing" language and an emphasis on sonic materiality.

In both cases, fragmentation is central in articulating a poetics of intimacy which paradoxically contests the objectification of the body which the fragment could have initiated. The fragmentation which characterizes the representation of the body in *Ulysses* and *Mrs. Dalloway* resonates with aesthetic theories prevalent in the plastic arts and has been read as a sign of the modernity of these works as well as of their intertextual dimensions.<sup>297</sup> What I want to underline through an introductory

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<sup>297</sup> The connections between both authors and early twentieth-century arts are multiple and profound. Where Woolf is concerned, through Bloomsbury or through her relationship with her sister, the artist Vanessa Bell, the author had many close connections to artists and contemporary art theorists such as Roger Fry, Duncan Grant or Frederick Etchells. In "Virginia Woolf and visual culture" Maggie Humm notes "there are profound associations between the aesthetic ideas of the early decades of the twentieth century and Woolf's writings. Woolf inhabited an aesthetic world in which her friends, her milieu, and art historians and philosophers were all focusing in particular on issues of perception and consciousness." The details of such affiliations are too intricate to develop here, and I am not so much interested in eliciting a particular influence over Woolf's work as in shedding light on the aesthetic dimension of her poetics and the interplay between dematerializing and materializing impulses in portraying the triangulation of body, image and text. For further reading see: Magie Humm. "Virginia Woolf and visual culture." In *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2010. pp. 214-231. Maggie Humm (ed). *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 2010. *Modernist Women and Visual Cultures: Virginia Woolf, Vanessa Bell, Photography and Cinema*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 2002. Jane Goldman. *The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf: Modernism, Post-Impressionism and the Politics of the Visual*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1998. Richard Morphet. "Image and Theme in Bloomsbury Art." In *The Art of Bloomsbury*. London: Tate. 1999. Diana Gillespie and Leslie Hankins (eds). *Virginia Woolf and the Arts: Selected Papers from the Sixth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf*. New York: Pace University Press. 1997.

Although Woolf's writings and personal relations evidence an equal interest in music as well as the visual arts, Joyce's interest in music and musical talent has overshadowed his involvement with the pictorial arts. Frank Budgen famously claimed Joyce was ignorant of the innovations of his time in the visual arts. Critics have nonetheless contested this claim, showing that there are close connections between Joyce's poetics and futurist, cubist, or Dada aesthetics. In this chapter I begin with discussions of aesthetic theory in the visual arts because I believe that Joyce's and Woolf's poetics

foray into art theory is a broader shift in the representation of the body: dematerializing the body as a codified object of representation in order to portray matter as flesh. Looking at the thingness of bodies and the corporeality of objects, I posit the hypothesis that the body is represented in the overlap and expressed by the enigmatic relationship between body and object, sense and meaning, which finds a mode of expression in the intersection between matter and text. In this sense, one might see the body in the text as a dialectic principle, the expression of an ongoing, never-ending exchange, an in-betweenness which courses from reader to text, text to flesh, and subject to object.

## 1. Blurred (Out)lines

### 1.1. Three Theories around the Erasure of the Outline: Rilke and Rodin, Merleau-Ponty and Cézanne, Pater and the Modern Aesthetic

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology delves into the interrelation between text, image and flesh. In the preface to the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty's early work, the philosopher established a connection between the phenomenologist's attempt to describe human experience and that of writers and painters. Merleau-Ponty's first essay on painting, "Cézanne's Doubt", published in *Fontaine* in 1945, addresses the painter's innovative attempts to represent perceptive experience. In this essay, Merleau-Ponty focuses on Cézanne's departure from the geometrical perspectives and

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confront the visual and the sonic in an endeavour to touch upon materiality. For further discussions of Joyce and the arts see Emma-Louise Silva, Sam Slote & Dirk Van Hulle (eds). *James Joyce and the arts*. Leiden; Boston: Brill Rodopi. 2020. Series: European Joyce Studies. Archie K. Loss. "Joyce's Use of Collage in "Aeolus"." In *Journal of Modern Literature*. vol. 9, no. 2 (May 1982). pp. 175-182. Jo-Anna Isaak. "James Joyce and the Cubist Esthetic." In *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal*. vol. 14, no. 1 (Winter 1981). pp. 61-90. Robert K. Weninger. "Joyce, DADA & Co.: Modernist ConInfluences." In *The German Joyce*. Gainesville: The University Press of Florida. 2012.

outline which had dominated Western painting since the Renaissance and which had become an essential component of realist pictorial representation.<sup>298</sup>

In *Sens et non-sens*, Merleau-Ponty notes, for instance, that Emile Bernard had taken issue with Cézanne's method. Cézanne had left aside conventional lines and proportions, juxtaposing planes of pure colour in an architecture which Bernard labelled "Cézanne's suicide: aiming for reality while denying himself the means to attain it [...], demand[ing] of Cézanne a more "intellectual" approach to painting in terms of linear perspective, composition, and distribution of light and shadows."<sup>299</sup> The same criticism could have been aimed at the groundbreaking novels that were *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway*, which combine the naturalistic elements of a new realism which endeavoured to render perceptive experience with the drive to shatter the conventions of mimetic representation.

Contrary to Bernard's claim, for Merleau-Ponty, Cézanne's disregard of linear perspective allowed him to better approximate the sensible world in his paintings. For Merleau-Ponty the geometrical line serves as a prime example of an intellectualist reduction of our sensual apprehension of the world; it is one of the ideological constructs which deny the body's relation to the sensible world of objects. The outline reconstitutes the object as separate and divested of its emotional tonality in a reduction which denies the relation to the perceiver which constitutes it.

For Merleau-Ponty, Cézanne's technique demonstrated the artist's ability to carry further the impressionist's study of appearances and transient moments of perception. The philosopher recognized the ability of impressionist technique to render an atmosphere by juxtaposing hues which added to the vibrancy of a scene; however, to his mind, the impressionists did so by enhancing the atmosphere

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<sup>298</sup> Before Merleau-Ponty, the art critic Roger Fry – a close friend of Virginia Woolf – had been the first British art critic to publish a study of Cézanne's work, which is still influential today. *Cézanne: A Study of His Development* (1927) was initially published in French in 1926 in *L'Amour de l'art* and then released in English two years after the publication of *Mrs. Dalloway*.

<sup>299</sup> Galen A. Johnson. "Phenomenology and Painting: "Cézanne's Doubt"." In *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting* ed. Galen A. Johnson, trans. editor Michael B. Smith. p. 11

while erasing the depth and weight (“*pesanteur*”) of the object. Cézanne’s work marked a departure from impressionism by restoring the solidity of matter, and the pull between objecthood and the perceiving subject. He writes:

La suppression des contours précis dans certains cas, la priorité de la couleur sur le dessin n’auront évidemment pas le même sens chez Cézanne et dans l’impressionnisme. L’objet n’est plus couvert de reflets, perdu dans ses rapports à l’air et aux autres objets, il est comme éclairé sourdement de l’intérieur, la lumière émane de lui, et il en résulte une impression de solidité et de matérialité.<sup>300</sup>

In *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader*, Galen Johnson explains that for Merleau-Ponty the hierarchical value attributed to the outline in art results in a loss of value for the object and the reduction of sight to an intellectual process isolated from the other senses. For instance, the prominence of the outline and conventional lines of perspective entail the devaluing of the object’s sensible properties, such as color, which are considered as “secondary qualities”:

Color became the unique feature of Cézanne’s fusion of self and world, for pigment is both a bit of nature and a visual sensation, therefore the element of construction that could bind object and sensation. Point, line, plane, and ratio are mathematical properties and they have been given the place of first importance in modern Western philosophy, science, and art, based on their epistemic repeatability and reliability. This prestige was revived from Plato by Leonardo, Galileo, and Descartes, and the mathematical properties were named “primary qualities” by John Locke.<sup>301</sup>

In *Sens et non-sens* Merleau-Ponty stresses the artificiality of outlining an object in painting, taking the example of Cézanne’s adoption of planes of color. The latter revolutionized the definition

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<sup>300</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty. “Le doute de Cézanne.” In *Sens et non-sens*. Paris: éditions Gallimard. Coll. Bibliothèque de Philosophie. 1996. p. 17.

<sup>301</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 12.

of the object in pictorial representation. More significantly, he draws a parallel between such conventions, the intellectual operation through which objects are perceived as having a finite form, and the representation of selfhood, objecthood and identity. Linear perspective consolidated the epistemological function of the gaze, indicating that the visible object world is essentially knowable through its observation. Blurring the outline implies retrieving a sense of epistemological instability, the sense of an unknowable limit which permeates sense perception. He writes:

De la même façon le contour des objets, conçu comme une ligne qui les cerne, n'appartient pas au monde visible, mais à la géométrie. Si l'on marque d'un trait le contour d'une pomme on en fait une chose, alors qu'il est la limite idéale vers laquelle les côtés de la pomme fuient en profondeur. Ne marquer aucun contour, ce serait enlever aux objets leur identité. En marquer un seul, ce serait sacrifier la profondeur, c'est-à-dire la dimension qui nous donne la chose, non comme étalée devant nous, mais comme pleine de réserves et comme une réalité inépuisable.<sup>302</sup>

For Merleau-Ponty, the outline is an artifice which flattens out the angles of identity so that the object is replaced by a normative conception of it, a visual model which subsumes its unknowable qualities. Perhaps the archetypal example of this in art is the conflation between the outline of the body, which allows the viewer to envisage it as a finite object, and the ideal of physical integrity underlying the body beautiful aesthetic. The idea that a finite physical form determines the contours of the body legitimizes its individuating function.

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<sup>302</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 25.



In Rainer Maria Rilke's notes on the sculptor Auguste Rodin, a compilation of conferences and letters, the German poet reflects on his encounters with Rodin's work. The poet's thoughts resonate with Merleau-Ponty's reflections on Cézanne and the outline of the body as an object of representation. Rilke's comments on Rodin read as a series of poetic descriptions and more philosophical aesthetic considerations arising from his contemplations of Rodin's bodies of stone. Rilke shared his reactions to Rodin's unfinished sculptures in a letter to his sister Clara Rilke in which he detailed his discovery of the 1900 exhibition of Rodin's work at the Alma Pavilion in Paris. Rodin had conceived of this exhibition as a retrospective view of his art parallel to the Universal Exhibition in which he aimed to show his work in all its diverse forms.

Rilke describes this presentation of Rodin's work as an overwhelming display of body parts which, although they are disconnected fragments, constitute a work of art with an overarching unity:

...everything, everything... Nothing but fragments, side by side, for meters on end. Nudes the size of my hand, others larger, nothing but fragments, barely a single nude fully formed: often a piece of arm, a piece of leg randomly presented, side by side, and just nearby, the trunk which belongs to them. [...] And yet, the better one looks, the more deeply one feels that all of this would be less whole if each figure were. Each piece of debris has such an exceptional and striking coherence, each is so indubitable and stands so fully on its own that one forgets that they are but fragments, and often fragments of different bodies entirely, which are so passionately gathered here.<sup>303</sup>

Rilke goes on to reflect that considering the body as a whole is not the business of the artist, but rather that of the scientist. The artist, says Rilke, should be concerned with creating new relations out of fragments of the body. The artist crystallizes relations between parts of the sensible world which can be considered as more timeless and legitimate entities.

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<sup>303</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke. "Lettre à Clara Rilke du 2 septembre 1902." In *Œuvres 3 (Correspondance)*. Paris: Seuil. 1976. p. 25. (my translation)

This is possibly why in his appraisal of Rodin's "La méditation ou la voix intérieure" Rilke rejects the notion that a body without limbs is not perfect. For Rilke, such a holistic view of the body relies on a dogmatic assumption. It relies on reducing the body to its visual representation: a contoured, individuated, and pre-determined form. In this sense, Rilke's reception of Rodin's fragmented stone bodies echoes Merleau-Ponty's reflections on Cézanne's rejection of the outline and conventional geometric perspectives. It also echoes modernist preoccupations with formal innovations which aim to undo systematic categorizations and allows us to consider Joyce's and Woolf's poetics of fragmentation as a means of formulating new relations between the senses as well as between flesh and text.

Rilke intuitively conceives of the body in art as a complex organism which constantly reforms its boundaries to account for its interrelation with other sensible bodies:

Une main qui se pose sur l'épaule ou la cuisse d'un autre corps n'appartient plus tout à fait à celui d'où elle est venue : elle et l'objet qu'elle touche ou empoigne forment ensemble une nouvelle chose, une chose de plus qui n'a pas de nom et n'appartient à personne ; et il est question à présent de cette chose particulière et qui a ses limites définies.<sup>304</sup>

For Rilke the artist's ability to blur the lines between individual bodies is the main condition for the advent of the body in art. The artist should challenge the integrity of the body as a pre-conceived form.

Rilke speaks of the artist's perception of the body in its particular relations to the sensible, at a specific moment in space and time, with a specific emotional and affective value, as a vibration. Rilke's concept of vibration seeks to blur the boundaries between the perceiver and the perceived, the artist and the body in art, by underscoring the creative moment as an event in which both artist and object are relatively co-constituted. Rilke's vibration may be understood as conceptualizing a renewed

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<sup>304</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke. "Auguste Rodin." In *Œuvres I (Prose)*. Paris: Seuil. 1966. p. 407.

interest in perception: it implies that the body should be experienced through art as institutive of a particular relation between subject and object.

Seen from the perspective of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, Cézanne's interest in color and form and Rilke's meditations on Rodin's fragmented sculptures share a phenomenological basis which may inform the aesthetic context of the metonymic representations of the body and the shift from outline to texture in *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway*.<sup>305</sup> It can be understood as the product of a post-industrial and post-war aesthetic shift but also as a means of instituting a particular relation between reader and text. Merleau-Ponty through Cézanne and Rilke through Rodin advocate for an erasure of the outline which consolidates the position of the body in art as both object and abstraction.

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<sup>305</sup> Arguably, the modernist aesthetic which is addressed here is informed by the inflection of phenomenology on aesthetic theories in the plastic arts which paved the way for the triangulation of art, flesh and text. Erwin Panofsky's essay "Die Perspektive als symbolische Form" (1927) discusses the role of linear perspective in Renaissance painting and argues that it does not reproduce an optical reality but rather should be seen as a cultural convention. See Erwin Panofsky. *Perspective as Symbolic Form*. Christopher E. Wood (trans). New York: Zone. 2002. Another seminal essay situating the question of the role of the graphic arts in the modernist Bloomsbury aesthetic is Roger Fry's "An Essay in Aesthetics," first published in *New Quarterly*, London in 1909, which discusses the role of sense perception in the affective response which is produced by the work of art. Carole Bourne-Taylor and Ariane Milden's collection of essays, *Phenomenology, Modernism and Beyond*, acknowledges the role of "phenomenology as an important clue to the nature of the modernist aesthetic project." Carole Bourne-Taylor & Ariane Mildenberg (eds). *Phenomenology, Modernism and Beyond*. Bern: Peter Lang. 2010. For a discussion of the dialectics between modernist poetics and the visual arts see Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei "The Aesthetic and the Poetic Image: Beyond the Ekphrastic Divide with Rilke and Cézanne." In *Philosophy Today*, vol. 47 (January 2003). For further studies considering the role of the visual arts and intermediality in the literary modernist aesthetic see also Cara L. Lewis. *Dynamic Form: How Intermediality Made Modernism*. Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press. 2020. Daniel Albright. *Untwisting the Serpent: Modernism in Music, Literature and Other Arts*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2000. Murray Roston. *Modernist Patterns: in Literature and the Visual Arts*. Basingstoke; London: Macmillan Press Ltd. 2000. Daniel R. Schwarz. *Reconfiguring Modernism: Explorations in the Relationship Between Modern Art and Modern Literature*. New York: St Martin's Press. 1997. Many critics further recognize the role of twentieth-century technologies and low culture in defining the modernist aesthetic, particularly the dialectics between image and text. See Karen Jacobs. *The Eye's Mind: Literary Modernism and Visual Culture*. New York: Cornell University Press: 2001. Laura Marcus "Modernism and Visual Culture." In *A Handbook of Modernism Studies*, ed Jean-Michel Rabaté. John Wiley & Sons Limited. 2013. Sara Danus. *The Senses of Modernism: Technology, Perception, and Aesthetics*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press. 2002.

Compared to the kind of metonymic and synecdochic insistence on body parts one encounters in *Ulysses*, fragmentation may seem an inadequate term to convey Woolf's own reworking of the outline of the body. The use of synecdoche to portray bodies in *Ulysses* emphasizes the scopophilia which surrounds the body and its erotic charge in this novel, whereas in *Mrs Dalloway* the erotic charge of the body is distinguished from its visual appeal through the same distinction which Woolf draws between sight and vision. Although both Joyce and Woolf undermine the hegemony of the image in fictional portrayals of the body, Joyce does so by using fragmentation to radically foreground the body's subjection to forms of perception.

In "Circe", "Sirens", "Lotus Eaters", "Calypso", "Nausicaa", or "Penelope", Joyce shows that it is the hallmark of the modern subject to be caught up in the production of bodies as objects of consumption to the extent that the objectification of the body is not just a source of pain but also a primary source of pleasure. Throughout *Ulysses* Joyce simultaneously derides and sustains a view of the body as an erotically charged object. While increasing the erotic dimension of the body, fragmentation paradoxically pushes to the fore the synaesthetic dimension of physicality and the body's recirculation in discourse.

In *Mrs Dalloway* Woolf challenges the visibility of the body more directly. The reader of *Mrs Dalloway* is invited to question the objectification of bodies first through the evanescence of the material world, and secondly through the oppressive force of the social gaze. Woolf conflates the reality of moments of being with a form of seeing without sight, in which the visual does not portray what a character sees but rather images a connection between what they sense or feel and the store of collective experience. Woolf replaces any notion of outline to focus on where the art of narrative intersects with sense perception through texture, if texture can be comprehended as the "feel, appearance, or consistency of a surface or a substance," the "tactile quality of a work of art" or even the "quality created by the combination of the different elements in a work of music or literature" (*OED*).

The ostentatious textuality of *Mrs Dalloway* could be considered alongside a Paterian relativism to the extent that it gives epistemological value to “the world of form, colour, and passion.”<sup>306</sup> In an 1865 essay on Coleridge, Pater distinguished between “modern thought” and “ancient” by arguing that modern thought sought “the cultivation of the “relative” spirit in place of the “absolute”: “ancient philosophy sought to arrest every object in an eternal outline, to fix thought in a necessary formula, and the varieties of life in a classification by “kinds,” or genera.”

Pater defined his relative spirit as a “faculty for truth” which resonates with the search for a moment of truth which drives *Mrs Dalloway*. Pondering Pater’s definition of the *modus operandum* of the relative spirit as a renewed interest in “[i]nstant, intuition, and sense,” one is struck by the extent to which this principle could be considered to inflect Clarissa Dalloway’s wandering thoughts, when McGrath writes:

[...] by dwelling constantly on the more fugitive conditions or circumstances of things, breaking through a thousand rough and brutal classifications, and giving elasticity to inflexible principles, begets an intellectual finesse, of which the ethical result is a delicate and tender justness in the criticism of human life.<sup>307</sup>

As McGrath points out, Pater revised his definition of the relative spirit in the “Conclusion” to *The Renaissance*. The terms in which Pater describes an increased interest in impressions and senses are significant, as here too the “transition from an outer world to an inner world” which McGrath mentions parallels the erasure of the outline of the body as a conceptualized physical form. In Pater’s words:

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<sup>306</sup> Qtd in F.C. McGrath. *The Sensible Spirit: Walter Pater and the Modernist Paradigm*. Gainesville: University of South Florida Press. 1986. p. 29.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*

that clear, perpetual outline of face and limb is but an image of ours, under which we group them – a design in a web, the actual threads of which pass beyond it ... but the concurrence renewed from moment to moment, of forces parting sooner or later on their ways.<sup>308</sup>

In his “Conclusion”, however, one can see how the classical outline which delimits the body in the “absolute” ideal is replaced by the equally constraining contours of a solipsistic subjective consciousness. Pater describes this radical subjectivity as a contraction, a term which Woolf also uses in *Mrs Dalloway* to express the constraint of collecting and composing one’s sense of self into an image to face society: “how many million times she had seen her face, and always with the same imperceptible contraction! She pursed her lips when she looked in the glass. It was to give her face point” (p. 31). In his “Conclusion” personality is the pre-condition for the fundamental isolation of the individual:

And if we continue to dwell in thought on this world, not of objects in the solidity with which language invests them, but of impressions, unstable, flickering, inconsistent, which burn and are extinguished with our consciousness of them, it contracts still further: the whole scope of observation is dwarfed into the narrow chamber of the individual mind. Experience, already reduced to a group of impressions, is ringed round for each one of us by that thick wall of personality through which no real voice has ever pierced on its way to us, or from us to that which we can only conjecture to be without. Every one of those impressions is the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world.<sup>309</sup>

In the case of *Mrs Dalloway*, the erasure of the contours of the body through forms of transport or the Rilkean “vibration” could offer a response to the solipsistic collapse which Pater’s early focus

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<sup>308</sup> Walter Pater. *The Renaissance*. Mineola: Dover Publications. 2005. p. 153.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.* p. 153.

on subjective impressions seems to invite. As McGrath points out, in his 1873 “Preface” Pater revised this solipsistic view through a phenomenological “modern reader-response theory” which “characterized what is essentially the phenomenological encounter between the perceiving subject and the aesthetic object.”<sup>310</sup>

In *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses*, the erasure of the outline takes on varying forms, one of which is to portray the body as disintegrated and narrative as disintegrative. This fragmentation exacerbates a post-war awareness of the instrumental use of bodies in war and in cultural propaganda, of their reification and commodification, at the same time as it challenges aesthetic and cultural conventions. For Woolf the disintegration of the body heralds that of the individual self, and the fragmentation of the body becomes a means of reverting the conventional association between solipsism, individual perception and interiority, by reasserting the collective value of sense-perception through the poesis of the novel. In *Ulysses*, the process of fragmentation concerns both body and text, bringing to the fore the recirculation of matter and text which Joyce presents as one of the irresolvable polarities of the book.

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<sup>310</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 35.

## 1.2. The Narrative Disjunctions of Flesh/Text: “Verbal or Visual?” Literal and Literary

*Joyce, “Penelope” and the Body* is one of the most comprehensive works of criticism dealing with the representation of the body in *Ulysses*.<sup>311</sup> Focusing entirely on the “Penelope” episode, which Joyce presented as the episode dealing most directly with the body, the volume’s twelve essays assess and challenge several major discourses surrounding the body. Looking at the critical angles chosen to explore the episode, many of the questions which “Penelope” raises concern the degree to which Molly’s flow-speech is embodied or disembodied, whether it can be conceived of as flesh or as text.

In “Joyce’s Answer to Philosophy: Writing the Dematerializing Object” Christine Van Boheemen-Saaf develops the idea that with “Penelope” Joyce may be voicing “a typically modern anxiety about” the “dematerialization of the body”. In “The Body Writing: Joyce’s Pen” Derek Attridge sheds light on the intersection of body and text which Joyce emblemizes through his use of the abbreviation “Pen” as shorthand for “Penelope”. John Smurthwaite asks whether “Penelope” is “Verbal or Visual?” and Maud Ellmann explores the idea of “Penelope Without the Body”. Finally, James Davies stakes the claim that Molly can be read as a “non-corporeal body”. These approaches illustrate the ways in which the metatextuality of *Ulysses* serves not only to foreground the materiality of language but perhaps also to emphasize the discrepancy between body and text.

If one looks at how *Mrs Dalloway* opens and closes, it appears the novel also strives throughout to articulate corporeal presence as a narrative disjunction, something which suspends verbal communication at the same time as it is articulated in words. The novel opens with reported speech, the well-known line “Mrs Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself” drawing a distance between the narrative voice and Clarissa through the use of a third-person perspective. Because of this beginning and because of the ambiguity of the narrative voice, the narrative stance of the entire novel

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<sup>311</sup> Richard Brown (ed). *Joyce, “Penelope” and the Body*. In *European Joyce Studies*, eds. Fritz Senn & Christine van Boheemen. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 2006.



positions the focalizer, Clarissa, as somewhere between subject and object. Clarissa's embodied consciousness offers a subjective vantage point whereas this vantage point is challenged by the ambiguity of the narrative voice.

This stance remains ambiguous up to the final conclusion of the novel – “for there she was” –, which encapsulates the dilemma of representing the body either as discourse or as a physical presence. The sentence implies Clarissa's physical presence; in at least one way it shows her becoming the object of representation. Her appearance at the end of the book also coincides with the suspension of language and the end of representation: the book falls silent when Clarissa materializes. But, “for there she was” can also be understood as reporting the subjective experience and realization of presence, which the material book stands as a testimony to: she is only “there” if “she” equals the novel.

In this configuration, the culmination of the book would be its embodying Clarissa Dalloway and “there she was” would signify “there you have Clarissa Dalloway” now that you have read the book. Clarissa's subject or object position depends on the level of narration and on the act of reading itself: if one fails to equate Clarissa's physical presence with that of the book, one is forced to recognize the failure to represent Clarissa in any other way than by pointing to her absence. It is only if one recognizes the presence of the book and is aware of the creative process through the act of reading that one can understand that last sentence as the triumph of the book to represent Clarissa.

Reading *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* side by side brings into focus the ways in which the representation of the body may signify the disjunction of matter and text. Through the character of Molly and the “Penelope” episode Joyce reaches towards just such a disjunction, by contrasting the portrayals of Molly outside of “Penelope” and Molly within the episode. “Penelope” is in a certain sense the culmination of the book which tends throughout towards the materialization of Molly as a physical presence since she has only been mentioned up to now from a third-person perspective.

“Penelope” features Molly putting an end to the book as an act of representation. Molly’s performance in “Penelope” depends upon shutting down previous attempts to figure her out, as the rest of the novel – which features Molly as the object of Bloom’s peregrinations – cannot survive this reversal from object to subject which is also the materialization of the subject-Molly as text matter which confronts the image as an object of representation. At the same time as Joyce foregrounds the materiality of language through which the narrative of embodied consciousness is made sensible to the reader, he increases the distance between the material body and the body in art through the multiplication of its discursive dimensions.

In *Corpus* Jean-Luc Nancy argues that the difficulty of representing the body in the text is that it is fundamentally equivocal.<sup>312</sup> He develops the idea that any transparent representation of the body is impossible because the body refers to an object (the real or physical body) which can only be made present through its own negation in a way similar to Blanchot’s analysis of the image which marks the death of the thing.<sup>313</sup> The body is rendered in a space torn by the act of writing, between figuration and disfiguration, between that which is represented and the process of its representation. However, unless one understands the body in a Cartesian sense, as a material entity separate from the mind, the body is already characteristically torn between its physical dimension and its representations. Representation – and fiction – characterizes the relationship between the self and the body, since to think of one’s body already implies a representation which is informed by all the discourses surrounding the body and its image in culture. Is it even possible to disentangle the material body from the concept of the body and from the act of its representation?

The body’s lack of transparency is fundamental to the philosophical distinction between the body-object or material body and the lived body or body-subject. The concept of “lived body” or *corps*

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<sup>312</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy. *Corpus*. Paris: Métailié. 1992. rééd. 2000.

<sup>313</sup> “L’image n’a rien à voir avec la signification, le sens, tel que l’implique l’existence du monde, l’effort de la réalité, la loi de la clarté du savoir. L’image d’un objet non seulement n’est pas le sens de cet objet et n’aide pas à sa compréhension, mais tend à l’y soustraire en le maintenant dans l’immobilité d’une ressemblance qui n’a rien à quoi ressembler.” Maurice Blanchot. *L’Espace littéraire*. Paris: Gallimard. 1955. p. 273.

*proprie* is generally attributed to Merleau-Ponty who uses it to express the notion of body-that-I-am as opposed to the strict physical reality of the body as a mass of matter. The lived body is characterized by its opacity, the incursion of affect, fantasy and the imaginary, and the gap between the body's objective reality and the individual's subjective perception of it. This also has epistemological implications for the representation of the body: the former is a supposedly knowable entity whereas the latter is not.

"Penelope" is well-known to be an episode in which Joyce deals directly with the interweaving of embodiment, visual representation and textuality. Set aside "Eumaeus" in the "Nostos" episodes the Molly/Pen of "Penelope" derives her narrative authority from the empirical stance which her body provides her and offers the illusion of an organic textual production. Although "Penelope" presents an outright performance of physicality as text, the interloping of empiricism, physicality and textuality concerns all three episodes of the "Nostos" which could be read as essentially concerned with the mechanisms of textual production.

"Eumaeus" deals overtly with narrative and dramatizes its fictitiousness. The Bloomesque narrative voice is concerned with the act of narration itself and this concern is ironically played upon throughout the episode. The reader's focus is drawn from the level of the story with its characters and events to the level of the narration of the story and its incompetent narrator. Arguing in favour of the significance of "Eumaeus" in 1976, Brook Thomas identified its central theme as being the imposture of language itself:

In *Ulysses*, as in all literary works, names and words play the roles of "real" people and acts. [...] Bloom, Stephen, and even *Ulysses'* Dublin depend upon words for their existence. Thus it is that in "Eumaeus", whose theme is imposture, we find *Ulysses* exposing its own linguistic forgery.<sup>314</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Brook Thomas. "The Counterfeit Style of Eumaeus." In *JJQ*. vol. 14. N°1 (Fall). 1976. pp. 15-24. p. 20.

Brook Thomas begins his argument by explaining how Hugh Kenner defended the episode which initially had the “status of being the most maligned chapter of the book” by pointing out that Joyce purposefully has his narrator employ “*locutions reçues*” or set phrases to portray a comically unpoetic mind. Thomas links this to Ortega y Gasset’s reading of the episode’s theme as the “collapse of the poetic.” Indeed, “Eumaeus” pastes together a staggering collection of dead metaphors which aim to be poetic all the while failing to “rescue the everyday from the ordinary.”<sup>315</sup>

The *clou* of “Eumaeus” is the imposture of language and incompetent narration but its conspicuous narrative disjunctions are only achieved by collapsing the link between body and text. This is mainly achieved through the unhappy confrontation of literal representations of the material world and metaphors referring to the material. This conjunction ruins the poetic dimension of these metaphors, by calling attention to their roots in the material and causing the reader to be aware of their literal meanings. For example, the description of the location of the cabman’s shelter is made delightfully confusing due to the juxtaposition of material-minded metaphors and the literal representation of materiality:

the propriety of the cabman’s shelter, as it was called, hardly a stonethrow away near Butt Bridge, where they might hit upon some drinkables in the shape of a milk and soda or a mineral. (*U* 16. 26264-7)

The metaphor – or what Kenner terms “*locution reçue*” – “a stonethrow away” is rooted in the material history of using one’s body to approximate distances. It is juxtaposed with “near Butt Bridge” which refers to the literal location of the shelter, causing the prepositions “away” and “near” to be read in the same glance, encouraging the collapse of the metaphorical meaning of a locution into its prior

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<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.* p. 15.

literal acceptance. This creates utter confusion for the reader as “away” connotes “far” whereas taken in its entirety “hardly a stonethrow away” means “near”. The literal dimension of “a stonethrow away” is also at odds with the name of the bridge, which is not to be taken literally. The same can be said of “drinkables in the shape of a milk”: the reader understands that the imagery in “Eumaeus” is to be taken literally and finds herself in the uncomfortable position of trying to picture what shape “a milk” might take. Another example would be when the narrator reports that Bloom “inhaled with internal satisfaction the smell of James Bourke’s city bakery [...] the very palatable odour indeed of our daily bread” (*U* 16. 25316). Here the narrator sidesteps the metaphorical dimension of “daily bread” with its religious connotations in favour of the literal meaning of “bread which is consumed every day.”

“Eumaeus” relies on a plethora of set phrases and dead metaphors which refer to the material body, laying bare the discrepancy between the text and the poetic representation of the body to comic effect. For instance, “there was nothing for it but put a good face on the matter and foot it”, in which the parallel between the body parts “face” and “foot” causes the reader to oscillate between the literal meaning of “put a good face on” and the metaphorical meaning which the object “matter” imposes (*U* 16. 25290). The absence of a clear antecedent for the pronoun “it” increases the ambiguity of the sentence, adding to its comic effect, as one might be tempted to understand “it” as referring to “face”. This incompetent oscillation between the literal and the fictional, between the material body and the body in discourse, is what makes the narrator of “Eumaeus” appear so comically misguided.

It is enticing to draw parallels between Stephen the exiled poet in search of a father and Bloom the everyday man who has lost a son and to add Molly to the equation as the object of desire and/or maternal other. Yet Molly’s, Bloom’s and Stephen’s sense of embodiment are all similarly mediated by their penmanship. What Stephen, Bloom and Molly/Pen/Penelope may have in common is how their potential as authors is interwoven with their desire to express an idea of their body and their own sense of embodiment.

Several times throughout *Ulysses* we are given to understand that Bloom toys with the idea of being a writer: on the jakes in “Calypso” he imagines himself sending in a story about life with Molly to be published in *Titbits*; in “Sirens” he writes a letter to Martha under the penname Henry Flower and muses about women being blank pages on which to write; in “Nausicaa” he attempts to write who he is on the sand with a muddy stick. Bloom never manages to finish his message and the stick stuck in the mud acts as a symbol for both his impotency and blank page syndrome.

In general, throughout *Ulysses* the reader may gather the impression that no one really acknowledges Bloom, who interacts with women through the mediation of gazes, art illustrations, books and letters. He does not manage to persuade Stephen to stay the night; he confronts neither Molly nor Blaise Boylan; his character is perniciously misconstrued by the public eye in “Cyclops”. In “Circe” Bloom’s solipsism grows into a paranoiac’s persecution complex in a trial in which he tries and fails to defend his character. In “Eumaeus” the narrator parodically fulfills Bloom’s fantasy of authorship, while showing how his aspirations to be a writer run counter to his pedestrian outlook.

The disjunction of text and matter is carried further as broad metaphysical concerns such as the well-known Shakespearian query “what’s in a name?” are given literal mundane meanings as when Bloom agrees that names can be misleading, while pushing toward Stephen a “socalled” roll of bread. The gesture points out Bloom’s literal acceptance of Stephen’s philosophical consideration that “sounds are impostures”: to Bloom, the coffee and rolls served at the cabman’s shelter are so substandard one can only assume that they are posing as such. If anything, while fictionalizing avatars of Bloom-the-writer, “Eumaeus” seems to be hypostatizing Bloom’s material-mindedness, comically drawing the poetic into the scope of his body-minded consciousness, and showing how linguistic elements link back to the material, through the confrontation of metaphorical and literal meanings.

The literary and the physical coalesce throughout *Ulysses* in a *mise en abime* of representation in which the body is inseparable from the representation of ideas of the body. For instance, Bloom’s

repairing to the outhouse in “Calypso” portrays his reading as a literal part of organic processes such as digestion. The scene also ties the organic process of digestion to the wider cycle of creation and destruction: in the background of Bloom’s act of reading is the chiming of the church bells, the obituary, and Bloom’s inspecting his suit, all of which showcase Bloom’s latent awareness of Paddy Dignam’s burial. In addition, at the same time as Bloom defecates, he fantasizes about producing his own piece of literature, a story inspired by a memory of Molly dressing, which he declares “Done!” as soon as he has finished, tossing it out along with his waste.

In countless other ways reading and writing are also part of Bloom’s sexuality: the most obvious examples would be Bloom’s epistolary fling with Martha and their shared “language of flowers” or the smutty novels which Bloom provides Molly with such as “Ruby, the Pride of the Ring.” The discrepancy between words and matter is articulated many times throughout *Ulysses*, and the over-productive textuality of the book appears in conjunction to anxieties surrounding material production. It is in the opacities that such a discrepancy produces that we find the most telling manifestations of the body-subject.

The climactic moments of *Mrs Dalloway* bind together body and narrative through the notion of narrative voice, the most puzzling one being the afore-mentioned final sentence “for there she was,” which exemplifies the paradox of representing the body in the text: the literary expression of physical presence through absence. In one passage, Clarissa Dalloway relives Septimus Smith’s death as she learns of the news from the Bradshaws at her party. The passage provides an intriguing counterpoint to the sort of intersection between text and organic processes which Joyce conveys in the outhouse scene of *Ulysses*. Clarissa’s reaction to the news is the culminating point in the narration of the party, as it is the moment in which Septimus and Clarissa connect, and towards which the entire novel has been building up.

In some ways – in tone and style for instance – these two scenes could not be more different, the one irreverent with comic undertones, the other solemn with tragic undertones, despite the ordinariness of both moments in which death is presented from the casual perspective of the everyday. The two scenes make clear the social distinctions which divide the two characters: Septimus's death is not all that shocks Clarissa, she is equally shocked that a man's death should be the subject of small talk at her party. On exiting the jakes Bloom checks to see whether his trousers are still clean for Paddy Dignam's funeral, showing that death is on his mind but also exhibiting a practical sense of decorum which is at odds with Clarissa's notion of it.

Yet both passages deal with narrative as a physical matter, made manifest through the motions of the body. Both passages act as culminating points to an episode in which the character peruses the city, carrying the reader from the perusal of texts to narrative to the texture of being. On hearing of Septimus' death, Clarissa is struck by the discrepancy between the levity of Lady Bradshaw's gossipy account – "they talked of it at her party" – and the significance of the event of death which manifests itself through its sheer materiality: "her body went through it ... her dress flamed, her body burnt" (p. 156). Whereas Lady Bradshaw's account defaces the reality of Septimus's death by turning it into news, a spectacle seen at a distance, "a sad case", through Clarissa's body, Septimus's death both materializes and matters.

Lady Bradshaw's account contrasts starkly with Clarissa's vision of the event, which revives the physicality of death in a way which speaks to the body of the reader and portrays the narrative process as one through which physical events are embedded into collective experience. Death is made palpable when Clarissa's empathizing revives the experience of death from the first-person perspective of the dying man:



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. (p. 156)

Reversing and restoring the flow of communication from chatter to matter is perhaps the body's most significant function as it is represented in *Mrs Dalloway* and one which depends on the discrepancy between body and text. Woolf hints at this in a crucial passage:

a thing there was that mattered; a thing, wreathed about with chatter, defaced, obscured in her own life, let drop every day in corruption, lies, chatter. This he had preserved. Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate [...] There was an embrace in death (p. 156).

Woolf causes the body as discourse and the texture of being to collide in this moment, emphasizing the gap between the reductive normative discourses surrounding the body – here, the predicament of the mentally-ill war veteran echoing that of the alienated woman of upper-class society – and the ability of the writer to portray the rhythms of a community of beings through the musicality, lyricism and sonic materiality of her prose.

With Leopold Bloom's reading of *Titbits* at stool, Joyce posits a similar conjunction between the gossip columns of the newspaper, the columns which Bloom's body excretes, and the mutual inscription of text and daily reality, brought to the fore by the pervasiveness of his fellow Dubliner Dignam's death. Bloom notes upon entering the jakes that he should be careful not to soil his trousers before the funeral and upon leaving he checks the newspaper to ascertain the time of the funeral. The scene conveys the banality of death by conflating it with waste – either bodily waste such as the refuse of Leopold Bloom's body or wasted words such as those of the magazines such as *Titbits* which

according to Bloom “print anything now” (*U* 4.3092). As Maud Ellmann explains, this also points to a common system of “circulation and exchange” which binds together the expenditures of the body, the city and the text.<sup>316</sup>

The circulation of words is one way in which the text replicates the organicity of the body – a point which is driven home by Bloom’s visit to the latrines. Joyce chooses to conclude an episode which presents Leopold Bloom to the reader by showing that this character will dispose of and renew the codes which have governed the representation of the body in literary texts, while pushing to the fore the mediation of bodies in discourse and the texture of language. Bloom’s newspaper reading anticipates what will occur in the later episodes in which Joyce finds new ways of inscribing the body in literary discourse through an emphasis on the texture of words.

These moments encapsulate the larger issue addressed by walking, which is the overlapping of the obvious textuality of the work and its expression of an intimate, material, physicality. Cor Hermans sees in Joyce’s predilection for circulation a sign of his belief in the interconnectedness of bodies and of the nomadic dimension of *Ulysses*.<sup>317</sup> Maud Ellmann interprets the prominence of the motif of recirculation as expressive of Ireland’s advanced communication and transportation networks despite its lack of a unified national identity. For Ellmann this contradiction reflects upon Joyce’s conception of the self as circulatory. For instance, she writes: “he thins the skin of subjectivity, presenting the self as a nexus of exchange, rather than an autotelic monad.”<sup>318</sup> This idea helps to understand the prominent circulation of body parts and linguistic elements throughout *Ulysses* as the narrative disintegration of the image.

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<sup>316</sup> Maud Ellmann. *The Nets of Modernism: Henry James, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and Sigmund Freud*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2010. p. 4.

<sup>317</sup> Cor Hermans. *Interbellum Literature: Writing in a Season of Nihilism*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill. 2017.

<sup>318</sup> Maud Ellmann. “*Ulysses*: The Epic of the Human Body.” In *A Companion to James Joyce*. ed. Richard Brown. Chichester : Blackwell Publishing. 2011. pp. 54-70. p. 58.

In these novels, the body is portrayed as organic and material on the one hand, while on the other it appears as part of a mechanism of self-conscious textual production, in which the readers' awareness of embodied experiences accompanies and expands their awareness of the text's fictional, constructed nature. As well as shifting the focus of representation from the material object of perception to the subjective experience of the perceiver, these novels confront the visual, material and discursive dimensions of the body to engage with the overlap between body and text.

### 1.3. Fragmenting the Body Image/Imaging Voice: Visions, Voyeurs, and Vibrations

#### 1.3.1. The Voyeur as Vessel: "empty vessels make most noise" (U 11.13607)

In *The Body in Pieces*, Linda Nochlin points out that the trope of the fragment has been inflected with both positive and negative values, depending on the specific ideological and historical context. For instance, she notes that "the French Revolution [...] constituted the fragment as a positive rather than a negative trope" which "rather than symbolizing nostalgia for the past, enacts the deliberate destruction of that past, or, at least, a pulverization of what were perceived to be its repressive traditions."<sup>319</sup>

Similarly, Vanessa Guignery and Wojciech Drag underline the diversity of interpretations of the fragment, noting that for the Romantics fragmentation was in no way synonymous with brokenness or meaninglessness.<sup>320</sup> Guignery and Drag quote Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy's

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<sup>319</sup> Linda Nochlin. *The Body in Pieces: The Fragment as a Metaphor of Modernity*. New York: Thames and Hudson. 1994. p. 8.

<sup>320</sup> Vanessa Guignery and Wojciech Drag. *The Poetics of Fragmentation in Contemporary British and American Fiction*. Coll. Series in Literary Studies. Wilmington/Malaga: Vernon Press. 2019.

work on the significance of the fragment to the German Romantics who give precedence to its aspiration “towards an impossible whole” over “the dispersion or the shattering of the work.”<sup>321</sup>

In the case of modernism, fragmentation is likely to be associated with a sense of loss, chaos, and the violent disruptions of the modern world. Guignery and Drag quote for instance David Metzger’s analysis of the fragment as primarily defined by the relationship “between part and whole”, adding that it is “a relationship that is predicated on loss.” Another critic, Alain Montandon, notes that the Latin words *fragmen* and *fragmentum* originate from *frango*: “to break, to shatter, to crash”, implying “an endured violence, an intolerable disintegration.”

In most of these studies, the fragment is shown to signify both the shattering of an illusory unity and the hope that some vestige of unification may be achieved through art. Theodore Adorno touches upon such a discrepancy when he interprets fragmentation as “an effort to save art by dismantling the claim that artworks are what they cannot be.” The authors conclude that “fragmentation in modernist literature needs to be set up against the wish to synthesize what has been taken apart in order to recover some form of unity.”<sup>322</sup>

As Nochlin remarks, the ambiguity of the fragment is particularly constitutive of modernism’s use of fragmentation as an art form which mobilizes both the tendency to destroy and that to recreate, so that:

It is by no means possible to assert that modernity may only be associated with, or suggested by, a metaphoric or actual fragmentation. On the contrary, paradoxically, or dialectically, modern artists have moved towards its opposite, with a will to totalization embodied in the notion of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the struggle to overcome the disintegrative effects – social, psychic, political – inscribed in the modern, particularly modern urban, experience, by hypostatizing them within a higher unity.<sup>323</sup>

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<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.* qtd. p. 14.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.* qtd. p. 16.

<sup>323</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 53.

The notions of disintegration and fragmentation are central to the representation of the body in both *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses*. Through these processes both authors explore the relationship between the body and the images fostered through its representations. Because Joyce and Woolf posit different relations between the body and the image, I find the term “fragmentation” applies better to the strategies employed by Joyce in *Ulysses*, whereas I prefer the term “disintegration” to address the specificities of the visual in *Mrs Dalloway*.

In *Ulysses*, bodies systematically appear in fragmented form. In fact, both Leopold Bloom and Clarissa Dalloway delight in the intimacy of seeing without being seen. Yet the “looked-at-ness” of the body and particularly the female body in its erotic dimension is exacerbated in various episodes of *Ulysses* in ways which contrast starkly with its treatment in *Mrs Dalloway*. Joyce’s *Ulysses* shows a special fascination for the body in parts – limbs, organs, sartorial items, fetish objects – and from the Linati scheme, which lists a corresponding organ for each episode, to its reliance on synecdoche *Ulysses* encourages the reader’s visualizing the body piece by piece, as a fragmented form. This fragmentation does not point to a “higher unity” which would be either a unified body or a unified narrative so much as enable the weakening of the borders between body and text through the recirculation of body parts and the recycling of textual elements as sonic material.

In her chapter “Bodies” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ulysses* Vike Plock notes that “in the earlier episodes of *Ulysses*” the “focus on the body’s materiality facilitated [...] the promotion of novelistic verisimilitude” but with the “Sirens” episode “deliberate and pronounced synecdochic fragmentation of bodies marks Joyce’s most radical experimentation with representing physicality in *Ulysses*.”<sup>324</sup> What new relations between body and self, text and matter, does Joyce seek to form through the fragmentation of the body throughout *Ulysses*? One might suggest that the physicality of

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<sup>324</sup> Vike Plock. “Bodies.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Ulysses*, ed. Sean Latham. New York: Cambridge University Press. 2014. pp. 184-199. p. 185.

the “Sirens” episode in fact leads to an anti-mimetic representation of the body, which aims to portray Bloom’s interiority. As often in *Ulysses*, images of the object world extend Bloom’s emotional perimeter and convey his sense of embodiment.

As Valérie Bénéjam has noted the fragmentation of bodies is general throughout *Ulysses* and can be read side by side with fetishistic sartorial details which refer to the body through metonymy.<sup>325</sup> “Sirens” offers a case in point as this episode relies systematically on synecdoche, featuring distinct body parts such as “wet” “teabathed” lips, “bronze by gold” hair and “greaseasea” eyes as recurring *leitmotifs*. It has widely been understood that the obsessive focus on body parts in “Sirens” shows Bloom’s attempt to distract himself from the thought that Molly is about to meet her lover Blaise Boylan.

In this scenario, synecdoche would have a fetishistic function, suggesting Bloom’s displacement of his desire for and fear of the unattainable female body. In *James Joyce and the Perverse Ideal*, David Cotter notes that in a Freudian sense fetishism – in which one part of the body is substituted for a relationship to the female body – “is a disavowal of reality, and a retreat into fantasy” through a “glorification of the wounded body.”<sup>326</sup> Freud links the occurrence of fetishism to the child’s fear of castration upon realizing that the woman has no phallus. According to Freud, the fetish acts as a substitute for the phallus which simultaneously equates the female genitalia with a lack. Cotter emphasizes the talismanic function of the fetish which acts as “a detail, a realistic prop, to make the fantasy seem real, to convince, and to prod imagination.”<sup>327</sup>

Bénéjam also argues that the fetishistic portrayal of objects and more particularly items of clothing serves to mask the body as a whole – whether Molly’s or Boylan’s – and is instrumental in expressing Bloom’s conflicting desire for the body. In “Sirens”, Bénéjam notes, the foregrounding of

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<sup>325</sup> Valérie Bénéjam. “Molly Inside and Outside “Penelope”.” In *Joyce, “Penelope” and the Body*, ed. Richard Brown. *European Joyce Studies* 17. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 2006. pp. 63-74.

<sup>326</sup> David Cotter. *James Joyce & the Perverse Ideal*. New York and London: Routledge. 2003. p. 131.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.* p. 134.

body parts serves to blur Bloom's vision and symbolizes his refusal to see – to visualize for the reader's benefit or to confront the reality of – his wife's adultery. In "Sirens" the stress is laid on synecdoche, as parts of the body are presented as distinct visual motifs which submerge Bloom's vision as well as detract from the subject matter of the episode.

In this episode each part of the body which comes into focus may be seen as a fetish object, isolated from the fantasized female body, whether the "gold pinnacled hair" of the barmaid, the "satiny breasts of satin" or the "smackable woman's warmhosed thigh." However, these synecdoches are not composed of solely visual elements, but are more frequently synaesthetic, with emphasis on the visual, the auditory and the tactile. Although the visual element of the fetish seems to further Bloom's sense of alienation from the sphere of desire, references to warmth, touch and feeling transpire through the sonic qualities of the text, offering hope that Bloom might fulfill his desire for contact and reassert his belonging to the sensible world.

Secondly, what is foregrounded is not the relationship of the part to the whole, one part of the body to the desired body, but the process of fetishization itself, in which the relationship is constantly shifting, as if perception were constantly reforming the boundaries of the desired body. One might wonder whether "Sirens" is truly synecdochic in at least one sense: do the body parts on display in the episode aim to symbolize the body as a total entity? Are they fetish objects which express the desire to sublimate the lack of the female body? Or is the aim the display of fragmentation itself, representing the circulating images of body parts as textual fragments? Through fragmentation the lyricism of the episode is linked to the erotic charge of the fetish and the circulation of linguistic units becomes integral to the poetics of "Sirens".

A constantly recurring visual motif, Miss Kennedy and Miss Douce's respective hair colors, "bronze by gold," begins as an attribute serving to qualify "Miss Douce's head by Miss Kennedy's head." Progressively, however, the boundaries between the human subject or individual as a whole,

Miss Douce or Miss Kennedy, and the physical attribute or synecdoche are blurred. One might consider the sentence: “she darted, bronze, to the backmost corner” in which due to the commas delimiting the relative clause, “bronze” becomes an attribute which defines Miss Douce’s entire person. In the following extract, Miss Kennedy and her “gold hair” exchange positions upon the spectrum of agency ranging from subject to object:

Miss Kennedy sauntered sadly from bright light, twining a loose hair behind an ear.  
Sauntering sadly, gold no more, she twisted twined a hair. Sadly she twined in sauntering  
gold hair behind a curving ear. (*U* 11.12275-7)

In these successive variations, the fetishistic object, Miss Kennedy’s hair, is given a more sensuous impact through a kinetic image, in which the hair is inseparable from hue, brilliancy, and the spectrum of motion and sounds ranging from twining to twisting to curving. Furthermore, the adjective “sadly” which is repeated three times, echoes Bloom’s own melancholy, a melancholy that the reader knows to be caused by his sense of impotency as he suspects his wife to be meeting her lover Boylan sometime soon. Miss Kennedy’s movement “sauntering” equally replicates on a more melancholic mode the jaunting of Boylan’s carriage. In this way, the fetish does not just point to a lack but each reified body part replicates and triggers the fantasmagoria of the desired female body.

The aesthetics of “Sirens” are two-fold. They rely on fragmentation, as the numerous references to the barmaid’s “wet lips”, the visual motifs of their “bronze” and “gold” hair, or the distinct sound of the blind Pat’s “tap” show. However, aesthetically “Sirens” places as much emphasis on musical flow as it does on fragmentation. Rhythmically distinct elements such as the “tap” of Pat’s cane cause syntactic disjunctions, yet these disjunctions are absorbed by the broader syntactic flow of the episode, in which linguistic elements flow together and reform new units, or variations around a same root word.



“Sirens” seems to employ synecdoche structurally: the episode begins with a summary of the visual and auditory motifs which compose the skeleton of the whole, implying that the substance of the chapter is fragmentation, but also that isolated elements form a whole which may be condensed or extended like a fractal. As in a fractal structure, the parts do not just make up the whole but replicate the essence of the whole on their own individual levels. One might see this as a kinetic poesis hinging both on textual production and on the sensory dimension of these reconfigurations.

As frequent as the repetition of isolated elements is the modulation of elements through successive variations. In terms of syntax and rhythm “Sirens” articulates stops and flows. For instance: “by rose, by satiny bosom, by the fondling hand, by slops, by empties, by popped corks, greeting in going”, despite juxtaposing isolated elements retains a flowing rhythm through the repetition of “by” and other forms of alliteration (*U* 11.13822). In “Sirens” Joyce juxtaposes isolated visual elements while including them within a broader harmony, which is a sonic composition. Successions of present participles and “-ing” forms add to the fluidity of “Sirens” syntax. “Tap” is in fact first introduced into the chapter in Bloom’s fantasized language of love in which words flow together and gush to mimic bodily fluids, while forming a poetic and sonorous unit:

Flood of warm jimjam lickitup secretness flowed to flow in music out, in desire, dark to lick flow, invading. Tipping her tepping her tapping her topping her. Tup. Pores to dilate dilating. Tup. The joy the feel the warm the. Tup. To pour o’er sluices pouring gushes. Flood, gush, flow, joygush, tupthorp. Now! Language of love. (*U* 11.13236-40)

In this passage, polyptotons, near homonyms and sentence fragments mingle in accordance to the aesthetic logic of the episode. The process of fragmentation does not only point to the fetishization of the body by drawing attention to body parts. Its dynamics rely on the destruction and reconfiguration of the symbolic and visual dimension of the body. In other words, the episode is not unequivocally made up of images and tableaux which express how the body is subjected to an objectifying gaze. The

point of “Sirens” is rather to portray Bloom’s affective state and the drive to resorb the distance which the image posits between the subject and the object, through the polymorphous “language of love”. “Sirens” portrays the body on a voyeuristic mode while undermining the objectifying force of the image through the musicality, synaesthetic and affective dimensions of the language of love. “Sirens” raises the question of the dematerialization of the body through a foregrounding of the constructedness of the text. It equally is a process of rematerializing the body through new sense-perceptive configurations which shift the boundaries of the body.

The sirens’ call recalls Blanchot’s theory of the image in which the subject’s fascination for the image implies the death of the “real” thing through its objectification. In *L’espace littéraire* Maurice Blanchot writes that fascination is synonymous with a “passion for the image” meaning that the viewer is subjected to an uncontrolled force which is the source of pleasure and suffering. In “Sirens” bodies seem to dominate the field of vision, yet for Blanchot this fascination would imply that the body “Sirens” presents to the reader and presents as seen by Bloom is a fantasized one. The fascinated subject “does not see any real object or figure, because what he sees does not belong to the world of reality, but to the undetermined realm of fascination.”<sup>328</sup> For Blanchot, the fascinating pull of the image does not result in any revelation, but rather in suffering and anxiety because it is an experience of exile from the common experience of human reality.

Nonetheless, one could also read the figure of the Siren as a departure from the image and as an embodiment of voice. “Sirens” features images of the body as pieces of fantasmagoria which Bloom peeps at from afar but the primacy of the image is undermined by the musical import of the episode. The overwhelming presence of visual elements is counterbalanced by the effects of music so that the resulting effect of the episode is not the satisfaction of Bloom’s desires but the realization that he has a deep longing for touch which is unfulfilled. “Sirens” makes palpable Bloom’s experience of exile

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<sup>328</sup> Maurice Blanchot. *The Station Hill Blanchot Reader. Fiction & Literary Essays*. Barrytown Ltd: Station Hill. 1999. p. 413.

from contact with the human body, his exile from the intimacy of human connections for which “tap” becomes a codeword. In “Sirens” the alienating force of the image is assuaged by the materiality of sound which forms new contact zones for the body. Furthermore, “Sirens” images voice as a continuum connecting inner and outer margins of the body, vibration and sound, language and senses. Blanchot writes:

intime est l’image, parce qu’elle fait de notre intimité une puissance extérieure que nous subissons passivement: en dehors de nous, dans le recul du monde qu’elle provoque, traîne, égarée et brillante, la profondeur de nos passions.<sup>329</sup>

“Sirens” portrays music’s ability to counter the dematerializing forces of the image, intimately connecting subject and object through the notions of resonance and vibration.

If the “Sirens” chapter is often read alongside “Nausicaa”, which equally portrays physical desire alongside the absence of physical contact, “Aeolus” better reminds us of the alienating potential of materialism. Whereas “Sirens” features the seductive dimension of sounds and the erotic appeal of the voice through musical effects, “Aeolus” emphasizes the clatter and noise of machinery which threatens to drown out the human voice entirely. “Aeolus” marks the beginning of a process of self-parodying which characterizes the second half of *Ulysses* and is the first episode to draw attention to the process of textual production and recirculation of signs as fragments which “Sirens” ostentatiously continues. “Aeolus” also depicts the body as fragmented and thus doing frequently foregrounds the interchangeability of subject and object positions, emphasizing the materiality of bodies and linking them to a wider process of mechanization which questions the limits between subject and object.

For example, the following lines from the segment “GENTLEMEN OF THE PRESS” recall the repetitions and rearranging of syntax which characterize the “Sirens” episode:

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<sup>329</sup> Maurice Blanchot. *L’Espace littéraire*. p. 352.

Grossbooted draymen rolled barrels dullthudding out of Prince's stores and bumped them up on the brewery float. On the brewery float bumped dullthudding barrels rolled by grossbooted draymen out of Prince's stores. (*U* 7.5380-2)

These lines uncannily resonate with the description of Miss Kennedy sauntering and twining her hair behind her ear in "Sirens", in which the same linguistic elements are rearranged to form three distinct sentences which act as variations upon a theme. In "Sirens" the process allows the reader to hear the musical variations of the sentences as a mechanism, while the repetitions draw out the action to the extent that the reader visualizes the sequence of visual motifs as a tableau. The body is broken down into visual motifs and distinct sound effects, to the extent that it can be read as a product of eroticized fantasmagoria.

By contrast, "Aeolus" empties bodies of their erotic potential, by portraying them as the products of a far-reaching mechanization in which technology encroaches upon language and voice. The bodies of the various newsagents in the episode appear to be part of a mechanism in which individual agencies are subdued by the effects of machinery. In "Aeolus" Professor MacHugh sardonically declares: "I speak the tongue of a race the acme of whose mentality is the maxim: time is money. Material domination" (*U* 7.6193). Indeed, looking closer at the effects of the ostentatious portrayal of the body alongside textual production in "Aeolus" and "Sirens" allows us to see that both episodes are inscribed within a larger exploration of the limits and modalities of "material domination" which are explored through the representation of the body in *Ulysses*.

In "Aeolus" Bloom struggles to find his place in the cogwheels of the mechanical production of texts in which the utterances of the printer rival human voices whereas "Sirens" ends with Bloom passing wind and feeling some pride at this production, although his "epitaph" is scarcely more than silence. One might read Bloom's final epitaph as an avowal of his incapacity to produce textual matter

which could rival the mechanical chatter surrounding him. In the same episode, however, Bloom remarks “empty vessels make most noise,” hinting at the fact that Bloom’s passive stance causes him to be receptive and responsive to the emotional texture of music. Bloom’s response to the music of “Sirens” provides the emotional texture of the episode.

Although “Sirens” sets Bloom in the position of a voyeur, enjoying the spectacle of the “flushed (O!), panting, sweating (O!), all breathless” barmaids, whose peals of laughter intimate their climaxing, it also contains a lament for a lost physical connection which is conveyed thematically through Bloom’s voyeuristic, passive, silent stance (*U* 11.12428). “Sirens” portrays the “sweets of sin” which Bloom enjoys only from a distance, through peeping and overhearing. The episode exaggerates the appeal of these voyeuristic strategies only to increase the sense of Bloom’s isolation. “Sirens” is both joyous, indulging in sensuality, and melancholic.

If the two barmaids are reduced to visual motifs, Bloom is equally synecdochally portrayed through reference to his eyes and his nose. The beginning of the episode posits an opposition between the private community of women and the incursion of men within this space. Miss Douce and Miss Kennedy mock the men who look at them from afar, Miss Douce noting for instance: “Look at the fellow in the tall silk [...] He’s looking. Mind till I see.” and laughing: “Aren’t men frightful idiots?” (*U* 11.12253). When Bloom is mentioned he is likewise associated with a voyeuristic expression of sexuality. Miss Kennedy asks Miss Douce: “will you ever forget his goggle eye” and the two imply that Bloom’s “other eye”, meaning his sexual organ, is equally risible, drawing a connection between the phallus and the gaze. Bloom’s “dark eyes” are referred to several times, hinting at the idea that the eyes may be a window and outlet for uncommendable desires. Bloom’s “greasy eyes” and “greasy nose” equally connote a lecherousness: “greaseaseabloom” excretes and offers a counterpoint to the sirens’ “wet lips”.

Yet the two barmaids are onlookers as well, who toy with the men they have entranced. Miss Douce has a “spying-point” from which she watches to see whoever watches her in turn. She refers to herself as “a holy show” “lying out on the strand all day” to which Dedalus suggests she has been “tempting poor males”. Miss Douce equally performs for Blazes Boylan and Lenehan when they ask her to “*sonne la cloche*” or pull her elastic garter and let it smack against her thigh for their entertainment.

Bloom enjoys the two women’s display at the same time as he melancholically senses his exclusion from it. Although the barmaids play into the visual exploitation of their bodies to satisfy male sexual desires, phallic symbolism does not dominate the episode. References to female desire and orgasm flood the text reinstating the barmaids’ dominant position and hinting at the fear of impotency and disconnection from the body through the autonomy of the feminine. Miss Kennedy and Miss Douce’s escalating peals of laughter barely disguise sexual innuendoes which establish a connection between laughter, the voice and female orgasm.

In this scenario, female sexuality is expressed through the exclusion of Bloom and even at his expense:

Shrill, with deep laughter, after bronze in gold, they urged each to peal after peal, ringing in changes, bronzegold goldbronze, shrilldeep, to laughter after laughter. And then laughed more. Greasy I knows. Exhausted, breathless their shaken heads they laid, braided and pinnacled by glossycombed, against the counterledge. All flushed (O!), panting, sweating (O!), all breathless.

Married to Bloom, to greaseaseabloom.

- O saints above! Miss Douce said, sighed above her jumping rose. I wished I hadn’t laughed so much. I feel all wet. (*U* 11.12424-9)

Throughout “Sirens” the sea offers a metaphor for the flow of female sexuality and production. The barmaids produce both music, through the shrill laughter and sonorous plenitude of the “full yell of

full woman”, and flow. They orchestrate the scene, just as they pour beverages and produce “oceansong”. The mermaid “Bloom eyed on the door” on a poster, “mid nice waves” is another avatar of the sea-bound siren. Bloom associates this fluidity with Molly whose laughter echoes the barmaids’ as he recalls her laughing at Ben Dollard’s tight trousers:

Threw herself back across the bed, screaming, kicking. With all his belongings on show.  
O, saints above, I’m drenched! O, the women in the front row! (*U* 11.13026-8)

The realm of the sea circumscribes a space of female desire which acts as a counterpoint to Bloom’s impotency. He laments and accepts Molly’s adultery deciding not to go home and interrupt the affair commenting “Too late. She longed to go. That’s why. Woman. As easy stop the sea. Yes: all is lost” (*U* 11.13143). The melancholy of loss amplifies Bloom’s disconnectedness from the body, his sense of impotency and unproductivity. The music of “Sirens” is metaphorically associated with fluidity and the language of flow as well as a rhythmic tension between the full sounds of the “O!” and Bloom’s more silent vibrations. For instance: “braintipped, cheek touched with flame, they listened feeling that flow endearing flow over skin limbs human heart soul spine” (*U* 11.13188). As Bloom wonders “Words? Music? No: it’s what’s behind” he gives a clue as to the common nature of words, music and the language of flow of the body which is the ability to connect and communicate non-verbally. What is lacking throughout the episode is the sense of touch which communicates a materiality which Bloom associates with joy: “The joy the feel the warm the.”

To the language of love which expresses the joy of physical contact Bloom responds with the language of flowers through which he romances Martha. Bloom imagines writing to Martha and pictures a romanticized love scene in which lovers are reunited after a period of longing:

Lionel cried in grief, in cry of passion dominant to love to return with deepening yet with rising chords of harmony. In cry of Lionel loneliness that she should know, must Martha feel. For only her he waited. Where? Here there try there here all try where. Somewhere.

- Co-me, thou lost one!

Co-me thou dear one!

Alone. One love. One hope. One comfort me. Martha, chestnote, return.

(U 11.13278-86)

Yet this romance is an illusion, producing only silence. “Bloom sang dumb” (U 11.13331). The elastic band which Bloom twangs snaps. The language of flowers acts as a parodic attempt to fill the void which only the language of love can fill. After writing to Martha Bloom is left with a feeling of sad loneliness. Bloom thinks of the women’s bodies as orifices which can be filled and pages to be written on. He reflects that Bronze’s “ear too is a shell, the peeping lobe there” and wonders why women hide their ears and their mouths: “Find the way in. A cave. No admittance except on business” (U 11.13555). He thinks of women as “cream vellum.”

This serves to further highlight Bloom’s anxiety of being unable to write, to produce, to pen, or to fulfill Molly’s desires. “Sirens” dramatizes a dream of material domination which scarcely disguises the loss of contact with the female body and the loss of connection to materiality, Bloom’s resulting melancholy, but also his hopes at retrieving his penmanship. He comments: “I too, last my race. Milly young student. Well, my fault perhaps. No son. Rudy. Too late now. Or if not? If not? If still?” (U 11.13726).

Bloom fantasizes a reversal of flow in which he would write upon the body of a woman, and produce music with her the instrument to his productions:

Blank face. Virgin should say: or fingered only. Write something on it: page. If not what becomes of them? Decline, despair. Keeps them young. Even admire themselves. See. Play on her. Lip blow. Body of white woman, a flute alive. Blow gentle. Loud. Three holes all women. Goddess I didn’t see. (U 11.13757-61)



In this passage Bloom's anxiety is pitted against the female body's power to connect. Bloom supposes women feel pity for the dying and the born "because their wombs" (*U* 11.13779). Like Bloom's windy epitaph, sexuality is music, the flow of the body and the flow of sound "all an attempt to talk." Bloom's silent, windy epitaph signifies the void, a production which is meant to be received only by himself. In "Sirens" Bloom's desire is appeased by a looking which is also a form of navel-gazing, a kind of masochistic appreciation of his own state of loss. As Bloom enjoys the pathos of the concert, the reader is given to enjoy the pathos of "Blue bloom" and his silent song.

Bloom provides the soft, silent whisper which is the melancholic note of the episode. Joyce plays on the homophonic possibilities of his name, calling him both "blue" which is a melancholic tonality and "Blew" which recalls his silent epitaph. Bloom exists in the intimate auditory space of silence and vibration. His name figures in the P.S. of his letter to Martha, both an intimate literary medium and an afterthought: "P.S. So lonely blooming." Bloom is also "Old Bloom" which refers to his waning capacities and sexual vigour. He is "so sad alone" and associated to a little pipe piping wind, a demure figure: "Pwee! Little wind piped wee" (*U* 11.12223).

In contrast to the barmaids' shrill cries or the jingle associated with jaunty Boylan, Bloom produces only a "light sob of breath Bloom sighed on the silent bluehued flowers" (*U* 11.12878). The theme of loss – which is all at once loss of sexual agency, loss of a voice and loss of penmanship – lends the episode its emotional fibre, and it is communicated through Bloom's silence. Bloom notes "It's in the silence you feel you hear. Vibrations. Now silent air" before playing out vibrations on his elastic (*U* 11.13355). "Stretch[ing] his string" Bloom notes that all songs convey the theme of loss. The voyeuristic mechanisms in "Sirens" are used to destroy the ideal of a unified body and to reconfigure a poetics of intimacy which is also an expression of isolation. This alienation from the female and from the material world contrasts with the visionary disintegration of the female body in *Mrs Dalloway*.

Joyce's representation of the body as a fragmented form, whose parts can assemble into various aesthetic configurations, highlights the body's role as an aesthetic, cultural and textual construct. By representing physicality through increasingly radically fragmented forms, Joyce signals throughout *Ulysses* the passage from the representation of the material body through pictorial realist conventions to the portrayal of the body as a complex of shifting discourses, all at once cultural, aesthetic and political, which challenges any anthropomorphic conception of it.

### 1.3.2. Disintegrative Visions: From the Visual to the Vibrancy of Touch

What Laura Mulvey refers to as "looked-at-ness" is a socially-constructed quality assigned to the female body which is indicted throughout *Mrs Dalloway*. It is addressed in passages of *Mrs Dalloway*, such as Peter Walsh's pursuit of the *passante*, Elizabeth's growing awareness of how she is perceived, as well as Doris Kilman's and Clarissa Dalloway's body dysphoria. However, in *Mrs Dalloway*, such moments hardly – not to say never – give rise to the sort of erotic *jouissance* channeled by the Arranger of the Joycean episodes. In *Mrs Dalloway* such moments of *jouissance* coincide with the visionary moment of being, which is the momentary expansion of an intimate space in which the notion of image shifts from the image of the body to the image as a production of the body. In this privileged moment the focalizer is empowered by the ability to see without being seen.

In *Mrs Dalloway* looked-at-ness is shown to be oppressive and expresses a sense of alienation from one's body – a discourse which is carried further by the portrayal of Septimus' own looked-at-ness in which madness (like womanhood) turns the body into a spectacle. When focus falls upon a particular body part – Clarissa's beak-like nose or Elizabeth's eyes – Woolf has her narrator steer clear of erotically charging the body, emphasizing instead its queerness, its inadequacy and the polymorphous nature of the self.

This leads me to think that what may be perceived as Woolf's lack of concretion – which initially made her particularly prone to being misread as the most characteristic canonic author of the inward turn – may be in other terms her endeavour to distinguish the body and sexual desire from its visual appeal because these are the terms through which desire is formulated for the male gaze. Compared to Joyce's, Woolf's bodies thus appear impregnable and the visual dimension of the body is disintegrative rather than fragmentary. The disintegration of the body as a total entity entails new modes of seeing the body's relation to the self and to the text, one of which is the visionary.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, vision implies the disintegration of the boundaries between the public sphere and the sphere of intimacy: what Clarissa sees becomes an expression of the female body as it is experienced beyond its reality as an image. Like Proust, whom Sandra Cheilan credits in *Poétique de l'intime* with the “invention of the *roman intime* in France,” Woolf glorifies the sphere of the intimate by conflating it with ethical values such as sincerity and authenticity.<sup>330</sup> The intimate is the space in which Clarissa is presented as being most in touch with her emotions and sensations. Through her body, it is in moments of intimacy that Clarissa experiences the closest contact with the universal dimension of existence. Cheilan notes that:

Woolf establishes a real, almost mystical harmony which carries us from personality to intimacy. “Intimacy” takes on a euphoric meaning, referring to a desirable intersubjective relation between the characters.<sup>331</sup>

Literary criticism has traditionally considered Joyce as far more at ease with the body than Woolf (perhaps more particularly in Joycean circles), addressing *Ulysses* as a joyful manifestation of the author's enthusiasm for the physical and *Mrs Dalloway*'s fraught relationship to the body. While the

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<sup>330</sup> Sandra Cheilan. *Poétique de l'intime*. Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes. 2015.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.* p. 13.

synecdochic representation of the body in *Ulysses* and the voyeuristic mode which it entails certainly expresses the release of pleasurable erotic energies, one might equally pause to consider how such fragmentation also furthers Bloom's sense of isolation, setting the voyeur apart from the realm of the physical upon which he infringes, and is laced with anxiety. Conversely, the experience of a disintegrated, intersubjective and invisible body in the moments of vision in *Mrs Dalloway* can be called, using Cheilan's own term, "euphoric", ecstatic and salutary. There is a desperate joy – even pleasure – to experiencing one's body in the sphere of its intimacy in *Mrs Dalloway* whereas any enjoyment of the body in *Ulysses* is equally subdued by loss.<sup>332</sup>

For similar reasons, Woolf's portrayals of embodiment seek to preserve the unfamiliar and the unknown elements which are central to her conception of intimacy. Elsa Högberg argues that this is essential to Woolf's aesthetics through which she "develops an ethics of intimacy in which the suspension of the self as an autonomous entity, distinct from the other and outside, inspires recognition of each individual's opacity and inviolable irreducibility" (p.5).<sup>333</sup> Högberg's analysis allows us to further comprehend why Woolf's representations of physicality often convey a sense of alienation from the body as well as a liberating awareness that physicality is not confined to the individual self. In *Mrs Dalloway*, the disintegration of the physical world and the objectifiable dimension of the body conveys an ethical and political stance because it detracts from the realist epistemological model and its "inherently violent logic of objectification." In fact, one might even argue that it is through her representations of physicality that Woolf contests the notion that the sphere of intimacy belongs to the mind and that interiority is the realm of the solipsistic self.

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<sup>332</sup> Clarissa Dalloway's return home shows her retreat into a pristine, monastic space and yet there is an exquisite serenity to the scene, which transpires in the way Clarissa registers sensations and each distinct sound within her household as part of a familiar pattern which forms a "secret deposit of exquisite moments." She compares these "gay sounds" – the "swish of Lucy's skirts," the cook's whistle, or the "click of the typewriter" – to "buds on the tree of life, flowers of darkness" which "she thought (as if some lovely rose had blossomed for her eyes only) [...] one must repay in daily life" (p. 25). It is no coincidence that the flower imagery, itself a Romantic trope conventionally expressive of feminine intimacy, is to be picked up a few pages on through the image of the "match in the crocus" which conflates an orgasmic kind of pleasure in the intimacy of private recollections with a "sudden revelation" or an "inner meaning almost expressed" (p. 27).

<sup>333</sup> Elsa Högberg. *Virginia Woolf and the Ethics of Intimacy*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. 2020.

In order to gain a clearer sense of how this disintegration operates specifically in *Mrs Dalloway*, the following passage bears consideration:

And then, opening her eyes, how fresh, like frilled linen clean from a laundry laid in wicker trays, the roses looked; and dark and prim the red carnations, holding their heads up; and all the sweet peas spreading in their bowls, tinged violet, snow white, pale – as if it were the evening and girls in muslin frocks came out to pick sweet peas and roses after the superb summer’s day, with its almost blue-black sky, its delphiniums, its carnations, its arum lilies, was over; and it was the moment between six and seven when every flower – roses, carnations, irises, lilac – glows; white, violet, red, deep orange; every flower seems to burn by itself, softly, purely in the misty beds; and how she loved the grey white moths spinning in and out, over the cherry pie, over the evening primroses! (p. 11)

In this passage, which exemplifies how the female body is portrayed in *Mrs Dalloway*, Clarissa Dalloway’s perception of the flowers in Miss Pym’s flower shop is telescoped with what might be termed a mental image or vision of the end of a summer’s day.

At first sight it appears that the object of representation is external to Clarissa’s body – flowers on display in a flower shop. Yet a curious affective value colors the description of the flowers, which is otherwise rather neutral and devoid of adjectives. This affective value is conveyed by the reversal of the positions of the passive/looked at flower and the active/looking woman. The flowers are endowed with an agency of their own, which the use of possessive pronouns exacerbates: “the red carnations” “[hold] **their** heads up” and the “sweet peas” are “spreading in **their** bowls” (p. 11). Further on, “every flower [...] glows” and “every flower seems to burn by itself” convey the impression that the flowers actively produce the colors and the vibrancy which Clarissa admires.

Two similes continue this personification of the flowers, establishing a connection between flowers, femininity, and the notion of a precious yet vulnerable female intimacy. The flowers are compared to “frilled linen clean from a laundry”. This simile then expands to incorporate the frills of the previous simile into a complex tableau in which “girls in muslin frocks” gather to collect flowers

at the end of a summer's day. One also understands, through parallels with Sally Seton's treatment of flowers, that while the realm of the intimate is the only one which offers freedom to Clarissa it is also at risk of becoming a secluded, constrictive space delimited by conventional views of frail, virginal, and decorative femininity. The ecstatic fringes upon the elegiac with the grayness of the moths which hints at death and decay and the "frilled linen" connoting the indissoluble connection between femininity, domesticity and virginity.

At the same time, these attributes of femininity – flowers, linen and frills – delimit a female space characterized by softness, color, intimacy and vibrancy. Like the flower shop itself, this space – which, more than visualized, is somewhere between imagined and remembered – is a haven of female experience. The notion of intimacy is conveyed through the seclusion of the flower shop, the feminine connotations of the flowers and the garden, the virginal connotations of the "fresh" and "clean linen," the reference to "girls" and the "grey white moths," the time frame depicting evening with "its almost blue-black sky," and the contrast between this natural, peaceful setting and the rush of the city.

Finally, the description of the flowers relies on visual elements which overlap with a haptic dimension, lending the perceptive experience an intimate nature. One example of this is the ambiguity of the verb "glow" which refers to a radiance which can be perceived by the onlooker from without or from within as both a visual and a haptic event. One understands that this is not solely Clarissa's perception of the flowers on display but the representation of a moment in which she perceives – feels and senses – the flowers as expressive of an intimate female sensuality and experiences a visionary communion with the female body. Here we have possibly an alternative image of female sexuality, in which the virginal and the erotic co-exist, which excludes penetration and intrusion, the moment of ecstasy resulting rather from the flowers' exuding of color, in a radiating outward motion, glowing, burning.

In this moment, Woolf foregoes a portrayal of sensual pleasure which would depend on the visualization of the female body and its passive subjection in favor of a texturing of Clarissa's sensual experience: the vibration through which the subtle hues of the flowers mingle with Clarissa's perception of them in a tableau which captures her style of perception, and portrays herself beyond the self, set into connection with a broader encoding of the feminine in the literary text. In this passage, as in much of *Mrs Dalloway*, it seems that Woolf purposefully discards the visual as a tool for rendering the body, allowing for focus on Clarissa's private experience of her body as a mode of apprehension of the sensible world.

In doing so Woolf perhaps seeks to reverse the primacy of sight as an epistemological mode. As Galen Johnson notes:

The sensible properties of the world, namely color, taste, sound, odor and touch, were called "secondary qualities" and regarded with diminished status in knowing the world in light of their alleged subjectivity and privacy. Since these secondary qualities are the ones more closely connected with the emotional and valuing tone of our experience, emotions and values were also relegated to secondary and subjective status, resulting in an arid and sterile rationalism that Husserl called the "crisis of European sciences."<sup>334</sup>

More specifically, Woolf values colour and touch over sight in representing the female body, lending it a vibratory quality through which it is not just a property of the appearance of the flowers, as it could qualify a body part, but a quality which affects the viewer and expresses the viewer's affect.

Vibration would be characteristic of a perceptive event in which the viewer does not assert their domination over an object or their subjection to the fascinating image but which takes the form of a communion in which the boundaries between viewer and viewed are blurred through the overlap caused by affect. The flowers described here may serve as an example of how the natural world in *Mrs*

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<sup>334</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 12.

*Dalloway* is intertwined with the representation of the body: it expresses and channels the vibratory dimension of perception.

## 2. The Body Objects: Objects, Lyricism and the Enigma of Being

There is a short description of Peter Walsh on the very first page of *Mrs Dalloway* which is remarkable for its metonymic portrayal of Peter: “it was his sayings one remembered; his eyes, his pocket-knife, his smile, his grumpiness and, when millions of things had utterly vanished – how strange it was! – a few sayings like this about cabbages” (p.3). Here the list of character traits which Clarissa associates with Peter has the opposite effect of the kind of materialistic description of character which Woolf sought to avoid: through its portrayal of selective memory, it underlines the elusive nature of character or, as Walter Pater put it in the conclusion to *The Renaissance*, “that strange, perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves.”<sup>335</sup> In *Mrs Dalloway*, the ordinary object lends to the evanescent quality of the characters rather than enforcing or stabilizing their image. Objects blur the boundaries of the body, expanding the sphere of embodiment, and contesting the divide between subject and object, individual and collective, material and lyrical.

In the list of things Clarissa remembers about Peter, the objects mentioned – his pocket-knife and cabbages – stand out through their apparent randomness. Peter’s pocket-knife is most notable through its lack of function. For Bill Brown, objects become things precisely when they lose their pre-determined functionality and symbolic potential. The “thing” acts “as a mediator of subject-object relations” replacing objects:

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<sup>335</sup> *Op. cit.*



when they stop working for us: [...] when their flow within the circuits of production and distribution, consumption and exhibition, has been arrested [...] The story of objects asserting themselves as things, then, is the story of a changed relation to the human subject and thus the story of how the thing really names less an object than a particular subject-object relation.<sup>336</sup>

In the scene in which Peter and Clarissa are reunited, the conflict which opposes them as well as the ambivalent feelings which accompany it are in part expressed through a mutual irritation with the other's belongings. When Peter expresses reluctance to tell Clarissa about his love affair with Daisy he thinks: "she is too cold [...] sewing, with her scissors." The object world conveys the gulf which divides them; socio-economically, at first – Peter notes "he was a failure compared with all this – the inlaid table, the mounted paper-knife, the dolphin and the candlesticks, the chair-covers and the old valuable English tinted prints – he was a failure!" – then spiritually (p. 37).

In a similar way, Clarissa grows irritated at Peter's handling of his pocket-knife, noting first that "he took out his knife quite openly – his old horn-handled knife which Clarissa could swear he had had these thirty years – and clenched his fist upon it" (p. 37). The knife, however, does not seem to matter intrinsically but rather to the extent that it is an expression of the circumstances that divide the two ex-lovers: "what an extraordinary habit that was, Clarissa thought; always playing with a knife. Always making one feel, too, frivolous; empty-minded; a mere silly chatterbox, as he used." In this moment Clarissa takes up her needle as if to gather her belongings to protect herself as they "sitting side by side on the blue sofa, challenged each other."

What strikes the reader about Peter Walsh's pocket-knife is not just its lack of use or function, but also its role in enabling the lyrical mode of the text. Comparatively to Joyce's *Ulysses*, *Mrs*

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<sup>336</sup> Bill Brown. "Thing Theory." In *Things*, ed. Bill Brown. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press. 2004. pp. 1-22. p. 4.

*Dalloway* is a decluttered novel, relying on well-selected references to the material world which manage to give a complete sense of the context of Mrs Dalloway's day in London while seeming randomly chosen. The flow of objects is nonetheless essential to the lyricism of *Mrs. Dalloway*, constituting the plane of the mundane which elicits that of the visionary and allowing Woolf to instill the idea that the enigmatic dimension of the object world is essential to the riddle-like quality of vision. Flowers, petticoats, a pocketknife drift through the novel, through the city streets and through the consciousnesses of the characters, their connections and recurrences signaling the working of a larger pattern of significance relying on the evanescence and enigmatic thingness of mundane objects to convey emotion.

The discrepancy between a familiar world of objects and the transport of moments of being highlights that the latter results from the enigma of the everyday, which is the subject's and the object's both belonging to a common state of being. This is perhaps why moments of being arise during everyday moments, so that there seems to be an inexplicable proximity between Clarissa's visions and the familiar object world. One example of this might be how Clarissa's vision of the match burning in a crocus occurs while she is undressing, setting ordinary objects on her dressing table: "laying her brooch on the table, she had a sudden spasm, as if, while she mused, the icy claws had had the chance to fix her" (p. 31).

In an essay on "Objecthood, Banality, and Refusal in *Ulysses*" Saikat Majumdar reflects upon the impact of objects on the interpretation of *Ulysses*.<sup>337</sup> He makes several points which are enlightening for our understanding of *Mrs Dalloway*. Majumdar takes as an example John Frow's interpretation of a poem entitled "Pebble" by Polish poet Zbigniew Herbert. In the poem, he writes,

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<sup>337</sup> Saikat Majumdar. "A Pebblehard Soap: Objecthood, Banality, and Refusal in *Ulysses*." In *Papers on Joyce. Vol. 10/11*. Festschrift for Francisco Garcia Tortosa, eds. Francisco Garcia Tortosa & Carmelo Medina Casado. Murcia: Spanish James Joyce Society. 2004-5. pp. 219-38.

“the pebble seems to resist meaning-making, a resistance that renders parodic the courtly and romantic idiom of the poem that puts the pebble at the center of its intense gaze.” In Frow’s own words:

This is the paradox of any fascination of the thingness of things, that things posited in themselves, in their distinction from intention, representation, figuration, or relation, are thereby filled with an imputed interiority and, in their very lack of meaning, with a ‘pebbly meaning’ which is at once full and inaccessible.<sup>338</sup>

Majumdar argues that when the symbolic and practical functions of the object are severed, the object becomes enigmatic, surrounded by the mystery of its mute materiality. The banality of the object is thus essential to its “epistemological resistance,” which is also an ideological resistance to “Enlightenment paradigms of reason, subjectivity, and knowledge-production.”<sup>339</sup>

Surprisingly perhaps, it seems that in their treatment of the enigmatic object, Joyce and Woolf similarly rely on banality as a form of resistance to imperializing structures of knowledge-making. Majumdar explains that Douglas Mao adopted the central arguments of Adorno’s *Negative Dialectics* as a counterargument to Hegel’s philosophy of the “hegemony of the subject” and the “supremacy of the abstract concept over the concrete materiality and earthy particularity of the object.” Mao writes that the object “materializes in an ongoing campaign against the reasoning subject’s inevitable and inevitably violent, move to reduce everything in the world to a concept.”<sup>340</sup> Majumdar further concurs with Garry Leonard’s analysis of how Joycean epiphanies indict imperialist historical discourses, noting that Joyce’s epiphanies also coincide with the presence of the banal object, linking Joyce’s interest in the resistance of the object to post-colonial “specific critiques of imperialist epistemologies and politico-economic structures.” Majumdar concludes that the banality of the object world acts as

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<sup>338</sup> John Frow. “A Pebble, a Camera, a Man Who Turns into a Telegraph Pole.” In *Things*. ed. Bill Brown. *Op.cit.* pp. 346-61. p. 348.

<sup>339</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 220.

<sup>340</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 220-21.

an indication of the relationship between Ireland and England, extending this logic to the act of walking itself:

Unlike that of Baudelaire and Virginia Woolf, flânerie in a colonial city like Dublin is simultaneously an act of consumption overshadowed by exploitation and thus represents an interpellation into the regime of control and surveillance ... The production of banality – partially a result of the continued frustration of these desires – is, therefore, not only an indication of colonial Ireland's fractured relation to consumer capitalism but also of its subaltern relation to the British Empire.<sup>341</sup>

Although Woolf displays her protagonist's belonging to imperialist British society in *Mrs Dalloway*, the way in which Joyce instrumentalizes the banality of the object in his epiphanies uncannily resonates with the inception of the moment of being within the ordinary in *Mrs Dalloway*. To see Woolf as disengaged from the critique of imperialist structures is to overlook the ways in which *Mrs Dalloway* portrays an affinity between materialism, the objectifying gaze, and imperialist patriarchal mechanisms which seek to control and subdue both female and marginal bodies. If one thinks of Clarissa mending her dress, one begins to perceive how *Mrs Dalloway* shows flights of lyricism to be grounded in the everyday use of ordinary objects, and peaks of emotion to result from the mundane motions of a domestic daily life. The object becomes a means for Woolf to fracture the solipsism of the subject and to inflect the hermeneutic process of reading. By capitalizing on the material object's resistance to meaning Woolf includes it in the process of redefining a lyrical subject.

In "Le sujet lyrique hors de soi" Michel Collot defines emotion as a form of transport which connects the subject to the lyrical object, drawing the subject outside the self. It is that which "only prolongs and reenacts that movement which constantly carries the subject and makes it drift outside of itself, and through which alone it can ek-sist and ex-press itself."<sup>342</sup> In this essay, Collot explores the

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<sup>341</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 234.

<sup>342</sup> Collot, Michel. "Le Sujet lyrique hors de soi," ed. Dominique Rabaté. *Figures du sujet lyrique*. Paris: P.U.F, 1996. pp. 113-25.

role of phenomenology in setting new terms for the lyrical subject. For Collot, exile and ecstasy are central dynamics for the modern lyrical subject, which is determined by the pull of the object:

The modern lyrical subject lives in the interval between the 'I' and the 'self', the self and the other: being dislodged from pure interiority, he is 'outside himself' or 'out of himself', torn between the two ontological extremes of exile and ek-stasis.<sup>343</sup>

By contrast, Joyce uses the object to articulate more specifically the dispossession of Dublin and his characters with the artistic enterprise of reclaiming Dublin. The exiled writer from a colonized land, Joyce clutters the pages of *Ulysses*, the streets, homes and minds of Dubliners with objects. It is as if Woolf refrains to some extent from materialism because it articulates in fiction the terms of the subservience of the female body and the female artist, whereas Joyce embraces materialism as a form of resistance to colonialist culture. In *Ulysses*, the object world helps to delineate what Willa Cather referred to as "the emotional penumbra of the characters"; objects serve to expand the contours of the body and reversely the material details of Joyce's settings expand the perimeter of being.<sup>344</sup> Cheryl Herr has demonstrated the Heideggerian dimension of objects in Joyce's text, commenting on how objects are depicted in their relations to the everyday and how their functions are used to highlight Bloom's sensorial being-in-world.<sup>345</sup>

At the same time, objects in *Ulysses* are widely portrayed as dysfunctional and this dysfunctional quality is meant to reflect the breaking down of the mimetic function of language in Joyce's fiction. For instance, when Bloom is making breakfast for Molly in "Calypso" he notes the many minor malfunctions of the objects around him and their awkward appearances: the tray has a "hump" which

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<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.* p. 114.

<sup>344</sup> Willa Cather. "The Novel D  meubl  ." In *Not Under Forty*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. rptd. 1988. pp. 43-49.

<sup>345</sup> Cheryl Temple Herr. "Being in Joyce's World." In *James Joyce in Context*, ed. John McCourt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2009. pp. 163-172.

“bumped” and the kettle is “dull and squat.” The awkward appearance of the objects is reflected in the awkwardness of the sentences which describe them so that the function of the sentence no longer appears to be mimetic but rather to showcase the breaking down of the mimetic function through its unpoetic quality. The aim is first to express Bloom’s relationship to his domestic environment through his perception of it; then to draw attention to language as an aesthetic artefact. One might wonder whether the functionality of objects is partially undermined to put forward the ways in which Bloom’s object world channels affect and acts as an extension of the body.

Clutter is part of the *modus operandum* of *Ulysses*. Genetic criticism has shown us that Joyce’s writing technique consisted in continually adding from the paraphernalia of daily life as he wrote.<sup>346</sup> “Ithaca” extrapolates the maximalism of Joyce’s approach to rendering the detail of the material world. Whereas in *Ulysses* objects freely contribute to expressing and expanding Bloom’s character through their role in depicting the fabric of the everyday and a character’s emotional perimeter, they are also necessary to the destruction of the body image and its conventionally symbolic meanings. The objects of *Ulysses* are often things in the sense that they offer some resistance to meaning or complicate the symbolic portrayal of characters.

Two examples of this are the potato and the lemon soap which Bloom carries around in his pocket throughout the day. There is no solid explanation as to why Bloom has a potato in his pocket. One

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<sup>346</sup> See Michael Groden. *Ulysses in Progress*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1977. In “James Joyce, Reader” Geert Lernout gives the following description of Joyce’s writing process: “In writing his last two books, Joyce collected an enormous mass of materials in notebooks [...] At least from the time when he was writing *Stephen Hero*, *Dubliners* and *A Portrait*, Joyce seems to have collected information from written sources in small copybooks. These heterogeneous materials, without references to their provenance, were later mined for use. Joyce would either use the word or phrase directly in one of his drafts, or else copy it in a more systematic ‘repository’ notebook or on special notesheets destined for a particular episode or manuscripts. In both cases he would cancel the item in the notebook with a coloured crayon.” Lernout also gives an account of what kinds of material Joyce was collecting: “Joyce read newspapers for political news, but he was also interested in obituaries, advertisements, comics and gossip, Ladies’ columns. He also carefully followed the reports of sensational murder and other trials in the London, Dublin and Irish provincial courts. He did read literary journals, but mostly issues in which his own work or reviews about his work appeared, and even then he was in one case more interested, at least for the purposes of this notebook, in an article on fox-hunting” (pp. 29-30). Geert Lernout. “James Joyce, Reader.” In *Joyce Studies*, no. 13 (2004). Dublin: National Library of Ireland. We also know from diaries belonging to Stuart Gilbert that Joyce collected “queer names” of streets, suburbs, parks for further use. Stuart Gilbert. *Reflections on James Joyce: Stuart Gilbert’s Paris Journal*, eds. Thomas F. Staley & Randolph Lewis. Austin: University of Texas Press. 1993.

could even suspect that Joyce chose a potato specifically because it is an object which has no imaginable function in the symbolic order of *Ulysses* yet fits tantalizingly well into 1906 Dublin. It is food which cannot be eaten and there is no conceivable use for it, yet it is reminiscent of the Great Famine and the history of Ireland. Joyce severs the potato from its function and leaves its symbolic meaning equally opaque so that the object asserts its thingness, which is its materiality, inaccessible to the order of meaning. The potato appears on Bloom's person and Joyce has Bloom acknowledge its presence, so that it nonetheless appears to be an intimate belonging. The inaccessibility of the object thus translates to Bloom, setting the symbolic portrayal of the character at odds with the thingness of the object.

Other objects increase Bloom's awareness of his body, such as the lemon soap which Bloom purchases at the beginning of *Ulysses*, which resurfaces throughout the episodes. As early as 1955, John Greenway noted in his "Guide Through James Joyce's *Ulysses*" that the lemon soap "begins its own little Odyssey" in "Lotus Eaters". It appears again in nine out of the thirteen remaining episodes. Bloom purchases the lemon soap in "Lotus Eaters", an episode which highlights sensuality, and the episode concludes with Bloom using the soap to bathe.

Unlike the potato, the soap invites symbolic meanings. Bloom is drawn to its "citronlemony" scent at the chemist's where he has made a stop to buy some cosmetics for Molly, just after he has read a letter from his lover Martha asking him what perfume his wife wears. Citrons are a fruit which often comes to Bloom's mind when thinking of Molly and her native Gibraltar. As letters often migrate to form new words in *Ulysses*, Joyce perhaps also intended lemon as an anagram of melon, another fruit which Bloom associates with Molly.

The lemon soap is first presented as an allure to the senses, refiguring both Molly's curvaceous body and her scent, acting as a trace which lingers on Bloom's person to remind him of Molly. At the same time, although the lemon soap draws attention to Bloom's body, after "Lotus Eaters" it mostly

acts as an interference, sticking to Bloom's body, soiling his handkerchief and creating confusion. The soap's odyssey is comical due to the sheer number of times Bloom forgets that he has a bar of soap on him before it turns up unwanted. In "Hades" he sits "on something hard" before realizing the soap is in his hip pocket and transferring it "to his inner handkerchief" (*U* 6.4617). In "Aeolus" Bloom takes "out his handkerchief to dab his nose" before realizing the soap is still in the handkerchief and moving it "buttoned, into the hip pocket" (*U* 7.5681). In "Lestrygonians" while trying to look busy Bloom pretends to be looking for something in his pocket before finding the soap: "Ah soap there I yes" (*U* 8.8581). In "Sirens" Bloom is stuck to the soap while standing up, "feeling rather sticky behind" and in "Nausicaa" he wonders whether Gerty's perfume is lemon-scented before realizing "ah no, that's the soap" (*U* 13.17817).

The soap may not have a meaning but it has a presence which calls attention to the reader's role in deciphering the function of the many objects of the book. Like Bloom, the reader does not really know what to do with the bar of soap. Like many of the objects in *Ulysses*, its role in the hermeneutics of the text is difficult to ascertain. It acts as clutter, a polluting object which is overly present without being useful or even causing some discomfort. Like the trace of Molly's perfume, the soap claims Bloom's attention and points to the ambivalence of sentient existence, encapsulating both Bloom's pleasure and pain. Karen Lawrence has noted:

Joyce deliberately includes random details that lie outside the symbolic form he himself creates. These details resist recuperation as part of the symbolic schema and thus dramatize the innate recalcitrance that materiality presents to the shaping imagination. They represent the wealth of life that cannot be assimilated to literary purposes.<sup>347</sup>

Objects play off the sentient body to achieve their significance or entrench their resistance to signification, hinting at the fact that their role is mainly to play up the dichotomy of alienation and at-

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<sup>347</sup> Karen Lawrence. *The Odyssey of Style in Ulysses*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1981. p. 78.



homeness, self-possession and dispossession, public and private facets of the self, and the gap between the body, the materiality of the text and its signification. The soap's own odyssey exemplifies textuality's double belonging to matter and meaning, body and language. In "Inventorying 'Ithaca'" Ramiller notes that critics such as Umberto Eco and Ariel Freedman have explained Bloom's relation to the object world from a phenomenological perspective as a "contact zone" articulating the inside and the outside. He writes:

The things in *Ulysses* are more than props or tools for characters, and character is more than a motivating factor for the inclusion of certain things. Instead, there is an inescapable identity between the two, a kind of co-constitution that requires the author to create the subject and the subject's things as part of a unified whole.<sup>348</sup>

Do the many objects of *Ulysses* make up a contact zone for the inside and the outside? This consubstantiality between Bloom and the object world becomes evident in the "Calypso" episode in which, righting the things on the breakfast tray he is preparing for Molly, the inadequacy of things comes to reflect Bloom's own sense of inadequacy. The "inescapable identity" between Bloom and the object world is perhaps what led Woolf to deplore the egotism of *Ulysses*, the sense that the material world is under the helm of an unsurpassable ego.

It is when objects are recalcitrant to expressing meaning and to the constitution of Bloom's ego, when they make the fictional character of the book more obvious and when they encourage the hermeneutic game through which *Ulysses* engages with the reader that they fracture the solipsism of the work and reaffirm their appeal as material things. The textuality of the book, which Molly appears as the main avatar of, is constantly challenging Bloom's subjective status and his role as the

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<sup>348</sup> Neil Ramiller. "Inventorying 'Ithaca': Things, Identity, and Character in James Joyce's *Ulysses*." In *Western Tributaries*. Vol. 4 (2017). pp. 1-12. p. 8. <http://journals.sfu.ca/wt/index.php/westerntributaries/article/view/39/24>. accessed 08/21/2019.

protagonist. The most overtly experimental chapters, such as “Aeolus” or “Ithaca” coincide with Bloom’s displacement from the position of subject, providing greater distance between the reader and Bloom as the main focalizer of the text.

In “Aeolus” the soap appears once more in Bloom’s stream of consciousness: Bloom notes the presence of the lemon soap bar before moving it yet again from his handkerchief to his pocket. However, the caption “ONLY ONCE MORE THAT SOAP,” calls attention to the fact that the book is repeating itself and acts as an objectifying comment on Bloom, rejoicing in the comic potential of the character’s obsession with materiality, while material comforts often show themselves to be only semi-satisfactory. *Ulysses*’ disruption of the categories of subject and object, body and thing, feeds the comic drive of the novel through which a greater distance is established between Bloom and the reader, who is increasingly aware that Bloom is a fictional construct.

In *Mrs Dalloway* the object world furthers the divide between the daily drone of non-being and the significance of being. Objects serve several functions in the novel, one of which is to underline the hegemony of rational thinking as an epistemological model. Woolf references the object world to contrast rational and affective apprehensions of the world and to qualify individual perceptions of reality. Through the individuating potential of the object, what Woolf seems to be expressing here is an “indomitable egotism” which flouts the possibility for communion on the deeper, more meaningful level of “life” itself. That the object-world might, through its association with individuality, be the realm of an “indomitable egotism” which is alienating and isolating seems at the heart of Clarissa’s frustration with the knife and Peter’s defying stance:

For Heaven’s sake, leave your knife alone! She cried to herself in irrepressible irritation; it was his silly unconventionality, his weakness; his lack of the ghost of a notion what anyone else was feeling that annoyed her, had always annoyed her; and now at his age, how silly!

I know all that, Peter thought; I know what I'm up against, he thought, running his finger along the blade of his knife, Clarissa and Dalloway and all the rest of them; but I'll show Clarissa – (p. 39)

Peter's pocket-knife expresses an individuality which appears futile and arbitrary in contrast to what Clarissa terms "their exquisite intimacy" (p.39). Here, the world of objects delineates a protective shell which does not prove entirely effective and acts as a counterpoint to the emotional subcurrents at play: "thrown by those uncontrollable forces, thrown through the air, he burst into tears; wept; wept without the least shame, sitting on the sofa, the tears running down his cheeks."

Woolf's objects destabilize the boundaries between the private and public self, between the solidity of the image and the evanescence of vision. When Peter Walsh returns to his hotel after his walk around London, he is overwhelmed by the soullessness of the objects surrounding him. The public dimension of the hotel denies him a sense of significance and intimacy, giving the impression that all individuals are interchangeable:

Any number of people had hung up their hats on those pegs. Even the flies, if you thought of it, had settled on other people's noses. ... Some arid matron made her rounds at dawn sniffing, peering, causing blue-nosed maids to scour, for all the world as if the next visitor were a joint of meat to be served on a perfectly clean platter. For sleep, one bed; for sitting in, one armchair; for cleansing one's teeth and shaving one's chin, one tumbler, one looking-glass. Books, letters, dressing-gown, slipped about on the impersonality of the horse-hair like incongruous impertinences. (p. 131)

Like Clarissa, Peter divests himself of the objects which surround him before retreating into the most intimate realms of introspection and picks them up again before going down to dinner. Yet, Peter Walsh's comment on the impersonality of hotel rooms is not without recalling Clarissa's illumination while observing the anonymous old woman in the room across from her own. She notes that people

are connected beyond their private existences by the sheer ordinariness, the commonness of life, realizing that: “here was one room, there the next,” the ordinary making up a common pattern through which the moment of being can arrive.

Woolf relies on objects to build up the ordinariness of a day in the life of a London socialite. These objects remain scarce and although they fade into the backdrop in moments of being which foreground imagery of nature, they are essential in articulating the divide between the individuating cosmos of the city and the community of the sentient expressed by images of natural life. *Mrs Dalloway* is a decluttered novel which, despite its attentiveness to the ordinary, establishes a hierarchy between the orders of the material object and the sentient body, which is actually a hierarchy between image and vision, magnifying the former through the lens of the latter.

By contrast in *Ulysses*, objects help give the city of Dublin an intimate and domestic quality, while externalizing interiority. Everyday objects articulate the relationship between the self and the environment and locate characters on the spectrum ranging from displacement to at-homeness. Bloom’s and Stephen’s dispossession is conveyed through their relation to the object world, yet Bloom’s ability to cope with his dysfunctional environment shows that he is at home with displacement, able to make his home in the streets of Dublin. Bloom offers a route to overcoming the alienating processes of colonization.

For Septimus Smith, objects bespeak a radical alienation from the modern civilization which London represents. In his moments of vision, Septimus Smith cannot help but see the brutality of human society beyond the mechanisms of the ordinary. The capitalist industrial post-war society barely manages to disguise its violent impulses with consumerist distractions. For Septimus, the world of objects often gives way to visions of human vice. Objects are the trappings of a civilization which hides its brutality beneath the veneer of its public face with the comforting routines of the ordinary and the mundane:

There was Brewer at the office, with his waxed moustache, coral tie-pin, white slip, and pleasurable emotions – all coldness and clamminess within, - his geraniums ruined in the War – his cook’s nerves destroyed; or Amelia Whatshername, handing round cups of tea punctually at five – a leering, sneering, obscene little harpy; and the Toms and Berties in their starched shirt fronts oozing thick drops of vice. (p. 76)

With the character of Septimus Smith, Woolf radicalizes the opposition between a public, rational domain – life in civilized society – and a private sanctuary for the unmitigated exploration of the self. Septimus is alienated from the sound rationality of the object world. He is terrified by his incapacity to see objects as they are, in all their banal materiality. Despite the absurdity of Septimus’s visions of nature, he clings to scientific rhetoric and observation to persuade himself that he is not entirely alienated from objective reality. For instance, Septimus asks “what was the scientific explanation (for one must be scientific above all things)?”; when he hears “music [clanging] against the rocks up here” he notes the source “it is a motor horn down in the street” and the “anthem twined round now by a shepherd boy’s piping” is followed by a rational observation “(That’s an old man playing a penny whistle by the public-house, he muttered).” In this sense, Septimus’s relation to the object world sets him radically apart from Clarissa, who experiences moments of serenity through her familiarity with objects whether in the comfort of her home or on Bond Street, for instance.

Septimus’s visions are almost systematically followed by his attempts to rationally explain them by observing objects. Woolf insists on this through her choice of verbs which show Septimus’s efforts to be rational, while acting as ironic comments on the oppressive strictures of a society which values reason and rational observation over feeling. Septimus perceives himself as “interpret[ing]”; he “reasoned it out”; he is eager for proof (“as if to prove it (scientifically)"); and the truth-seeking he accomplishes through his visions uncannily parodies the truth-seeking of scientific observation of

objective reality: “all of this, calm and reasonable as it was, made out of ordinary things as it was, was the truth now” (p. 59).

The hegemony of the rational objective world which values proportion and whose proponents are doctors like Bradshaw stands in contrast to the epistemological mode of feeling and intuition represented by birdsong. Visions of birds characterize Septimus’s perception and shift the notion of truth from objective reality to lyrical poetry, feeling and beauty. Creatures which can navigate several planes of existence, the birds Septimus perceives act as symbols of a marginal existence. Through bird imagery Woolf intimates that a marginalized being may attain to a higher knowledge, some significance which Septimus tries to grasp. Their significance seems to come from their musicality and this link to music sets them apart as holding the secrets to the pattern of the universe.

Septimus’s struggle to navigate between these two interpretations of reality – the rational and the lyrical – is emblemized by his relationship to his wife Rezia. Rezia is part of the society which Septimus is alienated from: she is a hat-maker, she aspires to live her life according to social norms (“She could not grow old and have no children!” p. 76), and she values her social image. On the other hand, she is also creative and strives above all for human connection. Through bird imagery, Woolf seems to be articulating the possibility that Rezia may come to understand and validate Septimus’s alternate reality.

While watching her at work on one of her hats, Septimus sees Rezia’s movements as bird-like: “he watched her snip, shape, as one watches a bird hop, flit in the grass, without daring to move a finger” (p. 76). Septimus’s wariness is conveyed by the image of the bird who might take flight at the slightest movement of the observer. Septimus fears that at any second Rezia might show herself belonging to the world of the “brutes” like Holmes who impose the violent laws of human society. This world is that of the public gaze which mocks and rejects abnormality. It is emblemized by the “girl who did the room” who finds some of Septimus’s writings and reads it “in fits of laughter” (p.

119). For Septimus, she illustrates human cruelty and the impulse of human society to destroy each other. When Rezia refuses to run away with Septimus to Italy, not understanding his dislike of Holmes, Septimus is overcome by a sense of isolation, commenting that “communication is happiness.”

In the final scene before Septimus’s suicide, Septimus finds a moment of connection with Rezia which makes his death all the crueler. Septimus distinguishes between the world of the brutes and the visions he experiences. These visions are characterized using naturalistic imagery and the presence of birds and music. As he lays on the couch, Septimus watches as “outside the trees dragged their leaves like nets through the depths of the air; the sound of water was in the room, and through the waves came the voices of birds singing” (p. 118). Rezia sums up these visions in the following lines: “He would look over the edge of the sofa down into the sea. Or he was hearing music” (p.119). The figure of Shakespeare recurs throughout Septimus’s writings and visions, and Rezia remembers her first impression of him as “how serious he was, wanting her to read Shakespeare.” Septimus’s preoccupation with Shakespeare, the presence of birdsong throughout his visions, and his understanding that music bears a deeper meaning, shows that the visionary realm is a poetic one. There is an opposition between the visionary, poetic dimension in which Septimus touches upon the significance of existence and the mundane dimension of ordinary existence which stifles the individual.

This poetic dimension also entails a political one, as the visionary stands in contrast to the rational thinking and glorification of civilization upon which imperialism depends. In the last scene before Septimus’s suicide Rezia’s hat-making temporarily connects the two dimensions, and Septimus knows a moment of relief from the terror of objects: “gathering courage, he looked at the sideboard; the plate of bananas; the engraving of Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort; at the mantelpiece, with the jar of roses. None of these things moved. All were still; all were real” (p. 120). The references to “Queen Victoria”, “the plate of bananas” and “the jar of roses” which Septimus associates with the

“real” articulate the world of objects with images of imperialism, colonialism and English national identity.

Rezia’s composition acts as an almost parodic exploration of the idea that through art poetry and connection can be vested from the alienating processes of civilization, with its mechanized and mundane world of objects. Her tumbling out the contents of her sewing box onto the table has a certain beauty to it, with its enumeration of “ribbons and beads, tassels, artificial flowers.” These elements have a decorative and feminine connotation, but they also appear as artifices, hinting that this fabricated beauty may not persist. The description of Rezia’s sewing together the hat portrays a moment of serenity in which time is suspended. In the following lines, interior and exterior, mundane and visionary, artificial and natural meld together in a moment of creation, the rising and falling of Rezia’s fingers replicating the revolutions of the sun:

So she sewed. When she sewed, he thought, she made a sound like a kettle on the hob; bubbling, murmuring, always busy, her strong little pointed fingers pinching and poking; her needle flashing straight. The sun might go in and out, on the tassels, on the wallpaper, but he would wait, he thought, stretching out his feet, looking at his ringed sock at the end of the sofa; he would wait in this warm place, this pocket of still air, which one comes on at the edge of a wood sometimes in the evening, when, because of a fall in the ground, or some arrangement of the trees (one must be scientific above all, scientific), warmth lingers, and the air buffets the cheek like the wing of a bird. (p. 122)

Septimus’s relief is temporary and he relapses into despair as soon as Rezia leaves the room. However, when Rezia returns she in turn describes Septimus as he was when she first met him. Reiza compares Septimus to a bird: “with his big nose, his bright eyes, his way of sitting a little hunched, made her think, she had often told him, of a young hawk, that first evening she saw him” (p. 124). Bird imagery connects Rezia and Septimus at this moment. The narrative voice notes:



Septimus could feel her mind, like a bird, falling from branch to branch, and always alighting, quite rightly; [...] if he should say anything, at once she smiled, like a bird alighting with all its claws firm upon the bough. (pp. 124-125)

This imagery signals the alliance between Septimus and Rezia and her entry into the private realm of Septimus's sanctuary. The connection which they share is based on a sense of beauty and poetry. When Septimus realizes that doctor Bradshaw can control him because of his threats to kill himself, he tells Rezia to burn his writings, to get rid of the proof of his insanity. Yet Rezia refuses, on the basis that "some were very beautiful". Instead she proposes to "tie them up (for she had no envelope with a piece of silk)." Rezia's protection of Septimus's writings, which are treated like precious letters or an intimate item, tied up in silk for safekeeping, shows that she has chosen emotion over reason, and Septimus over doctor Holmes.

In this moment, Septimus perceives Rezia as one of the trees of his visions "sitting beside him [...] as if all her petals were about her. She was a flowering tree; and through her branches looked out the face of a lawgiver, who had reached a sanctuary where she feared no one" (p. 126). Earlier, as Septimus watches Rezia his visions of drowning at sea seem to fade and are replaced with "a sense ... of a coverlet of flowers." In the passage Rezia is associated with the natural elements present in Septimus's vision, as if it were possible in this moment of intimacy, for the two worlds to coincide. Yet the coverlet of flowers also recalls flowers on a grave and foreshadows the idea that the most peaceful embrace is in death. Rezia's entrance into the realm of the visionary is seen by Septimus as a triumph over Bradshaw and Holmes. Their union is emphasized by a final use of bird imagery as sitting down beside Septimus Rezia embraces the birdspeech of Septimus's visions:

She sat down beside him called him by the name of that hawk or crow, which, being malicious and a great destroyer of crops, was precisely like him. No one could separate them, she said. (p. 126)

Finally, when Holmes comes to claim Septimus, Rezia attempts to protect him “like a little hen, with her wings spread barring his passage” (p. 126).

Another object which acquires a certain “thingness” in the same context, through its role as a lyrical object, is Clarissa Dalloway’s dress. Just as Peter’s pocket-knife, the dress seems to invite symbolic interpretations. However, at the same time, the dress flouts the symbolism it invites, through a similar double-leaning of its signification towards, on the one hand, the individuality of the object and, on the other, its role in linking the body to universal experience.

The evening dress articulates the public and private dimensions of Clarissa’s character. It consolidates Clarissa’s role as a high society hostess by being a costume she had worn to “the Embassy party.” Clarissa insists on the social significance of the dress, “one of Sally Parker’s, the last almost she ever made,” it being the kind of dress Clarissa “could wear” and “had worn” in such prestigious venues as “Hatfield” or “Buckingham Palace.” On a surface level, the dress invites its interpretation as the symbol of Clarissa’s embrace of her social milieu and materialistic love of her luxurious lifestyle and belongings.

On a deeper level, the sewing together of the folds of the dress can also be read as a metaphor for Clarissa’s self-composure and for the acts of composition and creativity which she considers give meaning to her position as a hostess, and value to her party. The dress seems to express the superficiality of Clarissa’s social milieu and the artificiality of the hostess: Clarissa notes how it appears a brilliant green in “artificial light” yet seems faded in the sun. Symbolically its torn fabric may speak of a jaded, coarser reality to which Clarissa turns a blind eye. Furthermore, the act of mending the dress is part of the fabric of Clarissa’s daily life as a hostess, one of the many insignificant

acts which compose the whole of the party and give significance to her life: “she would mend it. ... she would take her silks, her scissors, her – what was it? – her thimble, of course, down into the drawing-room, for she must also write, and see that things generally were more or less in order.”

If the dress may be interpreted symbolically as a sign of Clarissa’s role in society, the tonality of the passage begs an ironic reading of this role. Upon entering the drawing-room, Clarissa finds Lucy readying the room for the party and takes pride in having a hand in re-arranging the setting for her party, for example “turning the crystal dolphin to stand straight” and removing “the old bald-looking cushion in the middle of the sofa” under the pretext of giving it to charity. In the same way, through the disparity between Clarissa’s and Lucy’s perspectives, and their intersecting roles as servant and hostess, Woolf casts an ironic light on Clarissa’s desire to mend her dress herself, portraying her self-professed generosity and show of humility as a pretense which barely disguises egotistic self-indulgence:

‘But, thank you, Lucy, oh, thank you,’ said Mrs Dalloway, and thank you, thank you, she went on saying (sitting down on the sofa with her dress over her knees, her scissors, her silks), thank you, thank you, she went on saying in gratitude to her servants generally for helping her to be like this, to be what she wanted, gentle, generous-hearted. Her servants liked her. (p. 33)

However, there is at the same time a haptic dimension to Clarissa’s mending of the dress which invites the reader to go beyond this earlier interpretation. Mending the dress is an act through which Clarissa loses herself in a moment of intimacy. The description of Clarissa’s handling of the dress draws attention to the senses through its alliterative quality: “plunging her hand into the softness, [she] gently detached the green dress and carried it to the window” (p. 32). The alliterations in “softness” and “green dress” or “silks” and “scissors” point to a simultaneous and alternative reading of the

passage which continues in the description of Clarissa's "pausing on the landing" to listen to the sounds of her household:

Faint sounds rose in spirals up the well of the stairs; the swish of a mop; tapping; knocking; a loudness when the front door opened; a voice repeating a message in the basement; the chink of silver on a tray; clean silver for the party. All was for the party. (p. 32)

Here, the lyricism of the passage relies on its synaesthetic dimension, its use of alliteration and assonance and of internal rhymes. Its deeper meaning is to connect the organization of the party, its composition, to the poetics of a rhythmic pattern, which Woolf sees as expressive of life itself.

This subtext becomes more readily apparent in the moment of calm which follows Lucy's exit, in which Clarissa's preoccupation with the mundane, the objects surrounding her, the preparation of the party, is replaced by the rhythms of the body, and amplified through the naturalistic symbolism of the sea, which connects the image of the ebb and flow of the waves to the rhythms of needle sewing, heart beating, and lungs breathing.

In this passage, one might gather an intimation of how naturalistic symbolism in *Mrs Dalloway* works to connect the object dimension of the body, its mundane physical existence as quasi-object, to the experience of embodiment as a ground for universality and inter-subjective relations, as well as expressive of a rhythm which Woolf associates to life as well as to artistic creation. At the same time, the rhythms of the body are shown to replicate the rhythms of the text, as the stress pattern of the line from Shakespeare which Clarissa has been thinking gives shape to the rhythm of the heartbeat, soothed by the pattern of the verse, as if its form has trumped its meaning.

Quiet descended on her, calm, content, as her needle, drawing the silk smoothly to its gentle pause, collected the green folds together and attached them, very lightly, to the

belt. So on a summer's day waves collect, overbalance, and fall; collect and fall; and the whole world seems to be saying 'that is all' more and more ponderously, until even the heart in the body which lies in the sun on the beach says too, that is all. Fear no more, says the heart. Fear no more, says the heart, committing its burden to some sea, which sighs collectively for all sorrows, and renews, begins, collects, lets fall. And the body alone listens to the passing bee; the wave breaking, the dog barking, far away barking and barking. (pp. 33-34)

The rhythms expressive of the "divine vitality" which is celebrated in *Mrs Dalloway* as part of the process of writing and reading rely on this double orientation of the body, turned towards the object and beyond the object through its experiential dimension.

It is this interloping which Merleau-Ponty describes as characteristic of embodiment: when he writes:

[The body's] double belongingness to the order of the 'object' and to the order of the 'subject' reveals to us quite unexpected relations between the two orders. It cannot be by incomprehensible accident that the body has this double reference; it teaches us that each thing calls for the other.<sup>349</sup>

In *Mrs Dalloway* objects such as Clarissa's dress, the flowers in Miss Pym's shop or the airplane circulating overhead do not so much tether the self to its individuality but undermine notions of individuality. The object often expresses a character's struggle for connection and the alienating force of social conventions, such as Miss Kilman's confrontation with the petticoats in the Army and Navy stores or Richard Dalloway's attempt to express his feelings for Clarissa by thrusting a bouquet of roses at her. The visionary quality of Woolf's prose involves moments of being expressive of "life" in the sense that the body is connected beyond the individual to a larger communal pattern.

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<sup>349</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Originally from *Le visible et l'invisible. Basic Writings*. ed. Thomas Baldwin. Trans. Alphonso Lingis. London: Routledge. 2004. p. 254.

For Woolf, ecstasy is intensely corporeal to the extent that it expresses the awareness of the body carried beyond its individual dimension. Moments of revelation are moments which manage to communicate the common store of emotion which connects the community of the sentient. Finally, the object helps determine the hermeneutics of the text through its epistemological resistance: the ordinary object and the lyrical subject are drawn together by the enigmatic nature of being.

### 3. Bodies at Sea and the Poetics of Flux

#### 3.1. Sea Imagery and the Rhythmic Dissolutions of the Body

Despite the urban settings of *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses*, the sea is a recurring presence, acting on the metaphorical level as well as the poetic to convey notions of identity as well as creative inspiration. The sea imagery of *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* establishes a connection between physical and textual productions, through organic and aesthetic conceptions of flux. The urban spaces of *Mrs Dalloway*'s London and *Ulysses*' Dublin are telescoped with aquatic imagery which creates a connection between the productions of the body and artistic production. From the start, Clarissa notes that the early morning air is "fresh as if issued to children on a beach" (p. 3). *Ulysses* begins atop Martello Tower with Stephen's impression upon returning to Dublin from his European exile, that Dublin is ringed about by a hostile sea. *Ulysses* concludes in "Ithaca" with Bloom the water-lover's poetic ode to water in all its forms, connecting the water flowing from his tap to the "stream of life we trace." Through the Ulyssean theme as well as through the history of Dublin, *Ulysses* establishes an unquestionable link between the sea and the navigation of selfhood through physical and spiritual dispossession.

*Mrs Dalloway* contains a layered construction of space, the city being telescoped onto the places of Clarissa's past and memories of the sea. Throughout *Mrs Dalloway* there is a wider network of imagery of contraction and expansion which encompasses the oceanic. In *Mrs Dalloway*, the bodies of the various characters are curiously connected through varying metaphors and similes which seem, at first, to represent nature but which may in fact be representing an underlying rhythmic pattern of sense-perception which connects both the urban and the natural world through the notions of seascape and river-flow. Simultaneously, the natural and the urban signify through the body whose latent memories of nature are compared to the ebb and flow of the waves stimulated by the rhythms of sense-perception in the city which in turn recall the rush of an ongoing stream.

Sea imagery points to Woolf's view of the embodied consciousness as an extended, fluid and intersubjective entity in *Mrs Dalloway*, which is more overtly expanded upon in *The Waves*. This view resonates with other categorizations of mystical experience such as the panenhenic experience defined by Robert Zaehner.<sup>350</sup> This theory of 'cosmic consciousness' was inspired by Oxford scholar Robert Zaehner's reading of Arthur Rimbaud's poems. Zaehner coined the term in contradistinction to pantheism as the experience of "Nature in all things or of all things as being one."

Far from having a distinct meaning, the aquatic imagery of *Mrs Dalloway* is polymorphous and connected to further metaphors of drift, flow, drowning and navigating. Clarissa's first sensation on taking to the London streets is that of "a plunge" into fresh waters, the fresh air compared to "the flap of a wave; the kiss of a wave" (p. 4). On her way to Bond Street, Clarissa thinks of Peter Walsh meeting his fiancée on a boat to India and reflects that Peter and her are nonetheless still connected "somehow in the streets of London, on the ebb and flow of things" (p.8). In Miss Pym's flower shop Clarissa experiences "this beauty, this scent, this colour" as "a wave which she let flow over her" and assuage her hatred of Miss Kilman. Returning home, Clarissa continues to equate emotions with aquatic

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<sup>350</sup> Robert Zaehner. *Mysticism, Sacred and Profane*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1969.

imagery. Learning that Richard is brunching with Lady Bruton whereas she is not invited, she registers a shock like “a plant on the riverbed feels the shock of a passing oar and shivers: so she rocked: so she shivered” (pp. 25-26).

Other characters contribute to the latent connection between London and seascape, emphasizing another view of sea-faring as imperial conquest and London as a stronghold of civilization: for instance, the scene in which Londoners’ observe a passing aeroplane, they also watch a “flight of gulls” cross the sky. Watching the aeroplane, Mrs. Dempster thinks of how she would have liked to see “foreign lands” and remembers her trips to a seaside resort near Kent: “she always went on the sea at Margate, not out of sight of land, but she had no patience with women who were afraid of water” (p. 24). Mrs. Dempster keeps track of the aeroplane as it shoots off “soaring over Greenwich and all the masts,” referring to an area of London south of the Thames where the Royal Naval College is situated. David Bradshaw’s explanatory notes remind us that “the aeroplane would also pass over the docks of London: West India (1802), London (1805), East India (1805), Surrey (1807), St Katharine’s (1828), etc., and the ships moored within them.”

Sea imagery also occurs in the consciousness of lady Bradshaw, where it contrasts with Clarissa and Septimus’s consciousnesses. For Lady Bradshaw, waiting for her husband in the car among her “grey furs, silver grey rugs” and thinking “sometimes, excusably, of the wall of gold, mounting minute by minute while she waited,” the sea has very different connotations of wealth, security and conquest: she thinks of the wall of gold “until she felt wedged on a calm ocean, where only spice winds blow” (p. 80). Likewise, when Lady Bruton remarks that Peter has returned from India, she finds it “vaguely flattering to them all. He had come back, battered, unsuccessful, to their secure shores” (p. 91). Contrasting with the sea as an emblem of power is a view of the sea as a timeless universal entity, deeply connected to the rhythms and transports of the body. Upon leaving Lady Bruton’s Richard’s mind begins to turn to Clarissa and as she begins to replace affairs of state in his mind, he notes “but there are tides in the body. Morning meets afternoon. Borne like a frail shallop on deep, deep floods,



Lady Bruton's great-grandfather and his memoir and his campaigns in North America were whelmed and sunk" (p. 94).

Another facet of the sea-scape connects river-flow, waves and depth to a visionary state of awareness of the body, which is both dangerous and exhilarating. In Septimus's visions birds "sing freshly and piercingly in Greek words" "from trees in the meadow of life beyond a river where the dead walk, how there is no death" (p. 21). In this passage, the Thames is conflated with the Styx, the river of the dead in Greek mythology, and London with death. The divide between danger, death and ecstasy is expressed through sea imagery. Retreating to her room, Clarissa notes she "felt often [...] an exquisite suspense, such as might stay a diver before plunging while the sea darkens and brightens beneath him, and the waves which threaten to break, but only gently split their surface, roll and conceal and encrust as they just turn over the weeds with pearl" (p. 26). Moments later in her room, Clarissa's vision of the "match burning in a crocus" conflates sexual desire with images of rushing, gushing and pouring. Sea imagery returns when Clarissa mends her dress, the rhythms of sewing and breathing replicating the way in which "waves collect, overbalance, and fall; collect and fall" (p. 34). Clarissa refers to her "exquisite intimacy" with Peter Walsh as a "brisk sea-salted air" (p. 39). Leaving Clarissa's Peter Walsh notes that London is silent and "time flaps on the mast" (p. 42). When Peter falls asleep on a bench in the park, his visions are said to "murmur in his ear like sirens lolloping away on the green sea waves [...] or rise to the surface like pale faces which fishermen flounder through floods to embrace" (p. 49):

Such are the visions which ceaselessly float up, pace beside, put their faces in front of, the actual thing [...] and this figure, made of sky and branches as it is, had risen from the troubled sea (he is elderly, past fifty now) as a shape might be sucked up out of the waves to shower down from her magnificent hands, compassion, comprehension, absolution. (p. 49)

The smooth, reassuring yet confining finitude of the lake contrasts with the exquisite danger associated with sea imagery. The lake is referred to several times in *Mrs Dalloway*, and is connected to Clarissa's choosing Richard Dalloway over Peter Walsh and to her fitting into her domestic life as a London socialite. She makes the choice to marry Richard after a boat trip on the lake in which Peter senses the disconnection between them; when she meets Peter again in London she asks "Do you remember the lake?" (p.36) and she comes across Hugh Whitbread watching the ducks on the lake.

The stillness of the lake contrasts with the stream of impressions and sensations which Clarissa associates with London and with life. The vitality of the London stream hinges upon the presence of time and the threat of death which define the rhythms of the city. When Septimus first courts Rezia he notes she looks "pale, mysterious, like a lily, drowned, under water" (p. 75). Throughout the novel, the resounding of Big Ben acts as a leitmotiv connecting the image of sea-waves to the notion of sound-waves: "the sound of the bell flooded the room with its melancholy wave" (p.100). The ringing of Big Ben levels out the chaotic stream of impressions, while giving a coherence to the isolated debris of "little things" which make up daily existence: "all sorts of little things came flooding and lapping and dancing in on the wake of that solemn stroke which lay flat like a bar of gold on the sea. Mrs Marsham, Elie Henderson, glasses for ices" (p. 108):

Big Ben, with its lap full of trifles, Beaten up, broken up [...] the last relics of this lap full of odds and ends seemed to break, like the spray of an exhausted wave, upon the body of Miss Kilman standing still in the street for a moment to mutter 'It is the flesh.' (pp. 108-9).

Aquatic imagery in *Mrs Dalloway*, more than drawing up an association between the sea and inner life or the depths of the soul, seems to articulate images of surface and depth, expressing a view

of the soul as navigating between the rush of the quotidian London riverflow and the oceanic depths of universal consciousness. This transpires in Peter's reflections on the truth of "our self":

who, fish-like inhabits deep seas and plies among obscurities threading her way between the boles of giant weeds, over sun-flickered spaces and on and on into gloom, cold, deep, inscrutable; suddenly she shoots to the surface and sports on the wind-wrinkled waves. (p. 136)

Peter also thinks of the rushing stream of impressions and the rush of Londoners heading to Clarissa's party as part of a carnival or celebration which involves the everyday: "it seemed as if the whole of London were embarking in little boats moored to the bank, tossing on the waters, as if the whole place were floating off in carnival" (p. 139). Clarissa's party is compared to a stream which emblemizes the connectedness of city life: "but it was her street, this, Clarissa's; cabs were rushing round the corner, like water round the piers of a bridge, drawn together, it seemed to him, because they bore people going to her party, Clarissa's party." Clarissa's ability to navigate both dimensions sets her apart from Septimus, the "drowned sailor" and her hybrid selfhood is expressed in the final pages of the novel in which she emerges in the midst of the party as a mermaid, navigating both surface and depth

And now Clarissa escorted her Prime Minister down the room, prancing, sparkling, with the stateliness of her grey hair. She wore ear-rings, and a silver-green mermaid's dress. Lolloping on the waves and braiding her tresses she seemed, having that gift still; to be; to exist; to sum it all up in the moment as she passed; turned, caught her scarf in some other woman's dress, unhitched it, laughed, all with the most perfect ease of a creature floating in its element. But age had brushed her; even as a mermaid might behold in her glass the setting sun on some very clear evening over the waves. (p. 147)

Throughout the novel, an assortment of images of collecting and drift characterizes the depiction of the elements of nature: sea, sky and land. Looking closer, these images convey significance in terms of a spectrum ranging from the equation of one's body to the firm contracted contours of the self as a public image on the one hand, and to the sense that the body's boundaries have been undone on the other. Much has been said of Clarissa's retreat up into her attic room after her morning walk to "buy the flowers." The retreat may symbolize many things: Clarissa's aging, her sense of isolation, her self-proclaimed frigidity, her increased awareness of death after the war and after her illness. Yet Clarissa more precisely expresses her increasing sense of disconnection as her growing incapable of "stretching, of absorbing, as in the youthful years, the colours, salts, tones of existence" (p. 26).

In this moment, Clarissa describes the death of the soul as the solidification of the margins of the self and of her body which is less and less able to experience the full palette of existence. Though Clarissa still recognizes that this June morning is "soft with the glow of rose petals for some," she momentarily excludes herself from the realm of the sentient, feeling at odds with the "flowering of the day, out of doors, out of the window, out of her body and brain which now failed" (p. 26). In some ways, Clarissa assimilates the rigid borders of body and self to death and sterility. Her narrow bed signifies her frustration with "a virginity [...] which clung like her to a sheet", which she labels a "contraction."

Clarissa describes sexuality as the opposite: a glow, an overflowing of boundaries, to the creation of a moment of ecstatic connection. This overflow is voiced in terms which recall the formation of waves, breaking up the still surface of the water: "something central which permeated; something warm which broke up surfaces and rippled the cold contact of man and woman, or of women together" (p. 27). In this canonical passage of feminist literature, portraying female sexual desire, the contemporary reader might be struck by Clarissa's compulsion to mediate her desire through male desire: "she did undoubtedly then feel what men felt." Clarissa's feeling that lesbian desire can only

express itself in the terms of male sexuality and that female desire gains existence when it manages to encroach upon “what men [feel] for women” speaks volumes of the complexity of articulating female desire in the context of the sort of first-wave feminism in which Woolf is writing. However, at the same time, Woolf’s portrayal of lesbian desire furthers her reflection on the myth of the individual embodied self and of the fixed boundaries of the body in *Mrs Dalloway*. The experience of sexual desire enables the moment of being, a moment of ecstasy, through the overlapping of the boundaries between the male and female body and individual female bodies.

Contrary to the flow and drift of the waves, the contraction of the self has a visual element about it which entails a sense of impending danger and deathly isolation. The process of aging is one which Clarissa experiences as “icy claws” which she dreads will have “the chance to fix her” (p. 31). Watching the passing car, Septimus likewise dreads being transfixed by “this gradual drawing together of everything to one centre before his eyes, as if some horror had come almost to the surface and was about to burst into flames” (p. 13). In this moment of terror, Septimus feels himself “looked at and pointed at,” “weighted there, rooted to the pavement.”

This is a connection which Joyce equally posits in *Ulysses*. Stephen, the exiled artist struggles with a sense of dispossession which concerns his body, his country and his artistic production and all these issues are broadly conveyed in his relationship to water. By contrast it is no surprise that Bloom’s fluid sense of self as well as his desire for physical connection are expressed by his love of water in its many forms. Bloom equates water with life, thinking: “how can you own water really? It’s always flowing in a stream, never the same, which in the stream of life we trace. Because life is a stream” (*U* 8.7101). In *Ulysses* Joyce seems to apply the principle of “neverchanging everchanging water” to the flow of the narrative: as Bloom’s day progresses each new episode recycles elements from the previous ones, while using different styles and techniques.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, the waves tie into a wider metaphor for the prospect of restoring warmth and sensation through a momentary reconnection to the pattern of existence, the “waves of that divine vitality” which traverses the city. In *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf opposes linear narrative progression to the rhythms of the body through imagery of ebb and flow which is conveyed by the metaphors of streaming and drift. For instance, through an image which harks back to Clarissa’s memory of Bourton, with “the rooks rising, falling” over the trees, Septimus’s vision likens the rising and falling motion of the trees in the park to that of a wave: “the elm trees rising and falling, rising and falling with all their leaves alight and the colour thinning and thickening from blue to the green of a hollow wave” (p.19). The connection between Septimus and Clarissa does not only continue the reference to the Bourton of Clarissa’s youth and of her past self through tree and bird imagery but is also significantly predicated on the shared perception of the rhythms of the city as replicating the motions of a running stream. Aquatic imagery allows Woolf to establish a connection between fluid identities, the overflow of sense perception and artistic production.

The tenuousness of the connections which urban life makes more evident is further expressed by depictions of expansion and drift. The image of the wave is all at once a naturalistic embodiment of the rhythm of life and a metaphorical one for the fluctuating boundaries of the body beyond the self. Lady Bruton’s social interactions are depicted as a fine-spun web connecting social relations. The fragile web which inevitably stretches to breaking point once the moment is over conveys the ephemeral connection which social interactions provide. After lunch, Lady Bruton experiences each friend “attached to her by a thin thread [...] which would stretch and stretch, get thinner and thinner as they walked across London; as if one’s friends were attached to one’s body” (p. 95).

The image of a physical appendix which would attach one person to another and which is maintained by social interactions is repeated in a nightmarish form in the portrayal of Elizabeth’s relationship with Miss Kilman. Elizabeth’s departure is experienced by Miss Kilman as a painful

stretching and ripping apart of her body: “Miss Kilman felt, the very entrails in her body, stretching them as she crossed the room [...] stricken once, twice, thrice by shocks of suffering” (pp. 112-113).

Woolf sets this momentary, superficial, even painful mode of connection in parallel to the communion which shared modes of perception offers. Clarissa articulates a theory of universal connectedness through being, which opposes the image of a mist spreading through trees to Lady Bruton’s spiderweb. In Woolf’s theory of co-existence, both rhythm and sense-perception are key:

somehow in the streets of London, on the ebb and flow of things, here, there, she survived, Peter survived, lived in each other, she being part, she was positive, of the trees at home; of the house there, ugly, rambling all to bits and pieces as it was; part of people she had never met; being laid out like a mist between the people she knew best, who lifted her on their branches as she had seen the trees lift the mist, but it spread ever so far, her life, herself. (p. 8)

Images of drift resurface in the depictions of the passing car and plane. These vehicles emblemize the velocity of modernity at the same time as they highlight the modern individual’s unconscious partaking in the fabric of the city and in the underlying pattern of collective existence. This passive, unconscious manifestation of a common existence is conveyed by the portrayal of Londoners’ rumours at the sight of the car as “passing invisibly, inaudibly, like a cloud, swift, veil-like upon hills” (p. 12).

A parallel can be drawn between the passing of the car, which serves almost as a pretext to capture the latent unison of disconnected individuals, and the aeroplane which captures the attention of passersby. In both cases, Woolf toys with the reader’s expectations, replicated by the onlooking crowd, that the car and the plane might carry meaning. Londoners adopt the stance of the reader who embarks on a hermeneutic quest to discover the identity of the person in the car or of the message in the sky.

The passing of the car and the plane reveals nothing intrinsically other than the common aspiration for meaning, drawing a subtle connection between being and text, the onlooking Londoners and the reader of *Mrs Dalloway*. Woolf continues the connection between skyscape, drifting rumours, sense-perception and sense construction, through the depiction of the aeroplane's outranging motion stressed by the repetition of "away and away it went, fast and fading, away and away." The drifting aeroplane all at once expands the range of perception and symbolizes the expansion of the boundaries of the body, weakening the distinction between sight, thought and imagination: "away and away the aeroplane shot, till it was nothing but a bright spark; an aspiration; a concentration; a symbol [...] of man's soul; of his determination [...] to get outside his body" (p. 24).

Rather ironically, this quest for meaning culminates not with the revelation of the meaning of the signs "T, and O, an F", but with a rhythmical climax which seems sexual, a moment of ecstasy which uncannily recalls Joyce's portrayal of Bloom's ejaculation as fireworks in the 'Nausicaa' episode of *Ulysses*: "And now, curving up and up, straight up, like something mounting in ecstasy, in pure delight, out from behind poured white smoke looping."

This rhythm is also sonic: in the cases of Big Ben and the aeroplane it is soundwaves which connect individuals in *Mrs Dalloway* on a collective scale, while recalling the war and this allows Woolf to express an intimate connection of individual bodies which underlies its public manifestations. Trees, clouds and waves thus become expressive of a shared and far-reaching intimacy. Clarissa thinks of her intimate connection to Peter Walsh in these terms when he returns from India with news of his love affair with a married woman: "as if he had set light to a grey pellet on a plate and there had risen up a lovely tree in the brisk sea-salted air of their intimacy [...] their exquisite intimacy" (p. 39).

Modes of perception link the characters together on a subterranean level. For example, Clarissa's perception of Peter Walsh's hostility to her relationship with Sally seen "as one sees a landscape in a flash of lightning" casts light on the comparison of Peter's perception of the *passante* drifting down



the street surrounded by “the spirit of finery and whimsy” from the shop-window displays as “the light of a lamp goes wavering at night over hedges in the darkness” (p. 46).

In the central passage of the novel, in which Peter Walsh falls asleep on a bench in the park, the “rising and falling traffic” replicates the rising and falling motions of the waves in the ocean. Rhythm pervades sea, sky, and trees, which compose “the giant figure” who provides solace for the solitary traveler by “taking away from him the sense of the earth, the wish to return, and giving him for substitute a general peace, as if [...] all this fever of living were simplicity itself; and myriads of things merged in one thing” (p. 49). In sleep, Peter Walsh seems to approach an alternative plane of reality, the central motifs of which are sea, sky and branches, motifs which recur consistently in Clarissa’s memories and in Septimus’s present perception. These motifs seem to connect Peter Walsh’s sleep with Septimus’s and Clarissa’s experiences, signaling them out as particularly attuned to the visions which underly the ordinary.

The sea is persistently connected to the visionary through Clarissa and Septimus’s perceptions. One of Clarissa’s very first self-reflective remarks is that “she had a perpetual sense, as she watched the taxicabs, of being out, out, far out to sea and alone” (p. 7). The conflation of sea and vision is carried further through the character of Septimus, whose sense of embodiment is portrayed as severed from the ordinary and encompassed by the visionary. Septimus experiences himself as disembodied, drowned and cast ashore, his body “macerated until only the nerve fibres were left. It was spread like a veil upon a rock” (p. 58).

Whereas Clarissa appears at the edge of the precipice, transfixed by the terrifying yet exhilarating prospect of being swallowed by the waves, imagery of drowning pervades Septimus’s consciousness. While Clarissa is presented as at a remove from the daily drone of the thronging London crowds, Septimus is presented as existing on the margins of the world, a visionary being who has experienced death metaphorically even before his suicide. Septimus thus sees himself “high on his rock, like a

drowned sailor on a rock”; he is compared to “the sleeper” who “feels himself drawing to the shores of life”; his remoteness is stressed through the image of “the last relic straying on the edge of the world, this outcast, who gazed back at the inhabited regions, who lay, like a drowned sailor, on the shore of the world” (pp. 58-59, p. 79).

As the depths of the sea yield visions which “ceaselessly float up” Septimus’s drowning signals him out as having embraced unequivocally a dimension of visionary perception which alienates him from the “cotton wool of existence.” The link between vision and drowning is made explicit in the passage which precedes Septimus’s suicide:

Then there were the visions. He was drowned, he used to say, and lying on a cliff with the gulls screaming over him. He would look over the edge of the sofa down into the sea (p. 119).

Septimus’s visions recycle the motifs of the trees, the shore and the waves which surface throughout Clarissa’s thoughts. One of Septimus’s final moments of vision closely mirrors Clarissa’s peaceful recollection while mending her dress:

Outside the trees dragged their leaves like nets through the depths of the air; the sound of water was in the room [...] his hand lay there on the back of the sofa, as he had seen his hand lie when he was bathing, floating, on the top of the waves, while far away on shore he heard dogs barking and barking far away. Fear no more, says the heart in the body; fear no more. (p. 118)

In Peter Walsh’s vision-laden sleep embracing the visionary to the extent of self-destruction offers solace to the solitary traveler by “taking away from him the sense of the earth, the wish to return, and giving him for substitute a general peace” (p. 49). One better understands Clarissa’s comfort at Septimus’s death and her remark that “there was an embrace in death” if one understands death as an

avatar of the giant figure in Walsh's vision, the "champion of the rights of sleepers ... made of sky and branches" who seems to welcome the traveler "at the end of the ride." This figure is portrayed as merging all things in one in absolute simplicity, offering a response to the traveler who is weary and rising "from the troubled sea [...] to shower down from her magnificent hands, compassion, comprehension, absolution." The giant figure has the power to "with a toss of her head, mount [the solitary traveler] on her streamers and let [him] blow to nothingness with the rest" (p. 49).

In "The Metropolis and the Oceanic Metaphor" Melissa Baty argues that in *Mrs Dalloway* "oceanic imagery facilitates a larger discussion of the emerging modern city of London" and allows "Woolf to express a range of internal and external responses to the growing metropolis and related aspects of early twentieth century culture":

The characters in the novel definitively identify their experience of London and relationships with others in the city using this image of the sea; Woolf, in fact, uses the universal quality of the oceanic, which as a metaphor points to fluidity and ubiquity, to emphasize the relational connections possible in an urban setting.<sup>351</sup>

Baty draws upon the concept of the oceanic as discussed in the letters exchanged by Freud and the French writer Rolland, to contend that Woolf's use of water imagery foregrounds a division between body and soul to the extent that she "portrays the soul and emotional aspects of a person as inhabiting the depths of the sea, and the remainder, the physical body, left dwelling on the shore."<sup>352</sup>

Although Baty makes a valid point, she does not distinguish between oceanic imagery and its universal qualities and other instances of aquatic imagery more closely associated with the urban

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<sup>351</sup> Melissa Baty. *The Metropolis and the Oceanic Metaphor: E.M. Forster's Howards End and Virginia Woolf's Mrs Dalloway*. PhD dissertation submitted Fall 2003. p. 4.  
<https://research.libraries.wsu.edu:8443/xmlui/bitstream/handle/2376/2403/Baty%2C%20Melissa%20%20The%20metropolis%20and%20the%20oceanic%20metaphor.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>. accessed 08/21/2019.

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.* p. 21.

setting, such as stream and drift. In many instances, one could argue that the oceanic metaphor serves to build an elsewhere and to signify a universal selfhood which is referred to as both “soul” and “self” within the book, and which is on another plane than the urban setting although it is latent to it. Aquatic images which build up the sense of London itself and the quotidian either refer to the sea as a zone of colonial conquest which is historical (for instance through the character of Lady Bruton and her lineage) or refer to the “cold stream of impressions” which make up the texture of city life as an ongoing, ever-flowing body of rushing waters.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, moments of heightened sense awareness do not generally lead to an increased sense of self or of possessing a body, but involve an outward motion suggesting the salutary dissolution of the self through the body. This paradox may be useful to better understand what makes Woolf’s portrayal of embodiment so complex: that the heightened awareness of the senses – or attention to sense perception – seems to involve an increased sense of disembodiment, a zoning out of sorts. One reason for this distancing effect, which has been most frequently invoked by critics, is the great self-reflexivity of Woolf’s characters. However, it is possible to think of moments when sensations are processed through similes in free indirect speech not as the sign of the characters’ self-awareness, whether more or less subconscious, but as the expression of bodily excess as individual perceptions are intensified or expanded to a cosmic plane through the conflation of rhythms of the body expressed through cosmic imagery.

Many occurrences of the oceanic metaphor in *Mrs Dalloway* use hybrid imagery in the sense that the metaphor connects seascape, riverflow and skyscape with synesthetic effects. It seems that beyond the metaphorical dimension attributable to the ocean, the cosmic or universal dimension of these natural elements also comes into play more specifically. Similes also interfere with the strictly metaphorical dimension of the sea, by aiming to convey to the reader the inscape of a character through the recollection of their own physical sensations and perceptions at a specific moment in time.

The soul is portrayed as the unseen dimension of the sensing body, flesh conceived of as a sensing organ stripped of its exterior and therefore of its boundaries, which has the capacity to experience moments of ecstasy. These moments of ecstasy are not solely characterized by intense emotion, but rather by a motion through which the range of sense-perception expands from the individual and the everyday urban plane to the collective and the timeless natural plane. The London of *Mrs Dalloway* is doubled over by an oceanic metaphor, but perhaps even more so by a hybrid space circumscribing an aural spatiality where sensing bodies connect through resonating ecstatic experiences which form planes of overlapping perceptions.

### 3.2. *Seaspeech, Springsong, and Sonic Materiality*

Gather a shell from the strown beach  
And listen at its lips: they sigh  
The same desire and mystery,  
The echo of the whole sea's speech

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "The Sea-Limits" (1828-1882)

The sea they think they hear. Singing. A roar. The blood it is. Souse in the ear sometimes. Well, it's a sea. Corpuscle islands. (*U.* 11. 930-38)

In *Ulysses* sea imagery mingles with sea speech, drawing one to reconsider pre-conceived ideas of the male and female body around the notions of textual and physical production. "Telemachus", "Proteus", "Calypso" and "Lotus Eaters" are episodes which incorporate ambiguous sea imagery to emphasize the role of the female body in the anxiety of production (both physical and artistic) which affects Stephen and Bloom on their respective journeys.

“Telemachus” presents a haunting image of the sea which rings about Dublin bay. It reminds Stephen of the image of the “bowl of bitter waters” which stood next to his mother’s deathbed. For Stephen, the sea is haunted by the prospect of English invaders which have dispossessed the Irish of body and nation, but also by the ghost of the maternal body which portends death. In “Proteus” sea imagery is characterized by ambivalence, connecting the sea to both death and life, material, maternal and artistic production, and impressing upon the reader the presence of death in life.

The maternal body returns in this episode with the description of two women whom Stephen believes are carrying a misbirth onto the strand. The women carrying a misbirth out to sea confirm Stephen’s likening of the sea to a womb/tomb. Stephen re-appropriates this idea, channeling his anxiety surrounding the life and death-bearing powers of the mother sea into his art, noting the proximity of the words “womb” and “tomb” in his poem. Stephen seeks to process his ambivalent relation to the maternal body and to the mother land, reaffirming the ambivalence of the female body, which like the sea bears both life and death. The sign-reading and sign-making of “Proteus” respond to the dilemma which appears as early as “Telemachus”. Stephen’s struggle with the “ineluctable modality of the visible” translates the artist’s efforts to escape the influence of both mother and mother land by re-appropriating body and land through language and art.

In her study of “Water as Metaphor in Joyce’s *Ulysses*” Danica Igrutinovic refers to the sea as “protean prime matter” quoting Sydney Bolt’s claim that the sea is “the endless material flux” from which life emerges:<sup>353</sup>

The sea, of course, is the symbol of that flux. She is our mother because it is from the flux that our bodies emerge. The maternal and the material are etymologically linked, and evolutionary theory locates the origin of life in the ocean.<sup>354</sup>

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<sup>353</sup> Danica Igrutinović. “The Snotgreen Sea: Water as Metaphor in Joyce’s *Ulysses*.” In *Facta Universitatis. Series: Linguistics and Literature. Vol. 11. No. 1* (2013). pp. 55-66.

<sup>354</sup> Sydney Bolt. *A Preface to Joyce*. Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd. 1992. pp. 125-6.

Through Stephen's abortive poem and the interloping of life and death which translates through the connection between the sea and the maternal body, Stephen's horror at the death-bearing sea shows the proximity between the productions of the female body and the desire of the male artist to sublimate his sense of impotency and dispossession through artistic production.

This ambiguity transpires in the ambivalence of the image of Bloom floating in the bathwater at the end of "Lotus Eaters":

He saw his trunk and limbs riprippled over and sustained, buoyed lightly upward,  
lemoneyellow: his navel, bud of flesh: and saw the dark tangled curls of his bush floating,  
floating hair of the stream around the limp father of thousands, a languid floating flower.  
(*U* 5: 568-572)

Bloom's navel-gazing connects the stream to the flow of life through the "navel, bud of flesh" which is reminiscent of the "strandentwining navel of all flesh" of "Proteus", reminding Stephen that he is the product of another's creation, "lugged ... squealing into life" (p. 46). However, it also underlines his impotency, referring to his sexual organ as "the limp father of thousands, a languid floating flower." This line is doubly ironic as Bloom has only fathered one son who has died and seems incapable of producing any more offspring, so that unlike Abraham his lineage has no chance of surviving him. Secondly, the image of the "floating flower" has a feminine connotation which seems castrating and a Romantic connotation which is ironic: it already sets into place the passive feminine dimension of Bloom's sexuality.

Bloom's vision addresses on a physical level the same issues with creation that transpire in Stephen's wavespeech in "Proteus". Pausing to make water, Stephen listens to his own flow, replicating the sounds of the ocean:

Listen: a fourworded wavespeech: seesoo, hrss, rsseeiss, ooos. Vehement breath of waters  
amid seasnakes, rearing horses, rocks. In cups of rocks it slops: flop, slop, slap: bounded

in barrels. And, spent, its speech ceases. It flows purling, widely flowing, floating foampool, flower unfurling. (*U* 3.2331)

Stephen's wavespeech contains the same element of the flower floating in a pool of water, as if Stephen's attempts at artistic production were incipient to Bloom's contemplation of his unproductive body. In "Ithaca", when Stephen and Bloom are finally united on the road homeward to Molly, the two will concretize this bond by urinating in unison, producing simultaneous wavespeeches.

As Gilbert noted in 1963, Joyce conceived of Molly as "a manifestation of Nature herself, the antithesis of art."<sup>355</sup> If one is reluctant to admit this supposed opposition between the oceanic and the female as primal matter and the artistic drive of style, it is something which radically distinguishes *Ulysses* from *Mrs Dalloway*. For Woolf, artistic inspiration is born from the rhythm of the waves, sounds have the potential to conjure matter as pre-existing sense patterns, and dissolutions characteristic of the oceanic shape the style and form the poetic drive of the entire work.

In *Ulysses*, when male procreation is threatened by a deathly dispossession implied by the sea-womb, on the meta-textual level there seems to be a parodic compensation through the foregrounding of the poetic dimension of the text. These passages are poetically textured, through alliterations, assonance and onomatopoeia which aspire to mimetically reproduce the sounds, the flow, and the feel of the sea.

Joyce thus plays with the concepts of organic and mechanical production, writing over the organic productions of the female body, "the crimson sea" of "Penelope", with the pen to play up the dichotomies between sound and sense, voice and text. This is not to suppose that Joyce draws up a simplistic binary opposition between the male and female body, although he may use such an opposition as a starting point. As Marjorie Howes and Derek Attridge explain in their introduction to

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<sup>355</sup> Stuart Gilbert. *James Joyce's Ulysses: A Study by Stuart Gilbert*. Harmondsworth: Penguin. 1963. p. 39.



*Semicolonial Joyce*, Joyce often works through oppositions to complexify the political and ethical strata of his work: “to identify points of difference, for Joyce, is to articulate a kind of connection.”<sup>356</sup>

In order to further understand the singularities of Joyce’s and Woolf’s poetics, Stephen’s wavespeech can be considered alongside the springsong in *Mrs Dalloway*. Like the description of Bloom floating in the bathwaters in “Lotus Eaters” the wavespeech in “Proteus” contains Romantic imagery which reflects ironically on the perceiver, conveying notions of a juvenile artistry which contradicts the sonic virtuosity of the wavespeech. The wavespeech is reminiscent of another language of flow which is the “language of love” passage in “Sirens”. At first glance, both passages are profoundly mimetic, showing the ability of sounds to approximate matter and the polymorphous nature of language. In both passages, the sonic materiality of the prose seems to offer a response to the dilemma of aesthetic and physical production. Yet both passages also reflect ironically on the perceiver’s fantasized role in reproducing materiality.

As Derek Attridge’s detailed analysis of “Joyce’s Noises” demonstrates, Joyce’s use of onomatopoeia is extensive and complex.<sup>357</sup> Whereas the sonic patterning of *Mrs Dalloway* relies on the rhythm of syntax, punctuation, and intersects with visual echoes, Attridge reminds us that “the complexly patterned architecture of *Ulysses* is thus built not just out of repetitions of and variations upon words and phrases but out of sonic echoes and refrains.”<sup>358</sup> What Derek Attridge points out is that often Joyce’s use of onomatopoeia does not serve a mimetic function or rather is an instance of mimetic representation which aims to fail. Joyce thus “make[s] the inevitable failure of his mimetic sallies a productive resource, revealing the language’s own entertaining proclivities and challenging a long tradition of aesthetic practice and theorization based on the idea of imitation.”<sup>359</sup> As Attridge puts it the resulting conclusion is that “instead of letting the world break into the text [Joyce] reminds us,

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<sup>356</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 2.

<sup>357</sup> Derek Attridge. “Joyce’s Noises.” In *Oral Tradition*. 24/2 (2009). pp. 471-84.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.* p. 481.

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.* p. 483.

with comic brilliance, that the text produces a world.” This seems to me an essential distinction of Joyce’s and Woolf’s poetics. In *Ulysses* the use of sounds problematizes a rivalry between world and text in which language challenges the primacy of matter as well as it expresses materiality. Woolf on the other hand seems to conceive of both the natural world and the work of art as caught in a continuum of materiality which surpasses the artist, the work and the perceiver and which finds its most potent mode of expression in musicality.

The wavespeech of *Ulysses* nonetheless replicates the slapping of waves against rocks and the hissing of water, conveying an acoustic space which renders how different volumes of water produce varying sounds. Although both speeches in *Ulysses* are a reflection on artistry, they still aim to materialize the moment of perception by giving it a physical presence through Joyce’s sonic poetics. The passages do not aim to describe sounds but rather to produce the wavespeech and the language of love by vocalizing their sonic productions. At the same time, the sonorous aesthetic artefact is a representation of an act of perception, and these two speeches are therefore voicing the perspectives of Stephen and Bloom and voicing their physicality in this moment as a sonic style. The result is to convey the particularity of embodied perception, which is intensely personal.

The springsong in *Mrs Dalloway* is purposefully anti-mimetic. Its sounds cannot be called onomatopoeia as they do not seem to aim to convey any specific meaning. Although the song interrupts Peter Walsh’s thoughts, it quickly escapes the confines of his perception, expanding human perception beyond the human, the timely and the significant:

A sound interrupted him; a frail quivering sound, a voice bubbling up without direction, vigour, beginning or end, running weakly and shrilly and with an absence of all human meaning into

ee um fah um so  
foo swee too eem oo—

the voice of no age or sex, the voice of an ancient spring spouting from the earth; which issued, just opposite Regent's Park Tube Station, from a tall quivering shape, like a funnel, like a rusty pump, like a wind-beaten tree for ever barren of leaves which lets the wind run up and down its branches singing

ee um fah um so  
foo swee too eem oo,

and rocks and creaks and moans in the eternal breeze. (pp. 68-69).

Here the sounds of the song do not replicate the bubbling of the ancient spring, and it is the comparisons in the accompanying descriptions which add sonic texture to the song so that the sounds are inseparable from visions of nature: "like a rusty pump, like a wind-beaten tree for ever barren of leaves [...] rocks and creaks and moans." Woolf's springsong seeks to separate the voice from the particularity of human perception and expand materiality beyond individual perception and the present moment. The passage insists on the inhuman, timeless dimension of the voice which issues "from a tall quivering shape, like a funnel." Further on, the woman's mouth no longer seems to belong to a human body but rather to become an embodiment of voice, an absolute vessel for primal sonic matter:

As the ancient song bubbled up opposite Regent's Park Tube Station, still the earth seemed green and flowery; still, though it issued from so rude a mouth, a mere hole in the earth, muddy too, matted with root fibres and tangled grasses, still the old bubbling burbling song, soaking through the knotted roots of infinite ages, and skeletons and treasure, streamed away in rivulets over the pavement and all along Marylebone Road, and down towards Euston, fertilizing, leaving a damp stain. (p. 69)

Woolf's sonic production underlines a primal connection between artistic production and materiality, since she approaches the lyrical as a materialization of pre-existing patterns of sound which reaches beyond the human.

Woolf's aquatic imagery surpasses the function of imagery, producing rhythmic resonances of its own or rather conflating being with the primal matter of oceansong, reaching toward the ecstatic plane through the musicalization of the novel. Woolf's portrayal of the motions and emotions of the body extends through naturalistic imagery on the one hand and an intermedial approach to musicality on the other. Werner Wolf gives much evidence of Woolf's interest in music in *The Musicalization of Fiction: A Study in the Theory and History of Intermediality*, explaining how the musicalization of fiction was part of the author's endeavor to "[explore] meaning in a sphere beyond material appearances."<sup>360</sup> Woolf can be called an intermedial writer as she showed equal interest for music and painting and sought to address these art forms in her fiction.

Rilke's reflections on music are interesting to the extent that they resonate with the sort of rhythmic dissolution which can be found in *Mrs Dalloway*, and trace the artist's progression from an interest in the visual to an interest in the musical. Rilke's opinion of music was at first ambivalent. Contrary to painting which he found "converts everything into reality, fills itself, intensifies," he saw music as an art form which relies on the dissolution of the real to construct "an ocean of virtualities."<sup>361</sup> Rilke explicitly compares the effects of music to waves which carry the listener out to sea at the risk of leaving her stranded. For Rilke music is an unfinished and labile form which is in opposition to his view of art as leading to a sense of completion. In "The power of music according to Rilke" Fabrice Malkani interprets Rilke's wariness towards music as resulting from the inability to objectify music. For Malkani music "imperils the construction of the self which Rilke's works operate."<sup>362</sup> This may be precisely why Woolf is drawn towards musicality in her works. Of course, music can only be expressed in writing in the sense of musicality or musical sonority and rhythm produced by syntax, punctuation and sound effects.

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<sup>360</sup> Werner Wolf. *The Musicalization of Fiction: A Study in the Theory and History of Intermediality*. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 1999. p. 147.

<sup>361</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke. *Sämtliche Werke*. Frankfurt/Main: Insel. 1987. p. 91. (my translation)

<sup>362</sup> Fabrice Malkani. "Le pouvoir de la musique selon Rilke." In *Germanica*. Vol. 36 (2005). p. 5. url: <http://germanica.revues.org/1510>. accessed 08/21/2019.

Through similes which highlight the energy and motion of the natural world, the depictions of physical sensations in *Mrs Dalloway* recall Rilke's notion of "vibration" as the incidence of the personal upon the cosmological. About his own *Elegies* Rilke wrote that they showed:

The task of the continuous transposition of the beloved visible and tangible into invisible vibrations and affects of our nature, which introduces new vibration frequencies into the vibration-spheres of the universe.<sup>363</sup>

In *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf mediates the physicality of individual bodies through cosmological forces which expand the boundaries of the body through the notion of non-human energies. It may be interesting, when thinking of the connection between Septimus's and Clarissa's respective senses of embodiment, to think of the rhythms of flow as the expression of a physical intensity, an excess of energies, which overlaps individual beings and which depends on the disintegration of the body image.

In a 2005 interview, Elizabeth Grosz developed the idea that the creative process expresses animality in a post-Darwinian sense, meaning the overflow of bodily energies. She says: "there's something about art that is an abundance of excess. Art is the revelry in the excess of nature, but also a revelry in the excess of the energy of our bodies." In her analysis of the inhuman in *The Waves*, Carrie Rohman argues that Grosz's "recent discussions of art and the organic help us situate Woolf's poetics."<sup>364</sup> Rohman quotes Grosz's description of art as:

[The] productive explosion of the arts from the provocations posed by the forces of the earth ... with the forces of living bodies, by no means exclusively human, which ... slow down chaos enough to extract from it something not so much useful as intensifying, a

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<sup>363</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke. Qtd in Volker Durr. *Rainer Maria Rilke: The Poet's Trajectory. (Studies on themes and motifs in literature. Vol. 72)*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2006. p. 122.

<sup>364</sup> Carrie Rohman. "'We Make Life': Vibration, Aesthetics and the Inhuman in *The Waves*." In *Virginia Woolf and the Natural World*, eds. Kristin Czarnecki & Carrie Rohman. pp. 12-23. p. 12.

performance, a refrain, an organization of color or movement that eventually, transformed, enables and induces art.<sup>365</sup>

Rohman's main interest is how Grosz's conception of the creative process allows for a better understanding of the intersection between aesthetics, sexual difference and the non-human in Woolf's *The Waves*.

Rohman reminds us that underlying Grosz's discussion of art is the Deleuzian claim that "the arts produce and generate intensity, that which directly impacts the nervous system and intensifies sensation. Art is the art of affect more than representation, a system of dynamized and impacting forces rather than a system of unique images that function under the regime of signs."<sup>366</sup>

Where the representation of the body is concerned, both our authors turn to the materiality of sound to break down the representational or mimetic function of art and to build up the affective value of the body in art. Calling attention to the intersection between text and body, to the artificiality of the body, allows them to undermine the mimetic appeal of the image of the body in favour of the notion of energy or vibration which transpires in the sonic reconfigurations, or the soundscapes of the text. Vike Martina Plock has found evidence of Joyce's interest in the affective impact of vibration from as early as *Stephen Hero*. Plock argues that Joyce was particularly interested in "the question of how music and sounds can affect, stimulate, or touch the human ear or mind."<sup>367</sup>

In "Sirens" flow acquires a certain musicality and as often in *Ulysses* the lyrical scope of the text depends upon the labile quality of the prose. The audience in the pub in "Sirens" "[feel] that flow endearing flow over skin limbs human heart soul spine" (*U* 11.13187-8). Plock notes that in "Sirens" music has a tactile quality. This example also shows that beyond musical effects, Joyce is particularly

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<sup>365</sup> Elizabeth Grosz. *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*. New York: Columbia. 2008. p. 3.

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3.

<sup>367</sup> Vike Plock. "Good Vibrations: "Sirens," Soundscapes, and Physiology." In *JJQ*. Vol. 46. No. 3/4. *Joyce and Physiology* (Spring-Summer 2009). pp. 481-496. p. 481.

interested in the vibratory quality of music, which is to say the emotional and nervous reactions which it triggers. The vibrations of “Sirens” emphasize the need for a vessel.

Bloom is not so much a producer of music as an astute and well-attuned listener, a fact which Plock underlines in her comments on Bloom’s “very finely tuned ear.” If “Sirens” underlines that “empty vessels make most noise” then Bloom is essential to the musical resonance of *Ulysses* precisely because of his lack of production. Bloom is in fact incapable of artistic productions of the sort that Molly achieves and Stephen approximates. “Sirens” plays around with the notion that Bloom’s silent productions are a counterpoint to music: the prose of his letter to Martha is watered down and insubstantial, appearing to be a mere distraction from his thoughts about Molly and channeling the lyricism of the songs he hears; he plays on an elastic band, producing only vibrations and when he finally produces sounds he only releases air, his windspeech having none of the lyrical pretensions of Stephen’s wavespeech in “Proteus”.

Far from fulfilling his fantasy of writing upon the “blank face” of a woman, or playing on the “body of white woman, a flute alive,” Bloom is vessel-like, ventriloquizing for the reader the effects of the language of flow and complicating the link between masculinity and artistic production (*U* 11.13760). The force of the “Penelope” episode, which suspends the whole of *Ulysses* with a “yes” that acknowledges the force of the connection between Molly and Bloom in a particular memory of a shared kiss on Howth hill, is enabled by Bloom’s unfulfilled desire for physical and emotional contact throughout the novel.

Plock concludes in her essay that Joyce was at least as interested in music’s physiological ability to produce an “acoustic organization of the modern world” as to elicit emotional responses. Vibration shows Bloom’s role in channeling his material environment. Bloom’s lability and empathy allows him to be inhabited by Dublin, isolated but never fully alienated from the energies of the organic natural world.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, from wave sounds to soundwaves the rhythms of flux confer a transcendental quality to embodied experience, which is also metatextual. In the context of Deleuzian affect, which Rohman sees as implying “a linkage between bodily forces and “cosmological forces” [which] emphasizes human participation in the nonhuman,” Rohman conceptualizes vibration from a posthumanist perspective as a to and fro between “the living and the cosmic, that [opens] life onto excess and the artistic” to highlight the oscillation between the human and the animal.<sup>368</sup> I find Rohman’s discussion useful to further understanding how Woolf’s portrayal of the body in *Mrs Dalloway* may be seen as transcendental, through the notion of excess and the interloping, from the perspective of my own argument, between the individual, the cosmological and the lyrical. The visionary moment results from a realization of the expansion of the body beyond the individual which is conveyed by the materialization of aquatic metaphors through the sonic.

### 3.3. The Poetics of Overflow: Material/Mystical?

There is a certain ambivalence in Woolf’s portrayal of the body. When Woolf portrays a character’s heightened awareness of their body, through physical sensations, emotions, perceptions, she simultaneously portrays a moment of transport beyond the bounds of the here and now of the embodied individual. Should the reader gather that the aesthetic and artistic “truth” of the moment which she values and seeks to capture is an ecstatic transport which connects the body of the individual to the store of collective experience?

Woolf challenges the representation of the body as an individual, isolated unit whose boundaries are determined by the notion of a subject. *Mrs Dalloway* explores the ecstatic – perhaps

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<sup>368</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 14.



mystical – dimension of embodiment carried beyond the bounds of the individual by rhythmic patterns which are both organic and poetic. This may explain how difficult it is to separate the spiritual dimension of being in *Mrs Dalloway* from embodied experience and also why such a sense of spirituality is not founded on religious belief but on aesthetic convictions.

These moments nonetheless capitalize upon the seeping of the sense of embodiment beyond the bounds of the individual body, which Woolf would articulate in *Moments of Being* as the belief that “we are sealed vessels afloat upon what is convenient to call reality; at some moments, without a reason, without an effort, the sealing matter cracks; in floods reality” (p. 142).<sup>369</sup> In “Varieties of Mystical Experience in the Writings of Virginia Woolf” Julie Kane explains:

Despite her resistance to the very idea of “mysticism,” Virginia Woolf’s writings were displaying consistent mystical themes. The root “mystical experience” – loss of self; merger with a greater unity; the apprehension of numinousness, timelessness, transcendence, and intensified meaning – is recognizable in many of her novels and in her personal writings.<sup>370</sup>

In fact, in *Mrs Dalloway*, walking throughout the city is doubled over by a mystical transport, an ecstatic *errance* of the body beyond the bounds of the subject, which may nonetheless be perceived through the phenomenological lens of the perceptive ambivalence of flesh which Merleau-Ponty articulated. Kane gives several examples of what she terms “out-of-body” travel which she finds in *Jacob’s Room*, *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*. As Kane hints, “out-of-body travel” is also inter-body travel as for Clarissa “who can enter others’ bodies and experience their pain.”<sup>371</sup> Woolf’s essay in *Modern Fiction* on “Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown” articulates in similar terms her

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<sup>369</sup> Virginia Woolf. “A Sketch of the Past.” In *Moments of Being*, ed. Jeanne Schulkind. London: Harcourt Inc. 1985. p. 142.

<sup>370</sup> Julie Kane. “Varieties of Mystical Experience in the Writings of Virginia Woolf.” In *Twentieth Century Literature*. Vol. 41. No. 4 (Winter 1995). pp. 328-49. p. 332.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.* p. 336.

theory of what it is to be a writer: the ability to relate the inner lives of characters from a singularly embodied perspective, not as an object perceived from without. Woolf's appreciation of the narrative process involves being aware of the reversibility of subject-object relations and of the interloping of text and flesh.

Woolf did speak of this greater unity as "mind" rather than body in at least one diary entry from 1903, where she wrote: "it is this common mind that binds the whole world together; & all the world is mind."<sup>372</sup> However, it is possible that by "mind" she to some degree meant "perception" and it is striking to what extent the "common mind" is conveyed by nature imagery in *Mrs Dalloway*. Kane notes that "Woolf read St James Jeans's *The Mysterious Universe* [...] within weeks of its publication date in 1929," in which Jeans explained that quantum physics were beginning to invalidate mind-matter dualism:

[...] the stream of knowledge is heading towards a non-mechanical reality; the universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine. Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter; we are beginning to suspect that we ought rather to hail it as the creator and governor of the realm of matter.<sup>373</sup>

Arthur Machen's *Hieroglyphics: A Note upon Ecstasy in Literature*, first published by Grant Richards in 1902, offers a glimpse of how mystical ecstasy and the more secular modernist epiphany might resonate in their opposition to materialist realism. Parts of Machen's manifesto shed light on Virginia Woolf's own indictment of materialism in *Modern Fiction*. For example, Machen writes:

[...] you must remember that I am dealing with very bad people, who understand nothing but materialism. And when these people tell you in so many words that it is the author's business clearly and intelligently to present the life – the common, social life around him

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<sup>372</sup> Virginia Woolf. *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Anne Olivier Bell. London: Hogarth Press. 1977-84.

<sup>373</sup> Sir James Hopwood Jeans. *The Mysterious Universe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1931. p. 137.

– then, believe me, the only thing to be done is to throw *Odyssey* and *Oedipus*, *Morte d'Arthur*, *Kubla Khan* and *Don Quixote* straight in their faces, and to demonstrate that these eternal books were not constructed on the proposed recipe.<sup>374</sup>

Machen rests this distinction between what he calls “fine literature” and “literature” or “in other words between art and observation expressed with artifice”, on the notion of ecstasy.<sup>375</sup> In “Arthur Machen: Ecstasy and Epiphany” Nicholas Freeman presents the modernist epiphany alongside Machen’s religious-minded notion of ecstasy, considering the former as modernism’s secularized version of the latter. Freeman notes that “many modernist revelations were essentially personal rather than recognitions of the numinous beyond or outside the individual” and that critics have scarcely analysed “Woolf’s ‘moments of being’, [or] Joyce’s epiphanies [...] within a wider context of 20<sup>th</sup> century (Christian) mysticism.”<sup>376</sup>

In *Hieroglyphics*, Machen defines ecstasy as a multi-faceted concept encompassing “rapture, beauty, adoration, wonder, awe, mystery, sense of the unknown, desire for the unknown.”<sup>377</sup> Machen’s aim is to discover what is essential to “fine literature.” In Machen’s view, ‘fine literature’ sets the reader in the presence of ecstasy which entails “that withdrawal from the common life and the common consciousness.” For Machen the notion of ecstasy equally entails a communion with the eternal and universal through a sense of remoteness and solitude which is in evidence when he notes: “fine literature is simply the expression of the eternal things that are in man, [...] it always draws itself away, and goes apart into lonely places, far from the common course of life.”<sup>378</sup>

Freeman explains that Machen’s conception of ecstasy roughly conforms to Renaissance theories, one example of which is Ridgeley’s *A compleat practice of physick* (1656) which “defined

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<sup>374</sup> Arthur Machen. *Hieroglyphics: A Note Upon Ecstasy in Literature*. London: Unicorn Press. 1960. p. 45.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.* p. 76.

<sup>376</sup> Nicholas Freeman. “Arthur Machen: Ecstasy and Epiphany.” In *Literature and Theology*. Vol. 24. No. 3 (September 2010). pp. 242-55. pp. 242-3.

<sup>377</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 24.

<sup>378</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 80.

‘exstasis’ as occurring ‘when the mind is drawn away to contemplate heavenly things’.”<sup>379</sup> For Freeman, Machen carried further the conflation between the spiritual and the artistic, seeing the ecstatic function of literature as “a gateway to the numinous itself” and emphasizing the reliance of ecstasy on symbols.

However, Freeman also stresses how the experience of ecstasy touches upon the unknown through the expression of the ineffable. William James’s *The Varieties of Religious Experience* emphasizes the ‘noetic quality’ of mystical states such as ecstasy, which give “insight into the depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect” which “carry with them a curious sense of authority for after-time.”<sup>380</sup> Its transience and its construction of a larger narrative which reduces the subject to a passive stance, also draw a connection between the mystical state, ecstasy and the epiphany. James characterizes mystical states thus:

half an hour, or at most an hour or two, seems to be the limit beyond which they fade into the light of common day [...] the mystic feels as if his own will were in abeyance ... as if he were grasped and held by a superior power.<sup>381</sup>

Although Machen recognizes the difficulty of the “almost endless task of distinguishing matter from form, and body from spirit,” he nonetheless seeks to separate “things spiritual and things corporal.”<sup>382</sup> Woolf’s depiction of ecstasy significantly departs from Machen’s in this sense, as well as through the imbrication of the portrayal of ecstasy, of musical rhythms and of physical sensations. It does not adhere to Machen’s elitist agenda, nor to Manichean distinctions between “the infinite and the finite” or “soul and body.”<sup>383</sup>

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<sup>379</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 246.

<sup>380</sup> William James. *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*. London: Longmans, Green and Co. 1915. pp. 380-1.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>382</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 82.

<sup>383</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 93.

Where Woolf is concerned, I prefer to speak of ecstasy rather than of epiphany because of the centrality of the body in experiencing moments of being which are moments of emotional transport made significant through the rhythms and recollections of the body. Woolf's moment of being accomplishes the significance of the moment by expanding the plane of perception whereas the Joycean epiphany – arguably absent from *Ulysses* – suspends the process of significance by exposing a moral, epistemological or emotional stasis. In *Mrs Dalloway*, physical manifestations of the body are at the heart of the ecstatic experience and often a character's presence to their own body signals their sense of remoteness from as well as embeddedness in a routine plane of existence.

As Stephanie Paulsell explains in "Writing and Mystical Experience in Marguerite d'Oingt and Virginia Woolf," critics have understandably been wary of speaking of Woolf's mysticism, considering her skepticism and her father's well-known agnosticism.<sup>384</sup> Nonetheless, I think a fundamental aspect of Woolf's portrayal of the body, and one which it is helpful to come to terms with to better understand what sets it apart from Joyce, contains a degree of mysticism.

Woolf portrays embodied experience as suspended between the banality of material existence, the oppressive significance of fact, and an overwhelming sense of awe and ineffable significance. Caught in the flow of bodily existence and the body's everyday functions, embodied perception – and therefore the daily and ordinary routine of material existence – is nonetheless the repository for visionary experiences which are awe-inspiring.

Paulsell quotes the definition of mysticism in *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, to highlight the noetic qualities of mysticism. The definition already gives us some insight into the connections which can be drawn between the mystic experience and the act of

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<sup>384</sup> Stephanie Paulsell. "Writing and Mystical Experience in Marguerite d'Oingt and Virginia Woolf." In *Comparative Literature*. Vol. 44. No. 3 (Summer 1992). pp. 249-67.

writing itself: “reliance on spiritual intuition as the means of acquiring knowledge of mysteries inaccessible to the understanding.”<sup>385</sup>

An underlying sense of the mystical drives Woolf’s search for the “real” and its expression in her art, as well as her quest to understand herself as a writer. As Paulsell writes, “[she derives her] beliefs about reality not from the cool logic of rational thought, but from sensuous, sometimes terrifying, transcendent experiences.”<sup>386</sup> In “A Sketch of the Past” Woolf described her first memory of a moment of being, which is a moment of contact with the real through rapture, as a form of ecstasy:

If life has a base that it stands upon, if it is a bowl that one fills and fills and fills – then my bowl without a doubt stands upon this memory. It is of lying half asleep, half awake, in bed in the nursery at St Ives. It is of hearing the waves breaking, one, two, one, two, and sending a splash of water over the beach; and then breaking, one, two, one, two, behind a yellow blind. [...] 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.<sup>387</sup>

Machen’s use of the concept of ecstasy in his anti-realist manifesto creates an idealistic distinction between low and high literature which sets ecstasy and art for that matter in opposition to the common and the ordinary. On the contrary, the particularity of Woolf’s moment of being is its carving out a place for the significance of the ordinary and its reliance on embodied perception to articulate the individual and the collective, the momentary and the timeless, the mundane and the ineffable.

In “Virginia Woolf’s “Cotton Wool of Daily Life”” Liesl Olson details Woolf’s stance on the ordinary and the extent to which representing the ordinary is essential to her philosophy of writing.<sup>388</sup>

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<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.* p. 250.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.* p. 262.

<sup>387</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 64-5.

<sup>388</sup> Liesl M. Olson. “Virginia Woolf’s “Cotton Wool of Daily Life”.” In *Journal of Modern Literature*. Vol. 26. No. 2 *Virginia Woolf and Others* (Winter 2003). pp. 42-65.

Far from being the “most inward of all British writers,” as she is sometimes considered, Olson argues that Woolf is especially committed “to ordinary experiences” and to bridging the divide between “psychological interiority and realism rooted in the things that are shared among us” such as “repeated acts and habits.”<sup>389</sup> In *Mrs Dalloway* Woolf may be seen to be seeking for and perfecting a method of representing the dichotomy of embodied existence and “her persistently mixed feelings about literature’s responsibility to a real or external world.”<sup>390</sup>

This dichotomy sets Woolf apart from Joyce, who embraced facts with enthusiasm, seeing the clutter of the everyday material reference as far more productive. Woolf’s ambivalent stance on the material detail shows in her celebrating in Defoe what she to some degree criticizes in Joyce’s *Ulysses*: “emphasis is laid upon the very facts that most reassure us of stability in real life, upon money, furniture, food, until we seem wedged among solid objects in a solid universe.”<sup>391</sup> In Olson’s terms:

Her work is not split between representations of inner versus outer or personal versus political. Rather, her representation of ordinary experience works to reconcile two sides of a dichotomy that we usually understand as dominating literary modernism.<sup>392</sup>

This dichotomy could be glossed by what Virginia Woolf called “moments of being” versus “non-being” or “ecstasy” versus “the drone of daily life” (1911 letter to Vanessa Bell). Parallels between the rhythms of the body and the rhythm of writing and reading offer a response to the problem of representing the ordinary. As Lefebvre theorized, the ordinary and the everyday sap the symbolic significance of the system in which they function: “it is not possible to construct a theoretical and practical system such that the details of everyday life will become meaningful in and by this system.”<sup>393</sup>

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<sup>389</sup> *Ibid.* p. 44.

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.* p. 46.

<sup>391</sup> Virginia Woolf. “Phases of Fiction.” In *Granite and Rainbow*. New York: Harcourt Brace. 1958. p. 95.

<sup>392</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 46.

<sup>393</sup> Henri Lefebvre. *Everyday Life and the Modern World*. trans. Sacha Rabinovitch. London: The Penguin Press. 1971. p. 98.

It is through the insistence on the ordinariness of the everyday, an insistence which attention to the daily habits of the body makes possible, that Woolf manages to communicate the connection experienced in moments of ecstasy and to undermine the idea that significance depends upon the integrity of an individual subject.

Olson remarks upon the political impact of this dichotomy between the ordinary and ecstasy, recalling Eric Auerbach's argument in *Mimesis* that "modernity's emphasis on the "random moment in the lives of different people" sharpens the profound relationship between the individual and a larger sense of shared humanity"; thus "the ordinary becomes a vital assertion of life."<sup>394</sup>

The ecstatic body offers a counterpoint to conceptions of the body which would see it as the basis for the principle of individuation. Woolf explores the double orientation of the body more particularly in relation to writing and its ability to articulate patterns which are expressive of vitality, for example through Septimus's schizophrenic experience of the body. The ordinary comes to signify through the paradox of its artistic representation: the rhythms of the body which express the routine "drone of daily life" are also those which reveal the random moment as part of a pattern of existence, which is also that of artistic creation.

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<sup>394</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 60-2.



## CONCLUSION

Words? Music? No: it's what's behind.

Bloom looped, unlooped, noded, disnoded.

(*U.* 11.703)

[...] we are the words; we are the music; we are the thing itself.

(Virginia Woolf, *Moments of Being*)

In the quote from *Ulysses* which heads off this conclusion, Bloom ponders on words and music, sensing that the both point to something more significant “behind” – a cryptic evocation of what “matters” as well as a comic allusion to Bloom’s “behind” being the final resounding instrument of the episode. Playing with an elastic band, Bloom becomes a parodic figure of the artist, weaving his instrument through the air in his quest to produce matter and approximate meaning, while producing only wind, a continuous flow of silent vibrations: “Bloom looped, unlooped, noded, disnoded.” Bloom’s silent gesticulations materialize his silent wonderings: they seem emblematic of his inability to find a more specific answer to the question that he asks than the vague, intuitive “[i]t’s what’s behind.” In “Telemachus” Stephen had proffered a warning against immaterial productions, which foreshadows Bloom’s unproductive weaving: “the void awaits surely all them that weave the wind.”

At the same time, if Bloom’s weaving is vacuous, its silence is only metaphorical. On a textual level, that of flow and that of sound matter, it is productive: the verbs form a rhythmic unit, a binary repetition in keeping with the gesture, which can be endlessly repeated. Joyce playfully hints at there being a “behind” to text and music, some material substratum of greater significance, some hierarchical ordering of sense and sense material, while implying through a crass pun that hidden body parts reserve hidden meanings, that the poetic is subservient to the prosaic, and art subservient to the lowliest of body parts. The weaver of the loom knits together music, body and text in an ongoing flow of

dematerializing representations and materializing language, which is an endless production of material substances as signs.

This study begins with urban wanderings and concludes with the poetics of flow, as if its premiss were to follow the fluid motions of the walking body, to trace its wayward fluctuations through the cultural and aesthetic spaces of these novels. One could argue that flow is an exhausted metaphor which, like the much used stream-of-consciousness, has run its course. Nonetheless, when taken in its conjunction with wandering, dislocations and fragments, the concept of flow may surpass the mind-oriented notion of stream-of-consciousness and the body-oriented association between fluidity and the female body: it runs from the spatial to the visual to the sonic, subsuming composite elements within the sphere of creative material. For instance, Derek Attridge has argued that our view of “Penelope” as flow is primarily determined by stereotypical views of the female body external to Joyce’s text. In his view, the chapter draws attention to conventions of writing and makes the reader awkwardly aware that Molly’s supposed material presence is a composite of heterogeneous elements, characteristic of the dislocation of conventional portrayals of mind through the intersection of text and flesh: the “realm of thought [...] traversed by the material, differential, and cultural properties of language.”<sup>395</sup>

Attridge’s analysis is inspired by an alternative conception of flow, which is the one which interests me, because it intersects language and the body in forms of dislocation, reminding us that many of the representations of the body discussed throughout this dissertation can be understood as languages articulating the disjunctions of matter and flesh and the dissolutions of identity:

Language is both a flow and an articulation: a material substance – neural discharges, muscular pulses, vibrating cords and membranes, sound and light waves, ink, paint, stone,

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<sup>395</sup> Derek Attridge. “Molly’s Flow: The Writing of “Penelope” and the Question of Women’s Language.” In *Modern Fiction Studies*. Vol. 35, n°3. *Special Issue: Feminist Readings of Joyce* (Autumn 1989). pp. 543-65. p. 552.

liquid crystal – that threatens always to eliminate difference and identity, a system of differences and identities that in order to function has to mark a resistant substance.<sup>396</sup>

In Attridge's reading, our expectations of how bodies materialize – set prior to "Penelope" by the "Sirens" episode – are conditioned by the flowing motions of Bloom's silent loom.

Part of the aim of this enterprise has been not to presume an ideological triangulation of fluidity, marginal bodies and progressive politics but rather to use the dislocations of the wandering body as a starting point for recognizing the stratification of embodiment, in which cultural constructs, pictorial conventions, diverse spatial representations, and stylistic effects interact to form a poetics of the body which relies equally on figuring and disfiguring, materializing and dematerializing processes.

To Bloom's wonderings Woolf offers a more transcendental, ardent response: "we are the words; we are the music; we are the thing itself." The universality of the pronoun "we" belies any solipsistic reading of this ontological claim and equally opens up the timeworn concept of stream-of-consciousness to the incurrence of materiality, as words, music and thing are bounded by a common pattern. What the imbrication of materiality with the visionary show in *Mrs Dalloway* is that the stream reaches beyond the realm of consciousness as individual perception, taking its source in a wider pool of being which includes non-human, collective, past, physical, and spiritual energies.

One could argue that Woolf's "we" has an Emersonian quality to it and, contrary to Joyce, Woolf's understanding of flesh as flow is to some degree a transcendental one. One could note, for example, how it resonates with the Emersonian concept of a universal soul expressed in his essay "The Over-Soul":

We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal one. And this deep power in which we exist, and whose

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<sup>396</sup> *Ibid.* p. 559.

beatitude is all accessible to us, is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object, are one. We see the world piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the whole, of which these are the shining parts, is the soul.

However, in Emerson's essay, there seems to be a sense of serenity, which derives from a religious faith in the unity of the soul and in the possibility to access a state of beatitude through the contemplation of universal beauty, which distinguishes this worldview from Woolf's. One could, for example, consider it in comparison to Valsania's analysis of the role of imagination in Erasmus Darwin's poems, which she describes as a "spontaneous and God-free stream of self-representation, a formative drive that exists in things, or an 'objective imagination'" to see how Woolf's work resonates with a Darwinian train of thought: the common denominator is perhaps a view of materiality as the flow of creative substances, a productive force.

For Woolf in *Mrs Dalloway*, the work of art and the material world coalesce through a pattern which operates on all scales of being, material and immaterial, human and non-human, individual and collective, but these connections are fragile and transient and depend on conditions which enable their communication. Like a vibration, materializing this sense of unity depends on the receptivity of the vessel to the disturbance of an equilibrium – or a sensitivity to the dislocations of the body – and the communication between bodies. Flesh and text are communicating expressions of an enigmatic unity of being which surpasses the text and the self at the same time as art offers a precarious yet privileged access to it.

In Joyce's *Ulysses* language circumscribes a textual world in which the body is envisioned as a circulatory system of texts, sounds and cultural materials subordinated to the material productions of language. Like the riverrun of *Finnegans Wake* the work's textual flow circles back to where it began, circumscribing in an enclosed system the endless proliferations of an endlessly productive text. If, as Attridge claims, "instead of letting the world break into the text [Joyce] reminds us, with comic

brilliance, that the text produces a world,” Woolf reminds us that text and world only co-exist in the expression of a common belonging to the productive energies of the sensible – to which both reader and writer belong.

Discussions of the representation of the body in *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* can gain from recognizing the interplay between materiality and the void, the weaving and unweaving of images as discourses. “Dislocations of the walking body” capitalizes on this idea, if only to the extent that it might enlighten the works’ ambiguous relationships to realism and qualify discordant mimetic and anti-mimetic drives as expressions of the heterogeneity of Joyce’s and Woolf’s conceptions of the body. For instance, attempts to undermine the mimetic function of language in these novels which employ subversive rhetorical strategies such as irony, parody, textual playfulness, fragmentation and other stylistic innovations, are perhaps better valued by taking into consideration – as one would a notable disturbance or dislocation – the presence of objectifying pictorial codes which have traditionally governed representations of the body in art.

I have argued throughout this dissertation that the walking body is all at once an object of representation, a trope and a narrative principle which challenges hierarchical views of space and contests distinctions between bodies and the city as an “environment.” Wandering determines new relations to the London and Dublin of these works, one of which is the inversion of intimate and public spaces which espouses blindness as a creative force and disorienting mechanisms as constitutive of an immersive environment. In this sense, taking representations of the body in *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses* together with a changing conception of landscape adds depth to what are not just body-centric subjectivities, or representations of landscape from multiple perspectives but portrayals of the body-city or even body-space as a labile territory of representation whose shifting boundaries form objections to the establishment of a subjective point of view.

Overall, in *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses*, the process of figuring the body exposes the pictorial and cultural codes which dictate the representation of the body in art. Figures of female walkers problematize the ways in which women's bodies are consumed as aesthetic products. In *Mrs Dalloway* Woolf revises late-nineteenth-century Baudelairean aesthetics to pit the figure of the female artist against that of the female muse, whereas Joyce's *passante* confronts the conventional aesthetic of the body beautiful, figuring alternative muses derived from lowbrow culture. Both *passantes* and anti-*passantes* are textual productions, showing in turn how texts operate as products of cultural and aesthetic consumption which are traversed by material substances.

Figures in *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses* do not necessarily aim to reference any pre-existing body but rather to draw attention to the process of citation through which the body is dematerialized and reconfigured by varying discourses. They point to the myth of an original body. In "Nausicaa" and elsewhere in *Ulysses* Joyce achieves a reality effect precisely by referencing bodies which lie outside of the conventional mechanisms of citation, such as the disabled body. Woolf on the other hand, has female walkers escape the citational loop by reversing the perspectives of the artist and the muse, showcasing the creative forces of the non-visual, vibrant and visionary, non-pictorial body.

"Dislocations of the Walking Body" claims that Joyce's and Woolf's visual politics have radically different implications, although their poetics do not. The expansion of the body's bounds beyond the visible figure and the explicit mentions of the body might allow us to see concordances which are otherwise overlooked when gauging the representations of the body in terms of its explicit mentions in the text. After all, mirror images are equally problematic in both works, not because they reveal links between the body and the self but because they question the notions of "individual" and "character" and problematize the body's supposed impenetrability through the image. The porous fleshly body contests the impenetrable self-image in *Ulysses* through, for example, notions of filiation in which bodies are shown to be assailable by others, notions of reproduction in which bodies

recirculate texts, or notions of affiliation in which bodies are porous to other bodies, whether human or non-human – objects, volumes, bodies of sound...

In this way, both Joyce and Woolf seem to indicate that tolerating – or indeed encouraging – hybridity is a prerequisite for the productivity of the artist, and one which is formulated by the body's fictionally-constructed originality. Joyce's "Penelope" episode, for instance, may speak to Woolf's portrayal of memory as a hybrid space for the incurrences of text and matter, portraying the functions of memory as a circulatory hypertext in an episode which transits from representations of the body you see to representations of the body you feel.

In *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses* the body is a dislocative force: both dynamic and fundamentally dialectic, it moves beyond the bounds determined by artistic and cultural conventions, while questioning the drive to make sense of matter in the hermeneutic processes of reading. One of the claims I stake here is that Joyce's and Woolf's bodies beyond bounds are in conversation with a vast aesthetic background concerned with revising the notions of perspective, perception, subject, object, body and self. By testing the boundaries of the visual and the verbal in representations of the body, I address Molly's flow speech as a confrontation between the literal and literary and show that both Molly and Clarissa interrogate the dichotomies of embodiment and disembodiment, presence and absence, text and flesh.

This dissertation culminates with the notion that visual fragmentation translates into sonic material in an ultimate celebration of the materiality of language for Joyce; for Woolf, in an ultimate affirmation of the ability of art to reach beyond representation and affirm its continuity with the energies of the sensible. Physical phenomena such as vibrations blur the lines between the perceiving body and the perceived, human contact and the loss of humanity, the material and the immaterial or productivity and sterility. In *Mrs Dalloway*, touch draws a connection between the visionary and the

visible, the material and immaterial dimensions of perceptive experience. Intimacy is both the secluded realm of visions and the place for intensely physical experiences.

The body's connection to the object world, its objectifiable dimension, is not to be written off as a symptom of a Cartesian mind-body dualism. Rather it leads to an expansion of the notion of the self, contesting the concept of an embodied self and the anthropomorphic predominance of the "human" body which is often seen as the "normal" body. The enigmatic and the mundane are ultimately connected through a common mystery of being in *Mrs Dalloway*; through the overwhelming productivity and proliferations of material objects in *Ulysses*. In both cases, the kinship between the body and the object world demands a reframing of the hermeneutic processes at work in the texts.

"Dislocations of the Walking Body" considers the body as constituting an important point of articulation between the "material turn" and the "linguistic turn" and posits these dislocations as equally constitutive of a dialogue between Joyce and Woolf. In this sense, it can also be apprehended as a silent conversation with the field of eco-criticism and extrapolating the eco-critical implications of Joyce's and Woolf's representations of the body would be, I believe, one of the most fruitful ways of extending this project.

At the same time it could also be said that at many points throughout this dissertation, my reflection leans into the past: late nineteenth-century aesthetics feed into twenty-first century turns of thought. This is because I find Joyce's and Woolf's representations of the body are unconventional not because they never portray the body conventionally, but rather because they purposefully engage with conventions of representation and the intersection of the material and the linguistic, in which the figural and the substantial collide. The figural and the aesthetic dimensions of representing the body act as essential entry points into discussions of its subversive portents in both works. Often, in *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* Joyce and Woolf build upon conventions of portraying the body to push portrayals of the body beyond the bounds of the human, the individual and the subjective.



In her overview of material ecocriticism, Serenella Iovino defines materiality as “the condition through which bodies act with and relate with each other, shaping other bodies.”<sup>397</sup> She writes: “reflecting on matter means reflecting on the modes of production and consumption of nature(s) as reservoirs of usable elements; it means reflecting on the ways the matter of the world is embodied in human experience, as well as in human “mind.” As Iovino underlines, eco-critical approaches are concerned with the interaction between matter and text, acting as investigations into “the levels of what can be called a ‘material textuality’.” The representationalist and presentationalist divide which qualifies the somatic turn, which I referred to in my introduction, can be understood in connection to the dichotomies of the “linguistic” and “material” turns. Any mention of the body in the text can be met with skepticism and accusations of naivety concerning the divide between language and matter: to what extent is the material body ever truly materialized by discourse? Yet the intersection between materialist and linguistic approaches to both works attests to what appears to be an irresolvable polarity of their representations of the body and one which conventionally opposes cultural materialist and formalist readings.

As Iovino makes clear this dialectic traverses literary criticism itself:

in the humanities and in the social sciences, this neo-materialist renaissance comes after a period of abandon or dismissal of matter and materiality, which was the main result of the so-called ‘linguistic turn.’ One of the key points of the ‘material turn’ is in fact its reaction against some radical trends of postmodern and poststructuralist thinking, which it regards as “dematerializing” the world into linguistic and social constructions. In these fields the new attention paid to matter has, therefore, emphasized the need of recalling the concreteness of existential fields, with regard to both the bodily dimension and to non-binary epistemological object-subject structures.<sup>398</sup>

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<sup>397</sup> Serenella Iovino. “Material Ecocriticism: Matter, Text, and Posthuman Ethics.” In *Literature, Ecology, Ethics*, eds. Timo Müller and Michael Sauter. Heidelberg: Winter Verlag. 2012. pp. 51-68. p. 51.

<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.* p. 52.

The final chapter of this project seeks to constitute a bridge between cultural and theoretical discourses of the body and its material productions, arguing that discursive practices are also superseded by a non-binary poetics of materiality in which the material dimension of bodies carries over into the “texturing” of language as sonic matter and the instigation of a somatic reader-text relationship through a text which triggers affect.

What I have stressed through the notions of vibrancy, energies, transcendence for Woolf, genesis, productivity, and proliferation for Joyce, and generally through a final emphasis on flow, is the connection between both authors’ poetics and the creative forces of matter. Iovino references DeLanda’s conception of matter as having an “inherent creativity” or Bennett’s view of matter in *Vibrant Matter* as wrested “from its long history of attachment to automatism or mechanism.” From her perspective “the true dimension of matter is not that of static being, but of a generative becoming” – a claim which ties in with the ongoing circulation of bodies and texts which acts as a creative force in *Ulysses*, or the notion of a continuum which binds the sensible, which is a source of creativity in *Mrs Dalloway*.

This project deals indirectly with the immense difficulty of materializing the body beyond theory in literary analysis – and perhaps the density of its theoretical underpinnings attests to its failure to do so. At the same time, what can be seen as incoherences – an equal insistence on the figural and the discursive, on the cultural and on the material, on the political and on the aesthetic – are also what make this project’s contribution to what Hekman has explained as a postmodernist project: “to deconstruct the language/reality dichotomy by defining a theoretical position that does not privilege either language or reality but instead explains and builds on their intimate interaction.” For all that, this project is not resolutely deconstructive; it does not argue for the body’s dissolution into discursive matter. It is, in sum, all about the intimate interactions which make up the shifting territories of the body. All in all, it proposes that tracing the dislocations of the walking body in *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses* leads us to such a theoretical standpoint.

There is another, eco-critical, conception of flow as flowing bodies, interfering substances and interconnecting ecosystems: trans-corporeality. Iovino defines it as “a model of dynamic concurrence, permeability, and “interconnected agencies” of material substances and discursive practices” and Stacy Alaimo in *Bodily Natures* as “flows of substances [...] between people, places and economic/political systems” which “the material self cannot be disentangled from.”<sup>399</sup> In my introduction, I suggested apprehending Joyce’s and Woolf’s portrayals of the body as an open space, and this entire dissertation continues to think the body in terms of a site of exchanges between material substances and discursive productions. Surely, in this sense, I encourage a reading of the body on the “horizon of material ecocriticism” which Iovino describes: “that of a material-semiotic freedom, of an ecology of mind and of imagination understood as embodied processes that are created and re-created in essential co-implication with nonhuman subjects and forms.”<sup>400</sup>

The scope of this project is certainly ambitious and no doubt comparing Woolf and Joyce as I have done implies a certain degree of trial and error, an erring of sorts through different cultures to locate a common ground, and many shortcomings. Forty years ago, Robert Kiely attempted a comparative analysis of Joyce, Woolf and Lawrence, which according to his reviewer, Kingsley Widmer, was a sure failure. Widmer reasonably noted Kiely’s failure to take into account that “what we have with Joyce, Lawrence and Woolf are not just differences in literary manners but the polarities of different “cultures” (in class, ethos, roles, sensibility), and even different *Weltanschauungs*.”<sup>401</sup>

Widmer’s review is skeptical that a comparison of Joyce and Woolf could lead to useful findings, yet he concedes that “just possibly, one might make an interesting, however distorted, parallel reading, but that would require some pattern behind the evident differences, some larger reference.” His issue is that the pattern Kiely capitalizes on is a “unifying work of universal value”, “equilibrium”, “balance”

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<sup>399</sup> *Ibid.* p. 59. Stacy Alaimo. *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 2010. pp. 20-21.

<sup>400</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 61.

<sup>401</sup> Kingsley Widmer. “Review of *Beyond Egotism: The Fiction of James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and D.H. Lawrence* by Robert Kiely.” In *JJQ*. Vol. 19, n°3 (Spring 1982). pp. 351-54. p. 351.

and the “recoveries of limited order” which is “inappropriate for modernist writers” in contrast to the more accurate, and widely-accepted, view of their modernist “impetus to the breaking of accepted order and the denying of the spurious unifying values of twentieth-century culture.”<sup>402</sup> Widmer is generally right of course when he states:

Even the orderings, aesthetic and moral, were disconcerting, disenchanted, deconstructive. And they were certainly different. Joyce’s negations typically took the forms of endlessly rich parody [...] Woolf’s of incommensurate impressions and sensitive dissolutions. If they had a common ground, it was often the basic modernist one of disturbing rather than serving accepted order. To hold otherwise seems to be part of the current neutralization, co-optation by institutional mentalities, of the whole modernist impetus and its radicalization of sensibility.

However, Widmer’s account of how differing cultural dialectics should inflect the reader-text relationship seems to me absurd:

Appropriately, readers have responded for more than half a century in ways similar to Joyce and Lawrence. Those who have identified with one of the writers have been disdainful of the others, if not – as with anti-Lawrence and pro-Joyce Eliot, anti-Woolf and pro-Lawrence Leavis, etc. – downright hostile. For literary perceptions are not to be separated from social-moral allegiances and other cultural dialectics.

The idea that literature, reading, or literary analysis should promote cultural entrenchment seems to me outdated and unproductive, and one against which this project works. Joyce and Woolf produced immensely communicative texts with proliferating meanings – their territories expand through confrontation and encourage migrations through different cultural ecologies. I do not believe that good

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<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 352-53.

comparisons are necessarily endogamic and self-evident; comparisons may stun us into productive lines of thought when they are accurate yet unexpected.

The pattern which justifies my reading of Joyce and Woolf and Woolf through Joyce is one which recognizes the disenchanted worldview articulated through fragmentation while capitalizing nonetheless on the enchantment of flow, which is a poetics of creative matter and textual productivity and vitality. This is a conclusion which is perhaps better understood from the perspective of ecocriticism, which offers the pattern of matter as text. In this line of thought, the body could be conceived at the crossroads between the two, as Iovino puts it “a site of narrativity, a storied matter.”<sup>403</sup> The notion of reality would thus hinge on textuality, itself “an array of stories” and a “counter-story” with the aim “to redeem the inner “enchantment” of things, whose vitality – suppressed by the “cultural narrative of disenchantment” – can inspire in the human subject a deeper (ethical, emotional, cognitive) participation in the worldly emergences of forms and bodies.” If there is a similar enchantment expressed by the poetics of Joyce and Woolf, which subsists despite the deconstructive mechanisms of the texts, it is to be found at the intersection of flesh and text, in the vital assertions of flow, circulation and exchange, which constitute the productive energies of these distinct cultural ecologies.

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<sup>403</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 57-58.

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## Résumé

### **Dislocations et déplacements du corps dans l'*Ulysse* de James Joyce et le *Mrs Dalloway* de Virginia Woolf**

Cette thèse compare les représentations du corps dans l'*Ulysse* de James Joyce et le *Mrs Dalloway* de Virginia Woolf. Elle prend la figure du promeneur urbain comme point de départ pour envisager le corps dans ses déplacements au sens large: les déplacements dans la ville remettent en question un certain nombre de délimitations. Elles élaborent en parallèle un dépassement des limites constitutives du lieu, de l'identité individuelle, ainsi que de la frontière entre chair, texte et image. Comprise à la fois comme un déplacement, une délocalisation, ou une défiguration, la dislocation du corps est envisagée dans ces deux oeuvres comme une béance entre le corps phénoménologique de la conscience incarnée, perçu comme le site d'une expérience sensorielle, et la figure du corps, image tantôt réifiée, tantôt disloquée par l'écriture. Cette étude prend en compte une tension entre incarnation et désincarnation qui se retrouve dans les deux oeuvres, tout en faisant leur différence. Elle se propose ainsi d'ouvrir de nouvelles pistes pour comparer ces deux géants littéraires, notamment en ce qui concerne la mise en rapport du corps phénoménologique au texte et à l'image. Située au croisement des théories de la « chose », du nouveau matérialisme, d'approches phénoménologiques de la corporalité et de l'espace, ainsi que de théories esthétiques et culturelles délimitant l'image du corps dans l'œuvre d'art, cette thèse réévalue les résonances entre ces œuvres majeures en distinguant entre les images du corps et la représentation du sensible dans sa relation à l'espace de la ville et à l'espace diégétique pour éclairer la manière dont ces deux dimensions de la corporalité interagissent.

**Mots clés:** James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, littérature moderniste, phénoménologie, corps, espace urbain, conscience incarnée, flâneur, image du corps, poétique

## Abstract

### **Dislocations of the walking body in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway***

This thesis compares representations of the body in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*. It takes the walking body in the city as a starting point for considering the many dislocations of the body, positing that both authors' depictions of wandering in the city allow them to test the conceptual boundaries of place, individual identity, as well as the limits between flesh, text and image. The thesis asks how Joyce's and Woolf's city novels portray the body through dislocations, which express all at once the displacements, transitionings and disfigurements of the body and convey a tension between embodiment and disembodiment in ways specific to each author. It argues that both works examine the overlap between the phenomenological body of embodied consciousness as the site of perceptive experience, and figures of the body which articulate the image of the body, its object dimension, and its reconfigurations into writing. It suggests that the triangulation of phenomenological conceptions of the body, figures of the body and textual poetics allow for fruitful comparisons of these canonical authors beyond the pale of modernism. Drawing upon the intersecting fields of thing theory, phenomenological conceptions of narrative, embodiment and space, as well as cultural and aesthetic theories delimiting the imaging of the body in the work of art it aims to reevaluate the connections between *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* by distinguishing between images of the body and the portrayal of the sensible in relation to space and narrative, while taking into account how these distinct dimensions interact within the works.

**Keywords:** James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, modernist literature, phenomenology, body, city space, embodied consciousness, flâneur, body image, poetics