Relational Narrative Desire: Intersubjectivity and Transsubjectivity in the Novels of H.D. and Virginia Woolf

by

Maureen Anne Niwa-Heinen

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR of PHILOSOPHY

in the Department of English

© Maureen Anne Niwa-Heinen
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This dissertation may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopying or other means, without the permission of the author.
Relational Narrative Desire: Intersubjectivity and Transsubjectivity in the Novels of H.D. and Virginia Woolf

ABSTRACT

Supervisor: Dr. Evelyn Cobley

Relational Narrative Desire provides a narratological analysis of intersubjectivity and transsubjectivity, fictional representations of shared states of distinct subjectivities. In narrative, inter/transsubjectivity signals a pluralised source of mediation; protagonists recognise themselves as co-created, relational identities through inter/transsubjective connections. As relational identities, protagonists recognise and identify with like subjectivities, with the narratological result that certain modern psychological narratives are structured through voice, not plot.

In Part I, I consider how contemporary narratology’s privileging of plot perpetuates its structuralist origins by: (a) failing to conceive narrative identity in pluralised, inter/transsubjective forms; and (b) continuing to polarise certain aspects of narrative voice in mimeticism and anti-mimeticism. I explain how, in particular stylisations, narrative voice assumes a structural function comparable to, but distinct from plot, and moves identity out of singular modes of attribution wherein a narrative voice is assumed to signify a particular character or consciousness. By considering narrative voice stylisation as a structuring device, a model of narrative desire emerges that is different from Peter Brooks’s (1984) model in Reading for the Plot; I call this model relational narrative desire.

In my model of relational narrative desire, a pluralised mediation source relies on a degree of impersonality and disembodiment. I contextualise this within Monika Fludernik’s “natural narrative” and Ann Banfield’s “speakerless sentences,” arguing that narratology needs to expand its understanding of narrative voice’s capacity for anti-mimeticism and accommodate relational identity, virtual subjectivity, and communal consciousness—narrative strategies not accommodated in Brooks’s model of narrative desire. I then contextualise my narratological discussion in relation to Jessica Benjamin’s psychoanalytic theory of intersubjectivity, Luce Irigaray’s philosophical concept of civil identity, Jürgen Habermas’ theory of communicative reasoning, and Bracha Ettinger Lichtenberg’s aesthetic theory of metramorphosis. These theorists argue for two aspects crucial to relational narrative desire: the textual presence of two or more distinct speaking/thinking sources, and the value of power-with(in) over power-over social structures. I adapt and apply these theories to stylistic effects in narrative, showing how H.D. and Woolf’s novels stylise my theory of relational narrative desire.

In Part II, I focus on H.D. and Woolf’s narrative voice stylisations that are difficult, or even impossible, to attribute to singular speaking/thinking sources of mediation. By shifting the emphasis from plot to voice, H.D. and Woolf’s novels show how emergent forms of partial identity transcend notions of self-unified individuality. Such a shift produces narrative voice stylisations that reflect plurality and anonymity, not singularity. Close textual analyses of H.D.’s Palimpsest and Bid Me to Live, and Virginia Woolf’s To the Lighthouse and Between the Acts show how certain protagonists evolve from non-relational to relational identities. This evolution perceives individuality and
identity in terms of partialness, a view associated with feminist psychoanalytic and philosophical care-ethics. In H.D. and Woolf’s novels, relational identity reconfigures the self-Other relation as one entailing attunement and mutual recognition of self and Other in a subject-subject pairing (opposed to patriarchy’s subject-object pairing). This mode of narrative desire values social connectedness over individual autonomy; thus, a paradoxical logic emerges from relational identity, sustaining the tension between protagonists’ contradictory needs for inclusion and independence.

Integral to inter/transsubjective connections represented in H.D. and Woolf’s novels is the recognition stage of tolerance, where difference is actively courted and included in a subject-construction, an integration of Otherness appearing in Luce Irigaray’s concept of love and Kelly Oliver’s theory of wit(h)nessing. Thus, in the final section of this work, love’s paradoxical logic of needing individuation and integration is addressed in terms of narrative voice disembodiment, a growing phenomenon in Western computer technology. Relational identity resolves this paradox by showing disembodiment does not necessitate detachment from one’s own subjectivity. Through relationality, we achieve and experience our most profound sense of self.
# Table of Contents

Title Page  
Abstract  
Contents  
Acknowledgements  
Dedication  
Epigraphs  
Preface

## Part I: Theory

**Introduction**  

**Chapter I Narrative Voicings**  
Virtual Subjectivity and the Implied Reader  
Voice, The Neglected Term  
Mimetic Mechanisms in Peter Brooks's Narrative Desire  
"The Community Mind": Relational Narrative Desire  
Relational Desire and the Mimetic versus Anti-mimetic Debate  
Voice-in-Relation: Gertrude Stein's *Three Lives*  
Summary

**Chapter II The Illusion of Fusion: Narrative Intersubjectivity and Transsubjectivity**  
Literary Analyses of Intersubjectivity  
The Bonds of Love: Jessica Benjamin's Intersubjectivity  
The Mutual Recognition Stage  
Luce Irigaray’s “Civil Identity”  
Narrative Transsubjectivity: Habermas’s Communicative Action  
Narrative Strategies & Effects for Relational Narrative Desire  
Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger’s Matrix: Metamorphosis as Self-Transformation  
Summary

## Part II: Novel Analysis

**Chapter III Intersubjectivity and Transsubjectivity in H.D.’s *Palimpsest* and *Bid Me to Live***  
Narrative Palimpsest: H.D.’s Relational Identity  
*The Rafe and the not-Rafe*: Repression in *Bid Me to Live*  
“Chasing Gold Flame”: Intersubjective Connection in *Bid Me to Live*  
Intersubjectivity and Transsubjectivity in *Palimpsest*  
Summary

**Chapter IV “I insubstantise”: Intersubjectivity and Transsubjectivity in Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* and *Between the Acts***  
“That pang”: Woolf’s Relational Identity
Comic and Tragic: Interpretive Modes of Relational Desire 167
Habermas and Herd Mentality: Woolf’s War 179
“Partly visual, partly emotional”: Woolf’s Virtual Subjectivity 183
“I-Thou” Relations: Intersubjectivity and Transsubjectivity in To The Lighthouse 188
“Moments of High Pressure”: Intersubjective Connections in Between the Acts 210
“Her conspirator”: Intersubjective Connections in the Dodge-Isa Pairing 236
“‘We...composed of many different things’”: Woolf’s Communal Consciousness 257
Summary 295

Conclusion: Relational Desire Beyond Recognition 306
Beyond Recognition 305
Isa and Giles: The Final Union 310
Co-Created Self and Computer Gaming: New Notions of Individuality 317

Notes 330

Works Cited 364
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the English Department at the University of Victoria for supporting my work with three Teaching Assistantships awarded in 2000-2002, and three University of Victoria Teaching Scholarships awarded in 1990-1993. I also thank the University of Victoria Faculty of Graduate Studies for the University of Victoria Graduate Student Fellowship and Graduate Student Teaching Assistantship Award of Excellence, awarded in 2001.

I extend my deep gratitude to all of my committee members, who have faithfully supported me over a number of years. Dr. Evelyn Cobley has actively commented on this work’s many stages; I thank her for introducing me to narratology, critical thinking, and literary theory, the cornerstone of my education. I also thank Dr. Judith Mitchell for her unbridled enthusiasm for my topic and for leading my prose towards grace and clarity. Dr. Gordon Fulton’s lively conversations, worthy references, and insightful, detailed comments improved this work immensely, particularly in reconsidering and rearticulating certain analytical conclusions. I also thank Dr. Christine St. Peter, who took me on without a second thought, gave me a “mantra,” and whose wisdom about women and writing is reflected in the final version of this work. All of these members, in their own ways, have contributed directly to the ideas of relational identity that I present here.

I would also like to thank Dr. Smaro Kamboureli who was the Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of English while I was completing this work. Dr. Kamboureli’s commitment to graduate program fully supported my endeavours to complete this work. Her generosity and hard work remains a great gift to English graduate students. I also wish to thank the late Patricia Köster, who was the first to teach me about the “difference” in women’s writing; her passion for eighteenth century literature was the impetus for this work. The University of Victoria has an outstanding library staff; I wish to extend a special thanks to the Interlibrary Loan staff members: Arlene Tulloch, Jacqueline George, Karen Carter and Thea Todd.

I also wish to thank Dr. Dave Berry from the University of Victoria for giving me the opportunity to become a Graduate Student Teaching Assistantship Fellow, as well as the faculty at the Department of Humanities Red Deer College who provided a warm welcome to me during my first years of professional teaching. I especially want to thank Dr. Jim Gough, who encouraged me to “finish that Ph.D.,” Serge Gingras, who taught me about teaching, and Patricia Campbell for our trip to Three Hills. I also wish to thank Deanna Roozendaal and Susan Wilson at the Department of English at Camosun College for supporting my professional development.

I also thank my colleagues who have played a great part in “birthing” this work. These include: Dr. m.c. schraefel (our bus conversation about castration has never been far from my mind); Robin Cryderman, whose formatting gave this work its “form,” and Anu, whose generous offer to check my documentation saved me a week of work. I also wish to thank Monika Smith for befriending me after my move back, and Celeste Derksen and Kelly Pitman, whose pep talks have kept me motivated.

This work would not, and could not, have been completed without those who have cared for our family. Primary among these are Carol Meyer and Penny Cleator, whose chats and cups of tea and coffee have kept me fully caffeinated. I also wish to
thank my sister, Kathleen Niwa and her daughter, Paris Niwa-Unwin, who have so readily and graciously come to my assistance on more occasions than I can count. A heart-felt thanks goes to the late Jay Unwin, who once again managed to provide me with shelter; thank you, Jay, for building Squirrel Town, and Jack and Helen Unwin, who so generously helped me during my most dire time of need. I also wish to thank Louine Niwa for her valuable advice and babysitting. I could not have completed the final stage of this work without the help of Bonnie Heinen, Dick Heinen, Paula Heinen, and all of the Heinen brothers who so willingly looked after our girls and gave them a summer holiday. A huge thanks also goes out to the extremely gifted babysisters: Sarah, Mel and Molly Patterson, Cen Campbell, Corey Snider, and Susannah Jesse. Also thank to Roy Yeo, whose candy-filled visits were a welcome distraction, and Ingrid McCarrroll, who has been the best of friends.

My deepest thanks goes out to my husband, Peter Heinen, who immediately, and intuitively, understood what I meant by “intersubjectivity,” and who gave up countless weekends to look after the girls, freely giving the most precious gifts of all: time.
DEDICATION

for my little women,

Musa and Adora

with love.
What was thought without emotional achievement?

H.D.¹

One brain is only a teaspoon or thimble; and we ought to combine.

Virginia Woolf²

Lack of sympathy is not merely indifference; it entails ignorance, fear and hostility. Where there is no sympathy there is ignorance (no way of knowing) the other. Hostility is the reaction to the fear of the unknown. Ignorance, fear and hostility are fundamental to injustice or selfishness. They are intrinsic to the desire to dominate others in I-It relations.

Winnie Tomm³

The intersubjective mode assumes the possibility of a context with others in which desire is constituted for the self.

Jessica Benjamin⁴
Preface

One criticism I received upon the first draft of this work was that it appeared to be written in a vacuum, out of touch and presumably, out of synch, with current academic topics and trends. I was aghast, then equally amused, by this criticism. On one hand, I admit this dissertation was partially conceived in an academic vacuum; I proposed a new theory for narrative desire without having the opportunity to fully present these ideas in formal public academic forum. I faced the task of revising and shaping this work over a long, and then longer, period of time. During this time, I got married; I taught numerous English classes; I experienced the death of three family members; I gave birth to two daughters; I faced a near-dissolution of my marriage. I also participated in countless social arenas—playgrounds, playschools, playgroups, playdates—of which, as an academic, I had never before been cognisant. My kids took me to MacDonald’s. Although not formally recognized or validated as serious academic research, these arenas of sociability informed the questions of narrative identity that emerge in this study. They attest to the alterity I encountered, and then encompassed, while drafting this work—an alterity which previously had remained tangential to my academic life.

I realize that these kinds of life experiences cannot be evaluated or judged by those who must confer or withhold recognition for this work. But if, as noted, this work was created in an academic vacuum, it was certainly not created in a social vacuum. The experiences that cumulatively developed and tested my abilities as a student, teacher, wife, mother, woman, and parent, that (in)formed me as a relational identity, form the core of this work. I was challenged to integrate academic and non-academic worlds by
having to exist in multiple social roles and personae. Even though I had to (regrettably) sacrifice countless conferences, lectures, and discussions that would have enriched this topic, I gained practicse in witnessing and testifying to difference through the different social opportunities created by my new roles. I was forced to recognize and speak my own differences, even my own personal differences, shaped in entirely different, plural contexts. Certainly, I am not alone in this respect; countless post-secondary students toil under conflicting social obligations and personal stressors in circumstances more dire and daunting than my own. But too often, I believe, the recognition of these conflicts—identity crises—are not voiced in academic settings. Parental responsibility is one such conflict, obligating us to suddenly, consistently, and permanently, superimpose overlapping social roles. As parent-students, we learn to safeguard our rights to subjecthood in order to maintain our serious academic purpose, or alternatively, to become subjugated to tasks of fulfilling the desires of others. Since I have done both, I am confident that the knowledge gained from these alternatives, reflected everywhere in this work, could not have been gained exclusively from any university campus or academic exchange.

In this struggle for the right to subjecthood, my former illusion of "self" rapidly deteriorated. I had to learn each new task—changing diapers, explaining the moon’s phases, understanding the comma-splice—through others. I had to realise that I was not sufficiently adequate to accomplishing all of them all of the time. These demanding tasks, then, forced me to rely upon, and live plurality. To dispel the lurking threat of depression caused by these tasks, I required a new style, and delivery, of academic intelligence and emotional sensitivity, a new way of reading others, that all my years at
university had not prepared me. Thus, this potent, inescapable mix of different styles of social interaction as a student-parent challenged my previous views on self-definition and its academic constitution.

To a large extent, academic socialisation is non-relational. As academics, we appear skillfully able to theorise difference. Ironically, and actually, we too infrequently wrangle or wrestle with the conflicting desires that shape relational identity. Why would, or should, we experience such conflicts, for instance, when we can just read, think about, or theorize them? Therefore, I found communication models, like intersubjectivity and transsubjectivity, rich with theoretical potential to describe social interrelationships were relatively undeveloped. Although, in recent years, American psychoanalyst Jessica Benjamin’s concept of intersubjectivity (1986, 1988, 1995) has emerged as a critical term in literary and multi-disciplinary analyses of subjectivity, it has been virtually ignored by new branches of narratology. Despite its potent associations of fragmentation and fluidity aligning with postmodern concepts of feminist plurality and relationally, to date, the application of Benjamin’s model of intersubjectivity has been largely thematic, focussing on the “fusion” effect of unity through interpersonal relationships—an application that I wish to expand to technical aspects of narrative here as well.

In this work, I use the term intersubjectivity to invoke the social matrix or “web of partially interpenetrating consciousnesses” existing wherever human beings collect (Butte 58). To a certain extent, this “web” is the cross-section and superimposition of narratives. For instance, as a mode of internal mediation, intersubjectivity reduces the distance between subjects “to allow these two spheres to penetrate each other more or less profoundly” (Girard, Deceit 9). Although various applications of intersubjectivity are commonly accepted in literary psychoanalytic theories, I offer here a more rigorous
testing of its viability as a narratological term to describe certain narrative strategies and effects which evade singular modes of voice attribution.

In addition, no critical or complementary explanation of narrative transsubjectivity has yet emerged in narratology, despite the fact that narrative intersubjectivity branches off into the representation of a fictive presence of multiple subjectivities. I identify narrative transsubjectivity as a narrative voice\(^2\) collective, mediated by a communally-shared social consciousness, difficult to attribute to any singular source of fictive consciousness. This lack may be the result of what I take to be feminist psychoanalysis’s somewhat narrow interest in the mother-child dyad to describe psychic bonding. In the feminist psychoanalytic model of intersubjectivity, \textit{two distinct voices or subjects} are portrayed; through the recognition of SELF-Other difference, we see the appearance of civil identities. But since narrative intersubjectivity represents relational identity as SELF rooted in partialness and incompleteness, I believe that it can include Jürgen Habermas’s (1987b, 1987c, 1990) concept of transsubjective connection as well, that is, a bonding that spans across gender, age, class, ethnic, and geographical boundaries.\(^3\) Narrative transsubjectivity brings into play the illusion of individuality \textit{within} collectivity, a principle of great importance in feminist care-ethics.

Based on the conspicuous lack of narratological development of intersubjectivity and transsubjectivity, I argue that literary analysis has historically reflected academia’s devaluation of relationality—the real “vaccum,” I believe, motivating this work. As mentioned, through parent-student lived experiences, I became different from the person I used to be, and the one I had planned to be. By necessity, I fostered my psychic potential for inclusion, nurturing inter/transsubjective connection whenever possible. I believe that the passages of narrative intersubjectivity and transsubjectivity analysed in
the novels of H.D. and Woolf form a similar allegory for the co-created SELF divested of any one singular position or mode of expression. In “A Desire of One's Own,” Benjamin identifies an important component of women’s fantasy life as the wish for a holding other, whose presence permits the experience of one's own desire, “who recognizes it when it emerges of itself” (96). Becoming a relational subject entails this recognition of one’s own desire. As a student-parent, I had the privileged presence of these “holding others” who, in every sense, rescued me, and my subjecthood, by validating the aspects of motherhood and parenthood unrecognized by the insular operations of the academic environment. Benjamin’s view of a subject’s inner desire as a space and continuum, as one that includes “the space between the I and the you, as well as the space within me” (my italics, “A Desire” 95) prevented me from giving up my academic pursuits.

According to Benjamin, this space, one of “tolerable” paradox, allows “the mind to think” (“The Primal Leap” 129). Such was the case for me; being “held” by others, I could think and create what you read here.

In my case, this psychic space, consciously manifested with and guarded by the combined efforts of myself and loved ones, forms the theoretical foundation of narrative inter/transsubjectivity. Benjamin’s holding fantasy is one that permits self-discovery through the presence of otherness and otheredness; its state of aloneness paradoxically ensures outside recognition. Inter/transsubjectivity is not only the sharing of two subjectivities, but rather, the entire recognition of the social dimensions of identity. Quite often, as Noelle McAfee (2000) observes, we develop relations with others to get insight into our own identity; these insights expand our self-understandings: “Alone, relational subjects’ understandings will always be partial and fragmented. Together, they can fill in
the blind spots, however provisionally" (Habermas, Kristeva 135). A co-created self requires a balance of separation and connectedness through which self-unity is granted by one’s caring relationship with others.

In a world without Otherness, no capacity for interpersonal connection is present; the self loses opportunities to enrich itself through difference. In a world sensitised to Otherness, partialness and incompleteness are the only ways to form, and reform, an enlivened identity responsive to change, to what Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger (1996, 2000) calls metamorphosis. Since, however, Western patriarchy has never valued sharing power as a means to power, it continues to rely on obsolete, self-destructive modes of domination as its primary way of combating difference. As a manifestation of indeterminate possibility, relational identity resists all of the processes associated with domination, including objectification, appropriation, naturalisation and assimilation. Instead, it courts and integrates difference. Thus, although we will see some female protagonists emerge triumphantly as relational subjects in this analysis of H.D.’s and Virginia Woolf’s novels, we do not see them entirely liberated from the dominator culture of Western patriarchy’s subject-object pairing. H.D. and Woolf’s phantom female protagonists circumvent their own psychosexual objectification in patriarchal culture, but at the same time, reflect on their inability to free themselves from patriarchal oppression. In thus preserving outdated Victorian values of family life and femininity by negotiating their own adaptations to them, Woolf and H.D. continue to depict women under patriarchal control. These depictions, however, I argue detail imaginative possibilities of how their female protagonists could resist such control. Thus, the “new” modern woman, with her indefinite, eternally incomplete incarnations, patiently waits, and continues to await, recognition. In this spirit, I offer Relational Narrative Desire as a
positive testimony to the socially expansive benefits of tolerating different voices between, and among, subjects.

**Approach**

My approach, emerging out of feminist narratology's concern with issues of authority and gendering, conceives of narrative voice as a signifier for *inclusion*. I rely on classical narratology's distinctions among voice, focalisation, perspective, proximity, distance, irony and sympathy, as well as the illusion of cognitive "presence" to reveal voice's mimetic and anti-mimetic capacity for plurality, the unifying expression of difference.

My tools to examine the illusions of voice in intersubjectivity and transssubjectivity originate in psychoanalytic theories of *love* found in Jessica Benjamin (1986, 1988, 1995), Luce Irigarary (1991, 1996, 2001a, 2001b) and Kelly Oliver (1998, 2001). Complementing these theories are the art theories and practices of Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger (1996, 2000), whose notions of "matrix" and "metamorphosis" conceptualise how the borderspaces between separate subjectivities can be traversed and unified. I use Habermas' concept of transsubjectivity to posit a community-model of intersubjectivity, represented by Virginia Woolf as a communal consciousness. I also draw on the feminist theology of Winnie Tomm (1992, 1995) which posits an ethics of care connoting the intimacy found in Woolf's and H.D.'s novels. Tomm's liberationist ethic aligns with the pluralistic paradigm of identity and narrative desire presented here.

In my view, these theorists successfully deconstruct the Self-Other binary haunting classical narratological theories of narrator/character voice attribution. If self is conceived inter-relationally, that is, as a permeable voice, it represents otherness within
fusion, so that the threat of erased individuality does not occur. My approach to the structural aspects of narrative voice along this line configures relational narrative desire as an alternative to Peter Brooks’s theory of narrative desire, offering a mode of desire not yet available in contemporary narratologies. Relational narrative desire, predicated upon the recognition of the partialness of identity as a means to subjective community and (self)unity more easily accommodates structural characteristics of voice-centered narratives, particularly those associated with non-hierarchical event sequences, anti-closure, and aesthetic reiteration. I define voice-centered narratives as those depicting singular and collective modes of human consciousness in a psychic “processual chaos” (Fludernik, Towards 30). These narrativies represent the psychic evolution of a subject’s sociability, its interpersonal interactions with society. Such psychological narratives represent the emotive responses that convey the subject’s understanding of itself as a co-created, relational construct, inherent in the representation of identity-formation in H.D. and Woolf’s novels.

In my narratological model for inter/transsubjectivity, I focus on H.D. and Woolf’s literary representations of individuality and communality that offer new ways of conceiving identity. These representations pay attention to social diversity and psychic trauma and fragmentation, certainly worsened through these authors’ lived experience of two World Wars. H.D. and Woolf represent identity as an inclusionary response to difference, partially as political protest against the Nazis’ mass eradication of ethnic and social minorities. In their portrayal of individualism, H.D. and Woolf represent unity achieved through heterogeneity, a complex state achieved on an individual, temporary basis. The SELF grants unity to Others through temporary, transitory and even fragile exchanges wherein recognition transcends egoism. Such recognition, as sociability,
necessitates the use of fantasy as a mode for experiencing the SELF as relational-identity. I refer to this fantasy of unity as an intersubjective or transsubjective connection, a communally shared network of interrelated subjectivities. Fantasy counters the alienation of self-reflexivity arising from the dominator subject-object dichotomy in patriarchy. Through fantasy, H.D. and Woolf's female protagonists locate their subjecthoods and civil identities in more radical social imaginary with their constant shifting into virtual experiences of otherness. Fantasy signifies the ability to reconceive the self from a relational stance, as an enlarged subject sensitive towards differences and compassionate of similarities.

From relational narrative desire, sustained by fantasy, emerges a paradoxical logic accommodating our contradictory needs for recognition and independence (Benjamin Bonds, 221). This logic informs my narratological description of how the desire for simultaneous inclusion and individuation is stylistically represented by H.D. and Woolf. Relational narrative desire analyses fictional subjects in the process of experiencing their own partialness; they conceive of conceiving identity as an open-ended process in which the self is co-created by the Other through recognition and identification. In this case, knowing is an act of communion (Benjamin, Bonds 19), as we will see in the next chapter.
Introduction

I can make up situations, but I cannot make up plots. That is: if I pass the lame girl, I can without knowing I do it, instantly make up a scene...
This is the germ of such fictitious gift as I have.

Virginia Woolf (5 October 1927)

Since its inception as structuralism’s offspring in the mid to late 1960s, narratology’s role in literary theory has remained controversial. Departing from its initial search for empirical, scientific truths in what remains a realm of interpretation, narratology is currently being reborn through contemporary applications in multi-disciplinary studies. Postclassical narratology is experiencing an unprecedented boom, expanding into a highly diversified, interdisciplinary phase, hatching an array of different narratologies: postmodern narratology (Gibson 1996; M. Currier 1998; Aczel 1998, 2001b); historiographic narratology (Doležel 1999); possible / alternative worlds narratology (Ryan 1991; Ronen 1994; Kafalenos 1999); linguistic-applicational and natural narratology (Banfield 1982, 2000; Fludernik 1993, 1996-2001); cognitive narratology (Jahn 1997, 1999); constructivist narratology (Nünning 2000, 2001; Schmidt 2001); socionarratology (Herman 1999b); thematic narratology, including feminist, queer, and ethnic narratology (Warhol 1989, 1999; Mezei, 1996b; DuPlessis 1996; Lanser, 1982, 1999), and artificial intelligence / cyberage narratology (Ryan 1999, 2001; Young 2003).

Despite this insatiable appetite for applied narratology, anticipated by Roland Barthes in his introduction to the structural analysis of narrative in 1966, theoretical conceptions of narrative voice are conspicuously lacking in this growing abundance of research. Even in David Herman’s 1999 ground-breaking collection of interdisciplinary essays in Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis, for instance, voice is,
once and only in passing, considered by Katharine Young as a viable medium that can travel “unhindered” between different “realms”—and here it is in the medical, not literary, world (“Narratives of Indeterminacy” 205).^2

However, narrative voice’s categorical status continues to be debated as contemporary narratologists adapt classic narratological terms and concepts in computer technologies, sociological applications, and feminist philosophies. This debate takes two topics in the future feasibility of using narrative voice: (1) as trope or analogy for multi-object (multi-media) analysis; and (2) to describe embodiment and disembodiment as modes of mediation and degrees of mimesis in literary analysis. As Andrew Gibson points out in *Towards a Postmodern Narratology* (1996), conceptions of narrative voice are limited by spiritual and transcendental notions of presence as ideal entities, that is, as the sole representation of human voices (146, 168-169); thus, narrative voice continues to be conceived in terms critiqued by Derrida as the origin and guarantor of self-presence and identity. This view raises problems for narrative voices which do more, and something different, than signify attributable speaking/thinking sources. Therefore, throughout *Relational Narrative Desire*, I propose that narrative voice does not need to function exclusively as a representation of identity; rather, it can reflect the partialness of identity and the relationality of human subjectivity. Where the attribution to speakers or mediating consciousness(es) fails, “narrative voice” can emerge as a representation of plurality/collectivity.

Despite their overt differences, some ideas regarding the fictional sources of voice (including represented speech and thought) are shared among divergent postclassical narratologies. Narrators and characters, for instance, are generally considered pragmatic
identities, "deictic centers, gendered beings, holders of assumptions, sources of rhetoric and situated entities"—a reader's projection of psychologized embodiment—in order to understand perceptions, motivations, and desires in the fictional world (see Jahn, "Stanley Fish" NarrNet). Most narratologies continue to emphasize the reader's role in concretising the ephemeral aspects of narrative, including voice, focalisation, person, tense and reliability, while posing theoretical questions about the ontology of voice. They typically focus on the relevance of narratological anthropomorphism, that is, interpreting a narrative voice as representing a human consciousness, in textual passages or works where readers' customary voice attributions break down. Contemporary narratologists, including Andrew Gibson, Richard Aczel and Monika Fludernik, conceive of such breakdowns as interpretive moves (Fludernik, "New Wine" 622), which remove narrative voice as a theoretical construct from pure narratology to the realm of readerly practises—a study which expands to other humanist disciplines, such as literary criticism and theory. However, in response to this move, Marie-Laure Ryan, among others, has persuasively made the case for the "legitimacy of metaphor" as a valid way of mapping new territories for narratology: "Thinking," Ryan argues "is analogical as much as it is logical" ("Cyberage Technology" 115). With this statement, Ryan implies that as a descriptive metaphor for signifying human speaking/thinking consciousness, voice remains a highly useful term.

Using analogies based on feminist psychoanalysis, stylistics, and communication theory in Relational Narrative Desire, I offer a theoretical model of narrative intersubjectivity and transsubjectivity to broaden ongoing discussions of virtual reality in narrative (see Ryan, "Cyberage Narratology" 116-120). Narrative intersubjectivity and
transsubjectivity form new tools for the technical and thematic analysis of voice in the twentieth-century psychological novel.

At present, most narratologists agree that psychic and other cognitive states of being, including dreams, memories, trauma, repression, fantasy, and self-consciousness, offer valid areas for serious narratological enquiry (Jahn 1999). However, they neglect to consider how certain stylisations of intermediary forms of narrative voice like free indirect discourse and combinations of interior monologue and reported dialogue, play a part in representing the psychic aspects of fictional human subjectivity in radically experimental novels like those of H.D. and Virginia Woolf. Due to its analytically elusive linguistic expression and anthropomorphic mimetic link to human subjectivity, narrative voice has been somewhat stigmatized, considered useful only for mimetic and interpretative purposes. It has been pushed to the sidelines of pure narratological inquiry, despite its direct bearing on how and why we posit narrative voices as indictors of human consciousness, and extrapolating from that, of human bodies and identities. As Judith Donath points out, even in virtual environments of cybercommunication, “the body provides a compelling and convenient definition of identity. The norm is: one body, one identity” (“Identity and Deception” n. pag.).

By entering the debate about the mimetic effect of narrative voice, in Relational Narrative Desire, I dismantle this norm by arguing that narrative voice is multidimensional—it embodies speaking/thinking sources as individuated and nonindividuated. I analyse the grammatical, stylistic, and literary markers of narrative voice as a signifier of plurality and relational identity, rather than singularity and individuality. In so doing, I argue for a narratological conception of voice that plays a
structural role in narrative, equal to that of its theoretical rival: plot.\textsuperscript{4}

Theoretical studies that analyze the structural capacities of narrative voice are lacking for a number of reasons. Classical narratology polarises the functions of voice and plot by assuming that the representation of voice, whether thought or spoken, temporarily interrupts, suspends, or defers plot. Voice cannot, presumably, coexist with or simulate plot’s function.\textsuperscript{5} Classical narratology’s Aristotleian assumption that voice representation cannot adequately constitute an “event” or a series of events forms an entirely arbitrary, prescriptive approach arising out of structuralism’s desire to analyze measurable units of action, cause-and-effect events, and “logical,” mimetic sequences. But voice and plot, as I demonstrate in this work, are not competing entities, as classical narrative theory implies. Events may be voice-bound; they occur, or fail to occur, because of what is expressed or what fails to be expressed in represented thought or speech. In these cases, voice becomes a series of illocutionary acts inciting action—action is the expression of voice. Voice and plot are interdependent functions, receding and emerging in a symbiotic relationship. Mieke Bal’s \textit{Narratology} (1985) argues, as I do, that there is a category of narrative events not based in causal action, which happen for “no reason.” Bal’s theory supports my argument that narrative voice has its own (psycho)logical structure, as found in any classical opera wherein voice represents action as much as, if not more than, plot.

Fludernik supports this view in \textit{Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology} (1996c) in what she calls a “(post)structuralist obituary” for plot (27). Fludernik argues for narrative as a mediation of consciousness (rather than plot) because existence always takes priority over action parameters. Action belongs to narrative only “as a consequence of the fact
that experience is imaged as typically human and therefore involves the presence of existents who act”; the representation of human experience depends upon an illusion of *embodiment* because change can be “subsumed under it” (30; 27). Using Bremond’s notion of narrative choice and Stanzel’s definition of narrative as mediated story, Fludemik argues that *all* narrative is built on the mediating function of consciousness (49). Her term “naturalness” refers to a framework of human embodiment, a holistic schemata known from real life used in the construction of a mimetic, fictional world, “constitutive of prototypical human experience” (12). Thus, reading can be defined “in relation to readers’ cognitive reliance on [such] embodied schemata and parameters” (19), which constitute a narrativity that centers on “experientiality of an anthropomorphic nature” (26-8).\(^6\) Fludemik goes on to argue that, based on these parameters, the protagonist’s reaction to experience (emotional or physical) constitutes the experiential depiction of human consciousness *tout court*:

acting and thinking are equally part and parcel of the dynamic human predicament of living in a world with which one inevitably interacts. The specific aesthetic effect of narrative need not rely on the teleology of plot, on how all the episodes and motives contribute to the final outcome, but can be produced also by the mimetically motivated evocation of human consciousness and its (sometimes chaotic) experience of being in the world. (30)

These reflections support my investigation into voice as a viable mode of emotional structure within narrative. The voice-plot dichotomy in classical narratology relegates voice to real or imagined expressions of the psyche, while plot is restricted to external events. But nowhere is it determined that plot cannot represent actions purely in terms of their symbolism, that is, as thematic epiphany, as the open endings of Elizabeth Bowen’s
novel *The Death of the Heart* (1938) and her short story “The Demon Lover” (1952) clearly suggest. In neither text, do the protagonists’ actions change anything: Mrs. Drover, beating uselessly on the windows, is captive in the accelerating taxi, while Portia returns, reluctantly, with the housekeeper to the domestic prison she has just tried to escape. Nor is it clear that voice cannot function linearly, as a sequence of verbal events or performances, as in Virginia Woolf’s *The Waves* (1931). Narrative voice can function as the organizing principle of interrelated fictional subjectivities, whether embodied or “voiced” as characters and narrators, or not. In this case, “events” are “language happenings”—or, as Roland Barthes says, language “per se, the adventure of language, whose advent never ceases to be celebrated” (“Introduction” 271). Thus, I argue that narrative voices are not *function-bound* in being solely attributable to singular characters’ identities; they may assume a transitory, independent function that represents the loosening of and escape from these fictional bodily parameters.

I present narrative intersubjectivity and transsubjectivity as narrative modes signifying subjective transformation within and among characters, their local communities, and a larger, more general cultural collective, a historically-situated communal consciousness. These modes work to resolve the embodiment / disembodiment debate in narratology by arguing for a more fluid and dynamic understanding of narrative voice outside the rigid taxonomies of postmodern narratologies developed thus far: non-narrated narratology (Banfield 1982), naturalist narratology (Fludernik 1996c), and spatial- or geometrical-oriented narratological schematas (Gibson 1996). Instead, I interpret voice in relation to the concept of embodiment-as-mimesis, a concept useful for describing the reader’s “hearing” of voice(s). As Nilli Diengott (1986) previously observed, the term “voice” in narratology
relational narrative desire

seems unable "to override completely the mimetic language game" (524). To aid the
reader's process of attributing voice(s) anti-mimetically, however, a certain degree of
detachment and disembodiment must be present in voice-stylisation to represent its
capacity to reflect plurality.

Overview

I propose that narrative voice can function as a reflection of the partialness of identity and
the relationality of human subjectivity, as well as a representation of character identity. I
suggest that if the term "narrative voice" must be retired as a purely narratological term,
it can still be used to describe narratives based on disembodiment, invisibility, virtuality,
and non-individuation. Modernist texts like those of H.D. and Woolf raise questions
about stylistics; for instance, how can a subjectivity be cognitively experienced or
interpreted by a reader without voice attribution? Can there be "speaking parts" for
embodied and disembodied characters/narrators without "voices"? What aesthetic
implications arise from granting "voices" to non-individuated or communal sources?
Naturally, such questions must occur, as Ryan indicates, on micro-levels within texts in
order to avoid imposing any one governing system of narrative description globally
("Cyberage Narratology" 138). For this reason, I will present detailed narrative analyses
of short narrative passages and specific scene sequences in the following work.

To address these questions and accomplish this kind of analysis, in Chapter I,
"Narrative Voicings," I discuss how contemporary narratology's increasing
interdisciplinary applications have pointed to new directions in theorising voice, such as
Marie-Laure Ryan's application of narrative terms to cyberage technology, and for my
purposes here, to virtual reality. Although Ryan's discussions of narrative voice *per se* are limited in her recent works (1999, 2001) as in other new narratologies, they offer a context for the two main theoretical concepts for my model of narrative relational desire: (1) subject-subject pairing, necessary for theorising inter/transsubjective connections, as outlined in Luce Irigaray's (1996a) feminist psychoanalytic concept of civil identity; and (2) virtual subjectivity categorises narrative stylisations that grant a civil identity with her own voice and agency. In this chapter, I also explain how the feminist "gendering" of narratology in the past two decades, although beneficial for its close analyses of women's literary texts, has also left certain obsolete narratological models intact: Peter Brooks's (1984) theory of narrative desire and Wolfgang Iser's (1974) implied reader, for example. Although these are examined more closely in Chapter II, I suggest here how they fail to perceive narrative structures based on relational identity, a concept pioneered by J. Hillis Miller's (1968) study of social interrelationships and community collectivity in literature, the basis for narratological models of intersubjectivity and transsubjectivity that I develop in later chapters.

H.D.'s and Woolf's themes that promote the social tolerance of individual differences, a new kind of "unity" valued in inter/transsubjective connection, form the basis for my model of *pluralized* narrative voice, a narratological signifier of relational identity. In contrast to current feminist criticism which marks "ambiguity" as the defining aspect of modern women's fiction (Mezei 1996a), I suggest that *plurality*, and the polyvalence of narrative voice that it engenders, reflects a style of mediation that transcends any singular source of attribution. In this way, H.D. and Woolf's narrative voice experimentation straddles the current debate on narrative voice concerning its
mimeticism and anti-mimeticism, evidenced in the theories of Monika Fludernik and Ann Banfield. I propose engaging both of these theories to understand fully the effects of narrative inter/transsubjectivity. While endorsing Fludernik’s (1996c) belief that narrative voice belongs to the realm of interpretation, I also invoke Banfield’s (1982) analysis of “speakerless sentences” to suggest how narrative voice can represent subjectivity, without necessarily representing individual identity. This theoretical partnership is tested out in my analysis of Gertrude Stein’s novella *Three Lives* (1909) which shows that the undeniable similarities among the three characters suggest their interrelationship, stylistically and structurally reflected in a communal voice which thematically unites these different women. The narratological construct of a communal voice is elaborately detailed in Chapter IV, an analysis of Woolf’s novels *To the Lighthouse* and *Between the Acts*. My discussion of *Three Lives* conjoins with Irigaray’s concept of “civil identity,” a term used to describe subjects seeking recognition in dominator cultures. By emphasizing the role of care-ethics in Irigaray’s civil identity, I apply it to Benjamin’s psychoanalytic model of intersubjectivity and Habermas’s communication model of transsubjectivity. In these applications, I focus on the narratives’ subject-subject pairing and their non-ironic representations of indirect stylisations of narrative voice.

In Chapter II, “The Illusion of Fusion: Narrative Intersubjectivity and Transsubjectivity,” I adapt Benjamin’s psychoanalytic concept of intersubjectivity and Habermas’s philosophical concept of transsubjectivity to narratological analyses of narrative voice. Within this discussion, intersubjectivity is conceived as an open-ended process in which the self is co-created by the Other through recognition and
identification. To elucidate Benjamin’s concepts, I consider three ethical approaches related to her concept of intersubjectivity: Bracha Ettinger Lichtenberg’s maternal connectedness, Luce Irigaray’s civic identity, and Winnie Tornm’s concept of caring as a means to knowledge. From these frameworks emerges Habermas’ visionary construct of transsubjectivity, which perceives personal identity as a “mirror image of collective identity.” This “mirror image,” a recurring trope in the novels of H.D.’s *Palimpsest* and Woolf’s *Between*, symbolises a dialectic in the self between individuality and anonymity, an ability to enrich the self through the integration of the Other.

Note that in this discussion I also temper the inflated rhetoric surrounding the feminist glorification of subjective “fusion” emerging from these theories in order to more precisely conduct a narratological application of these terms. For instance, I acknowledge the negative effects of successful inter/transsubjective connection, as well as the positive effects of failed inter/transsubjective connection. I conclude this discussion by suggesting how Iser’s classical model of the implied reader could be reconfigured from the perspective of a relational model of narrative desire which accommodates “virtual” subjectivities.

In Chapter III, “Intersubjectivity and Transsubjectivity in H.D.’s *Palimpsest* and *Bid Me To Live*,” I discuss how H.D. represents narrative intersubjectivity as a dynamic interrelationship between self and Other: not self-in-Other, or self-through-Other. To counteract appropriative dominator models of identity, H.D. necessarily holds the stylistic strings of two, and sometimes more, life-worlds at once. To this end, I show how *Bid Me*’s two antagonists, Julia Ashton and Bella Carter, share an intersubjective connection, despite their intense personal dislike of one another. Similarly, in *Palimpsest*
Part II, Raymonde and Ermy experience a successful intersubjective connection by “fusing” past and present trauma, whereas in Part I, Hipparchia’s self-reflexivity and interobjectifications fail to constitute her as a civil identity; thus the intersubjective connection between Hipparchia and Marius fails. My analysis of H.D. focuses on her use of transvocalisation and transfigural imagery, both of which illustrate her concept of “transhumance,” an acknowledgment that subjectivity is a relational construct. In Notes on Thought and Vision (22-3), H.D. defines transhumance as a “sympathy of thought” in which two minds merge in an emotional and intellectual fusion; the “over-brain,” the egotistical self-awareness consciously experienced, works together with the “love-mind” or “love-brain,” the desire for inclusivity, in such a way that a visionary quality of connection (or “love”) takes hold. Transhumance characterises Julia’s desire to trust her sense of self-security so that the SELF is temporally positioned and constructed through the separate “lens” of the Other. The fusion of two separate subjectivities (Julia’s and Bella’s) in narrative dialogue challenges the dichotomy of individuality and collectivity—between the “I” and the “you,” “one picture” is formed, a picture of intersubjective union: “I am on the other side. But, if so, am I still I or am I you? (Are “you” “I” now?)” (cited in Campbell 19). This dramatic meeting of two antagonists represents inclusionary desire by showing that self-change paradoxically acknowledges similarity in various contexts of difference.

In the same way, Woolf’s literary depiction of an anonymous, unattributable, authorial voice symbolises a plurality speaking as “one.” In Chapter IV, my interpretation of these voices complements Fludernik’s analysis of the inverse effect of free indirect discourse (“New Wine in Old Bottles?” 2001) which lays the foundation for,
and I believe anticipates, the model for communal narrative voice developed here. If the “new wine” of free indirect discourse emphasizes the need to consider non-ironic, empathetic effects of narrative voice, then the bottle I propose here holds Fludernik’s mimetic illusion as one grounded in communication: subjectivity experienced in a communicative, relational mode. My contribution here ploughs new ground for narratology which, by listening to voice, can let go of traditional conceptions of unity based solely on plot structures.

In this chapter, I focus primarily on Woolf’s liberation of narrative voice from singular identity in *Lighthouse* and *Between*. This analysis problematises narrative voice attribution, showing how the relational capacities of narrative voice, with its de-hierarchizing and destabilizing effects, can support a model of relational narrative desire. Woolf’s reliance on narrative voice polyvalence, particularly with her use of pronominal stylisation, thematises the desire for inclusion and subject-subject pairings. Although no single unified narratorial position can be easily determined in Woolf’s novel, temporary “solderings” of multiple voices, I argue, emulate the feminist ideal of intersubjective fusion and communally shared subjective states. For marginalized protagonists, these states, as Carol Gilligan notes in *In A Different Voice* (1982), provide ways of being with others that allow a subject “also to be with her[him]self” (53)—that is, in a state of communality that simultaneously ensures self-unity.

I also argue here that Woolf’s communality emerges from the narrative representation of multiple voices which symbolize a virtual, non-attributable, shared subjectivity, outside of, and not readily heard within, the phallogocentric register. By exposing, through diverse combinations of free indirect thought/speech and pronominal
interplay, the various social prejudices which govern conversational exchange, Woolf graphically portrays patriarchy’s fear of difference, symbolised by socially ostracized and emotionally vulnerable characters, like the gay visitor William Bankes, and the lesbian artist Miss La Trobe. In Between, as well as in some passages of Lighthouse, Woolf challenges us to perceive a narratively constructed communal consciousness, a “we” composed of “many different things” predicated on both anonymity and individuation.

No doubt with the advent of even more sophisticated computer-technologies, many narratological advances will be made to capture formally what has always escaped abstract stylistic theories of voice: its musicality, idiom, and audibility. Meanwhile, in the absence of any comprehensive notational systems to indicate accurately voice inflections and modulations in the interpretive process, I continue to rely on the term “voice” for what it symbolises: a representation of what transpires in a narrative situation where distinct subjectivities combine. In so doing, I acknowledge that any communicative exchange, inherent in inter/transsubjective connection, is partially rooted in human embodiment. I believe that this kind of material embodiment aligns with the feminist aim underlying this study, namely, to examine the possibility of applying fictional inter/transsubjective connections to actual social, political, media, and personal communicatons. In this sustained explosion of voice, we need interpretive strategies to open ways of conceiving of voice beyond mimesis, without erasing the subject. I hope that this study can help us grow wiser about the ironic interdependence of the mimetic and anti-mimetic, “both in theory, and in narrative itself,” as well as in real-life communicative acts (Fludernik, Towards 79).
Chapter I
Narrative Voicings

“Did the plot matter? ... The plot was only there to beget emotion. Don’t bother about the plot: the plot’s nothing.”

Virginia Woolf

Evolving from formalist and structuralist origins, contemporary narratology privileges plot to describe narrative structures. Narratology’s weighty inheritance of plot-based theories chokes off the development of a narrative poetics appropriate for analysing voice-centered, modernist texts. Consequently, voice has been neglected as a viable tool for analysing modernist psychological narratives that are often inconsistent with classical Oedipal-quest plot structures. Oedipal structures embed the desire for mastery through self-Other appropriation of a dominant “I,” thus bestowing upon the fictional subject, or self, patriarchal powers of agency. However, in modernist female plots, female protagonists who are unable to embody or represent desire in similar power structures still need new narratological tools and theories for their analysis.

Obviously, the representation of narrative desire solely as a desire for domination is problematic; it assumes a master narrative, an assumption not yet formally challenged by postmodern narratology, particularly problematic for radical voice experimentation of twentieth-century modernist fiction. Such an assumption is also problematic for modernist writers whose female protagonists are not liberated, or granted recognition of their subjecthood. Instead, these writers fight for such recognition of female subjecthood by resisting Oedipal plots and refusing passive roles that only reflect patriarchal desire. In this chapter, I argue that, in female plots, voice is the narrative technique most responsible for articulating narrative desire. In female plots, subjects are motivated by desire and pleasure distinct from those of the Oedipal-plot structure. To analyse such
female plots, I introduce a model of relational narrative desire. This model values social
inter-relationality over action as a principle of narrative structure in contrast to
domination and appropriation; it focuses on narrative strategies and effects that promote
themes of integration and inclusivity. Relational narrative desire opposes power-
structures of domination since pleasure is experienced through a recognition of self-Other
interdependence.

Relational narrative desire requires a new narratological construct, which I call
virtual subjectivity. Virtual subjectivity refers to a source of mediation that is not
embodied as a character or narrator in the text. As a source of mediation, virtual
subjectivity can be attributed to "no one and everyone" since the authority mediating the
text is shared and distributed among several subjectivities. This effect gives the reader
the impression of a generalised, communally shared mediating source, which is shared
either between two subjectivities (intersubjectivity) or more than two subjectivities
(transsubjectivity), but which still retains audible traces of individual voices. This key
construct, which I derive from the theories of Monika Fludernik (1996c, 2001) and Ann
Banfield (1982) shows how narrative voice can be pluralised to represent relational
identity. Relational identity shifts the focus of narrative plot to the structure of social
networks that transcend, but still "voice," singular identity.

Of the many literary psychoanalytic models that scrutinise and problematise
narrative desire, very few concede, as does Susan Winnet (1990), that female pleasure
might have a different plot (507). Virginia Woolf, however, clearly anticipated this
possibility. For example, at the height of her literary success, she repeatedly apologizes
in her diaries for what she perceives as her inherent inability to construct plots. Her
mock protest against this "defect" implies that her ability to "make up situations" cannot
be valued in the ways that good plot-making can. A narrative situation, Woolf claims in ironic self-deprecation, is merely a "germ," that only partially, and indirectly, captures reality; it does not structure a whole. Her comment characterises the literary critical climate at that time, and I believe, given the neglect of alternate plot structures in narratology, to this day, such a climate persists.

The model of relational narrative desire I introduce here analyses these "germs"—narratives whose hierarchies and linearities are structured according to voice, not plot. This model forms an alternative to the only fully-developed theory of narrative desire in use: Peter Brooks’s (1984, 1993, 1994) theory of narrative desire. In this chapter, I show how Brooks fails to consider the structural functions of narrative voice and favours power structures of domination. In so doing, he assumes an Oedipal-plot structure, and many experimental modern novels do not conform to this. To expand the parameters of Brooks’s model to accommodate relational narrative desire, I emphasise the nature and dynamics of fictional characters’ social interrelationships which represent identity as partial and relational.

Relational narrative desire has several profound implications for contemporary narratology’s debate on the categorical status of narrative voice. Within this debate, I focus primarily on the theories of narrative voice put forth by Monika Fludernik (1996c, 2001) and Ann Banfield (1982). In several complementary ways, Fludernik’s ongoing research into readers’ attribution practices with literary voice parallels Banfield’s study of narrative grammar. According to Banfield, fictional subjectivity does not necessarily guarantee the presence or identity of a speaking or thinking human consciousness. Narrative voice, Banfield claims, can be disembodied, or “severed” from the
representation of a single fictive consciousness, typically embodied as a character or narrator. Along separate, but complementary lines of argument, Fludernik (2001) discusses readers’ attribution processes as largely “interpretive moves,” thus identifying the means by which disembodied voices become pluralised. Such work suggests to me that since narrative voice can be represented in a literary text without being granted identity, or without being attributed to an easily recognizable or identifiable source, narrative voice can function mimetically as well as anti-mimetically. Narrative voice can represent a speaking/thinking human consciousness, as well as be a site of multiple speaking/thinking sources that do not imitate any embodied reality. The realisation of narrative voice’s anti-mimetic capacity allows the shift of narrative desire from plot, the imitation of action, to voice. With this shift, narrative voice forms the narratological foundation for defining narrative intersubjectivity and transsubjectivity—shared sources of subjectivity—presented in the next chapter.

Narrative voice stylisations, straddling both mimetic and anti-mimetic modes of representation, depict fictional identity in dual modes: embodied and disembodied, real and virtual. These alternate modes configure identity as pluralised and relational. Two such examples of voice-as-plurality are H.D. and Woolf’s representations of virtual subjectivity; by evading attribution to a single character or narrator, such representations of fused subjectivity signal an intersubjective or transsubjective connection. Such a signal can be located in narrative grammar’s polyvalence, an effect often interpreted as textual ambiguity. My model of relational narrative desire explores how this ambiguity, a term often associated with modernist women’s writing, may indicate something else—the presence of multiple, but specific, interpretive choices for narrative voice.
attribution, or, alternatively, a collective or communally shared source of mediation which J. Hillis Miller (1968) calls the novel’s “community mind.”

Since such concepts support Fludernik’s notion of reader decidability, an account of reading practices, I argue that relational narrative desire significantly revises Wolfgang Iser’s 1974 theory of the implied reader. Rather than making judgements about the characters, readers of modernist novels decide how empathetic or insensitive their readings will be towards certain characters, or groups of characters, since multiple possibilities for interpretation exist both in the narrative grammar and in the themes of the texts. To a certain extent, the act of making character judgements becomes irrelevant since alternative readings exist. Together, the textual effects of plurality and multiplicity represent such distinctive forms of narrative desire that I believe they depart significantly from both Peter Brooks’s model of narrative desire and Wolfgang Iser’s model of the implied reader.

Virtual Subjectivity and the Implied Reader

Narrative modes of inter/transsubjectivity rely on virtual subjectivity to theorize civil identities, that is, the right to subjecthood (Irigaray 1996a, 2001a, 2001b) for disempowered subjects in dominator cultures. In this section, I offer a more detailed explanation of virtual subjectivity, and its effect upon readers’ interpretations and textual identifications. As a narrative construct, virtual subjectivity creates a permeable identity that liquefies infrastructures of identification. As a feminist strategy, it shows how the female subject creates her own agency and structuring devices with which she orders, unorders, and disorders her world—an agency essential for constituting the self as subject, as will be discussed in the next chapter. The concept of virtual subjectivity
revises Iser’s concept of the implied reader, making reader identification less of a moral issue, that is, the matter of judging what is right and wrong, and more of an ethical issue, that is, a reflection on the moral variables and values involved, and a decision about what is respectful and tolerant of difference.

Narratives predicated upon relational desire evoke multifarious approaches to the interpretation of unattributable voices. This observation supports a postmodern emergent reading of H.D. and Woolf since readers’ interpretation and identification engage a mode of *decidability*—a morally freer process than classical narratology, and in particular, Iser’s (1974, 1978) model of the implied reader allows. In emergent readings, the reader’s textual access is a temporary immersion into *one* interpretation which must be seen *in relation to* other available choices. By emulating the inter/transsubjective modes of empathy and compassion that they may have anticipated in reader-response, H.D. and Woolf move narrative voice out of the mimetic realm and into the structural realm, dramatising conflicts of difference between subjects wherein individual will/desire fuses with a collection of other subjectivities, Woolf’s “group mind.”

As Ryan argues in her study of mimesis in *Narrative as Virtual Reality* (2001), applications from narratology for electronic media (and vice versa) conceive of virtuality as *illusion* and *potentiality* (13). Virtuality reality, whether in real world or fictive text, exists as a cognitive and/or physical interactive illusion for the reader/user. Each version of virtual reality exists in a latent, potential state, directly depending upon the reader/user’s choices in determining the nature of its engagement. In other words, virtual reality and the reader/user are bonded relationally, but since such relations cannot be fixed, they exist as possibilities. These “possible-worlds” qualities are congruent with the mimetic concept of immersion in virtual reality. Immersion, the actualisation of
virtual reality's potentiality, manifests attributes of active/alternative embodiment, transparent medium, and aesthetic spatiality (51). For my model of relational desire, we can adapt Ryan's conception of narrative virtuality in two ways: (1) a style of voice mediation that has its source in a virtual subjectivity, attributable to more than one character or narrator, or to neither; and (2) a style of reading which interprets the text in a mode of decidability, predicated upon identifications with characters which shift from moment to moment.9

Virtual subjectivity parallels the telepresent, interactive identity, or virtual persona that Ryan uses to describe virtual reality's naturalising features in fictional immersion. In other words, in order to “actualise” virtual reality, a user must, to a certain extent, suspend his or her disbelief in “real” world, and take the fictive or technological world to temporarily replace “reality.” This acceptance of the virtual world's reality “naturalises” it for the user in the same way that a virtual subjectivity in fiction “naturalises” an absent source of mediation for the reader. For this reason, virtual subjectivity helps to resolve the difficulty of conceptualising voice without being able to attribute it to a source or to sources in a text. Furthermore, a reading subject's (or user's) multiple, digitised identities are actualised by being “ultimately supported, held together” or “warranted” by the medium of virtuality (Narrative As Virtual Reality 61). In this cognitive space, the virtual reader (reader-persona) is located in the text's reference world (104), inseparable from the interpretive possibilities latent in the text. In immersive poetics, Ryan explains, the reader, as a split subject immersed in and detached from the textual world, can simultaneously experience different kinds of relations to the narrative's possible (actual or nonactual) worlds (99-102).10 To capture these relations, Ryan proposes a recenterable possible-worlds model in which the reader has the choice of
aligning his or her own moral value system with the text’s fictional universe, including its fictional truths, authority, and objectivity. Here, “choice” refers the fact that text can be recentered in infinite ways, inclusive of infinite numbers of moral systems, but tied, or limited to, any one system. In this way, the reader, with multiple accesses to different “pictures” of the text, may leave areas of undecidability and contradiction open and unresolved, a possibility supported by anti-closure devices. In other words, such virtuality grants the reader a pluralised identity since each reading is inclusive of conflicting and contradictory choices which destabilise identification, an effect more in line with the model of relational narrative desire I suggest here.

In applying Ryan’s schemata of virtuality to scenes of narrative inter/transsubjectivity as well as to practises of interpretation, we can see that narrative voice stylisation posits a character’s virtual subjectivity. Virtual subjectivity signifies partial identity; characters or narrators project onto their antagonists (their “Others”) a certain awareness or knowledge about themselves that they have not yet fully integrated. Like the shifting images of a hologram, virtual subjectivity shifts the characters’ parameters for their identity-formation based on the reception that they imagine that they receive from their Others. Readers see characters or narrators as subjects-in-process, learning about their own activities of subject-construction. By shaping themselves to socially negotiate alternative modes of being, protagonists evade dominator culture’s subject-object dichotomy. For instance, in Bid Me to Live, Julia Ashton maintains agency despite her rebellious rejection of the masculine norms enforced in sex, war, and creativity. Virtual subjectivity signifies her temporary evasion of the dominant ethical systems that “unfairly pit” her against privileged masculine subjects and the “differential doors to privilege” (Stockton 29). Produced on behalf of the protagonist, but not entirely
attributable to her, virtual subjectivity constitutes Julia as a relational identity, thereby providing her with a way of conceiving herself as outside of patriarchy's devaluations while she is conversing with her husband's mistress.

Virtual subjectivity, freed from attribution, signifies a pluralised narrative voice that represents partial, relational identity. Partial identity emerges as characters participate in narrative inter/transsubjective connections. Virtual subjectivity's plurality challenges Iser's concept of the implied reader. This reader is not deduced from specific textual references, but instead marks out certain positions or attitudes in the text which are assumed to provoke emotional reactions from real readers. Iser's implied reader comes into being based on the text's instructions to fill in its own indeterminacies with moral reasoning, or "corrective motivation" which envisions an hermeneutically contained social reality (Implied 36, 44). Iser believes that by "repairing" these indeterminacies, the reader connects parts of the text, interpreting them within the holistic context of a fictively-inferred world. In this way, the unifying function of the implied reader, a "bracketed self," projects "possible wholes" out of textual fragments at any given point (Heller 4).

I propose that Iser's implied reader can be viewed as a relational subject position inscribed within the text, generated and sustained by identifactory responses that Heller calls "commitments" to the text (4). When making judgements about characters, a reader assumes a definitive moral stance; but equally, because this moral stance is predetermined by existing social mores, it more closely resembles Kaja Silverman's concept of the "spoken subject"—a mediating consciousness conferred and superimposed upon a reader (or a film's viewer) through the narrative's discourse (Subject 47). Just as a character is constituted through a narrative's discourse, the
implied reader is constituted by identifications generated by what Silverman calls “mnemic implants” (*Threshold* 4) used to reinforce dominant values in the text. These mnemic implants, synonymous with the moralising processes inherent in Iser’s implied reader, privilege certain readings over others, thus reinforcing the status quo. “Suturing” the subject into pre-existing discourse conforms the reading to a socially acceptable form of identification, thus resisting difference and any alternative forms of imaginary identification. In relation to some modernist voice-centered texts by women, Silverman is right: narrative texts constitute the readers’ subjectivity for them in discursive exchanges in which they are spoken for as various subjects. Consider the way that Silverman describes suture, and imagine “dominator-desire” as its passive insertion:

> The [text] terrorizes the [reading] subject, refusing ever to let it off the hook. That hook is the system of the suture ... we want suture so badly that we’ll take it at any price, even with fullest knowledge of what it entails—passive insertions into pre-existing discursive positions. (*Subject* 233)

In this description, the reader’s freedom of identification is vastly co-opted within an authoritative moral system. As well as exemplifying language’s inherent constraints, Silverman here points to the explicit ways on which desire is generated for the reader in terms of identification. For this reason, a subject sutured into the Oedipal quest structure is denied interpretive choices which could grant alternative identifications; thus, the reward is sought, while the obstacle is feared, despised, and eliminated.

> The same suturing effect is present in Iser’s construct of the implied reader. This reader, represented as an irresistible part of the fictional illusion of narratives, has far-reaching implications for postmodern narratology, which needs to reconsider the structural function of narrative voice. If we can assume, as does Silverman, that reading
subjects are passively inserted into existing narrative discourses, then Iser’s theory becomes a terrifying prospect in the context of Brooks’s model of narrative desire. The text seduces the reader into making positive identifications with characters/narrators who uphold the dominant moral values of their society. In the white Western world, these continue to favour patriarchal modes of thought, power, and exchange.14

As Ommundsen observes, in this case the implied reader is a set of attitudes towards the reception of certain moral messages (170). As such, identification can become frustrated through the “constant troubling” of categories of identity and motive in attempts to change signification (Silverman, Subject 122; Threshold 84; see also York 170). This contradictory style of identification is identified by Bracha Ettinger Lichtenberg as a matrixial affect. In this case, identification freely bypasses predetermined phallic channels, sliding towards pleasure and/or displeasure “without necessarily striving to disappear in perfect quietudes” (Lichtenberg, “Metamorphic Borderlinks” 130). This integration of one with another, rather than elimination of contradictory modes of reading and interpretation characterises relational narrative desire.

Iser’s implied reader, echoed in Silverman’s sutured subject, is a supremely passive one that does not align with the model I am suggesting here. It conceals identification choices by requiring the reader to stabilise, and resolve, textual indeterminancies.15 The virtual subject’s placement into the psychogenesis of narrative relational desire makes identification become an interpretive choice, an active shifting into Otherness. Authors representing relational identity with narrative voice evoke multiple, and sometimes contradictory, readings and interpretations. Hence, the reader’s process of reflection radically suspends habitual values and prejudgments so that the
reader becomes aware of her/his own constitutive role in interpreting the work (Zapf 104). Here, I have once more emphasised the plurality of moral systems infusing, but not governing, certain modernist texts because interpretive choice offers the reader freedom to decide on a particular reading for a particular purpose, time, and reason. Plurality is represented, and authorised, in terms of narrative voice, and the text institutes partialness in the identification process so that no definitive moral structure dominates. 

When a constant shifting into Otherness is in play, the reader, as Ommundsen argues, gains "readerly freedom"—a possibility of occupying multiple reading positions offered by the text (173). This freedom, or flexibility as Wilson (1981) calls it, requires a different reader-response than Iser's implied reader can provide; Iser's reader is not sufficiently equipped with personalised, context-specific characteristics needed to make individualised interpretive choices (854). The real reader chooses between ethical and non-ethical ways of interpreting texts, complicit with or resisting patriarchal rationalisations in modernist texts. This open-ended, interactive reading interfaces with imaginative projections on both sides of the text—representation and reception—neither privileging any one single interpretive possibility, nor denying multiple and conflicting possibilities.

**Voice, the Neglected Term**

Although contemporary narratologists continue to expand their research into interdisciplinary fields, mysteriously narrative voice remains a neglected term. Despite the fact that human beings continually "voice" how they come to terms with social and psychological change, as a narrative technique, voice receives serious treatment as a
narrative technique in only its anthropomorphic capacity. While applied narratology branches into multiple disciplines, including medicine, neuroscience, digital and cybertechnologies, drama, cinema, comics and cartoons, cultural studies, historiography, women's studies, music, fine arts, computer science/games, education, communication and media studies, ethics, and artificial intelligence (Herman 1999a, 15-27; Jahn 1999), voice has been left out of these exchanges.\textsuperscript{18} For example, although the American Association of Artificial Intelligence offered a symposium on “Narrative Intelligence” in November 1999, and the Second International Colloquium sponsored by the Narratology Research Group in Hamburg, recently called for papers, neither of these included “voice” as one of their topics (NarrNet). Furthermore, major electronic undertakings, including Narrbib, a website synthesizing eight projects of the Narratology Research Group at Hamburg University and the electronic Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory, containing more than 500 entries, currently grant “voice” only a fleeting notation.

Another project of electronic magnitude is R. Michael Young and the Liquid Narrative Group’s Project Mimesis at North Carolina State University. This interdisciplinary research into artificial intelligence, interactive entertainment, and educational software (Narrnet) is based on the analysis of plot structure—not voice—despite the fact that technological advances through the Internet have all been directed toward the transmission of disembodied voice. Even Project Mimesis’s most cutting-edge research into computer interactivity remains highly plot- and action-oriented. For instance, Young’s Liquid Narrative Group focuses on action-oriented sequences in computer games in the same way that “cinematographers choose appropriate scenes for a movie to convey plot” (Rudd, n.pag.). In this particular
application of narratology to computer technology, voice is entirely ignored. Young’s gamers use cognitive processes to recognize opportunities for actions, but not for words or thoughts. Young’s representation of thought and speech in Mimesis takes the form of pre-scripted speech/thought “nuggets” or “bubbles”; thus it forecloses the opportunity for any voice interactivity in gaming, and thereby diminishes the gamer’s status as subject. The omission of voice results in a dramatic eradication of difference in positioning subjectivity, while action-choices simply unpack a predetermined chain of causality.

Despite the renaissance of applied narratology and its journey to other disciplines in the past decade, studies of narrative voice in pure narratology have been comparatively rare. Recent works on narrative voice question its validity as a term and theoretical narratological construct rather than examining its role in narrative structure. The few innovative studies of narrative voice include the New Literary History issue “Voice and Human Experience” (2001), and Fludernik’s two texts, Towards a Natural Narratology (1996c) and “Beyond Structuralism in Narratology: Recent Developments and New Horizons in Narrative Theory” (2000). These works focus on the categorical status of voice in the mimetic versus anti-mimetic debate, which is helpful for theorising about voice, but not for analysing it. For instance, certain theorists favour narrative voice in its capacity to represent human consciousness, while others argue that voice has other functions beyond the purely mimetic level—a point I support here. Although this debate illuminates the use of narrative voice as trope, little has been done to relate studies of voice stylistics to theories of narrative desire beyond Brooks’s work. His model remains uncontested, but is, at the same time, inadequate for analysing voice-centered narratives and the female plot in women’s writing. Let’s examine the most prominent inadequacies
of Brooks’s model for theorising relational narrative desire.

**Mimetic Mechanisms in Peter Brooks’s Narrative Desire**

If the motor of narrative is desire, totalizing, building ever-larger units of meaning, the ultimate determinants of meaning lie at the end, and narrative desire is ultimately, inexorably, desire for the end.  

Peter Brooks

Despite feminist narratology’s work on women’s writing, to date only one literary theory of narrative desire exists, and in it, narrative voice is not considered. Peter Brooks’s model of narrative desire, developed in *Reading for the Plot* (1984), continues to dominate mainstream narratology even though women’s writing, often with entirely different plot structures, emerged as an object of Western academic study in the mid-1980s. *Reading for the Plot*, an analysis of male-authored nineteenth-century realist novels, uses metaphors of masculine eroticism to theorise narrative desire in relation to linear structures of domination. Although these tropes are useful for theorising novels which privilege traditional Aristotelian plot structures, they prove inadequate (even inappropriate) for analysing voice-oriented modernist psychological novels which, in some cases, do not progress towards an identifiable climax or a definitive end.

Brooks’s sex/textual analogy assumes a masculine eros; metaphors associated with conventional male sexuality—“erection,” “tension,” “ejaculation,” and “dissemination” appear frequently in his work. These figures actively promote patriarchal investments in competition, control, and, important for my purpose here, a deliberate exclusion of Other—a valuing of exclusion antithetical to relational desire’s valuing of inclusivity, more closely associated with an ethics of care, rather than specific moral principles.

Through these tropes, a fully developed narratological adaptation of Freudian
psychoanalytic desire emerges in Brooks’s main narratological works: *Reading for the Plot* (1984) and *Bodywork: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (1993). This model of reading narratives is controlled by “textual erotics”—the desire to know—and it posits a theoretical analogy between reading and sexual acts.23 Freudian Oedipal investment permeates his theory of narrative desire.24 Freud’s “eros,” and its cycle of pleasure and displeasure, informs Brooks’s dynamic model.25 He defines reading pleasure as a state of arousal resulting in “erection,” and the novel’s ending as “death,” a transcendental signifier for ambition, appropriation, violence, and completion. Brooks’s model of narrative desire argues that plot, like sex, is intimately connected to the thrill of climatic vulnerability, which results in ideological insertion or control.

Brooks’s model of desire presupposes Freud’s psychic apparatus of drives—specifically, the death drive, the pleasure principle, and the human unconscious—by assuming that narrative desire is organised in terms of a dynamic longing for authority and knowledge.26 Brooks assumes a fictional subject’s lack of affective power because the “energy” in the novel is always reincorporated back into the plot’s teleological system. Plot, a “structure of the mind,” assumes a human subject is a centrality of reason, a master character.27 Thus, in Brooks’s theory, the reader’s desire to know what happens privileges plot as the means to that knowledge, and knowledge as the means to power. Readers “master” stories, needing to know solely what happens. In the desire to master plot in a singular act of appropriation—any pleasure in the aesthetic, thematic, or stylistic levels of the text—is superseded by a drive to uncover the text’s plot, privileging the story’s end, rather than its means. In this case, reading for the plot is not a necessarily a consequence of such desire, but nonetheless, it directly feeds into it.
Although the distinctions between the text and the readers' desires are never clear in Brooks' model, narrative desire is "always there," latent in the text. By viewing psychoanalysis as a dynamic model of psychic processes, Brooks hopes (in his earlier works), and asserts (in his later works), that psychoanalysis—presumably a literary application of its "scientific" terminology—offers a narratological model productive for describing the dynamics of texts (Reading 36). He argues that the reader begins in a state of initial arousal, reaching intensity through a titillating series of narrated events, which precipitate, but do not complete, the narrative. Climax is delayed until pleasure can be experienced as gaining knowledge (and knowing more). Narrative desire causes pain and pleasure in strategic acts of indulgence and withholding; in Freudian eros, desire signifies "wound," split in its movement toward its own end (reward) and its own resistance against this movement. Like Freud's eros, narrative desire in Brooks's model is founded on the lack and longing inherent in the death instinct. This lack is assumed in plot's mimetic function.28

By sharing René Girard's assumptions regarding narrative mimesis, Brooks limits himself to analysing narrative structures in terms of plot.29 Brooks's concept of narrative's Oedipal "masterplot" originates in Girard's Deceit, Desire and the Novel (1965), Violence and the Sacred (1977) and Violent Origins (1987). Brooks implies that the degree to which the narrative is structured as a hierarchy mimics the degree to which the reader's expectations are fulfilled. The degree to which narrative desire is ritualised, structured along socially licensed models of aesthetic and moral sociability, indicates the degree to which readers read for plot.30 According to Brooks, narrative's dynamism includes the concept of story as self-construction ("we define and construct our sense of
self through our fictions;” *Reading 36*); and *ambition*, the force “that drives the protagonist forward, assuring that no incident or action is final or closed in itself until such a moment as the ends of ambition have been clarified, through success or else renunciation” (*Reading 39*). In this view, plot is a quest founded on appropriative conquest; whether or not ambition is fulfilled or rejected, the desire for achieving a specific goal remains.\(^3\) In this instance, as Brewer (1984) observes, the discourse of desire obeys one law: “the discourse of male desire recounting itself through the narrative of adventure, project, enterprise, and conquest;” this law leaves no difference between “psychoanalysis’ discourse of castration and any other discourse of desire, epistemology or fiction, founded on lack, non-possession or the presence of an absence” (Brewer 1151). Thus, Freudian and Lacanian lack and loss permeate Brooks’s theory of narrative desire. For this reason, it is problematic for analysing representations of modern female subjects who are denied the kind of agency granted to male, patriarchal subjects. In this context of lack, they are assumed to be “pure” reflectors—not holders—of masculine (patriarchal) desire, or any desire, as a result of Brooks’s neglect of female plot and ambition.

Brooks’s limited understanding of *ambition*, particularly in “female plots” (*Reading for the Plot 39*) given the fact that he does not analyse any, precludes an analysis of certain modern voice-centered narratives that is sensitive to forms of desire outside of dominant social structures of heterosexuality and phallocentrism. His successive elaborations of his original theory of narrative desire (1986, 1987, 1993) fail to acknowledge the gender prejudices underlying his original model of narrative desire. Although he exclusively focuses on nineteenth century French realist male novelists and
playwrights in Reading, Brooks himself notes in passing that his key concepts for defining narrative desire, self-construction, and ambition take on a more “complex stance” in what he calls “the female plot” (39). Although the female plot is not unrelated to Brooks’s narrative norm (male plots of ambition), it can be read as Brooks asserts, “a reinterpretation of the vectors of plot” (Reading 39). But here, Brooks does not explicate this reinterpretation, or suggest what such a reinterpretation might mean for a gendered narratology.

His patriarchal plot-focus characterises the singular “I,” an identifiable, unified, masculine subject who performs actions, including thinking and speaking. But in numerous modernist novels, and in postmodern theories of the subject, this subject is assumed to be decentered and destabilised. However, my reading of women authors from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries suggests that Brooks’s model of narrative desire, while it is intended as a reaction against narratology’s structuralist roots and as an anticipation of postmodern reading strategies, results in an (unconscious?) devaluation of women writers. Brooks’s model cannot adequately theorize women writers’ discernable flattening of plot hierarchy, nor can it handle passive female protagonists who do not conform to phallocentrism’s “weaker vessel” figuration.

Ambition, for instance, the driving force of Brooks’s narrative desire, is given an entirely andocentric context. Ambition is “inherently totalizing, figuring the self’s tendency to appropriation and aggrandizement, moving forward through the encompassment of more, striving to have, to do, and to be more” (39). Quite clearly, plots are figured here as orgiastic compulsions driven by the Lacanian “lack,” predicated upon the Freudian Oedipal resolution. In Brooks’s theory, ambition is a search for
substitutions accumulated to complete the self (or what I consider as the illusion of self) since identity cannot be conceived in partialness. In phantasmic scenarios of satisfaction, the subject experiences temporary, illusory fulfillments of desire, which serve only to perpetuate more lack. Desire is never satisfied because while it aims at fulfillment, it always precludes it. In this way, narrative is created from a limited set of perceptible repetitions that show readers a significant interconnection of actions and events (Reading 99), but not necessarily characters’ subjectivities. 

For this reason, I will use the term “dominator” (Eisler 1995) to describe the non-relational power structure underlying Peter Brooks’s model and contrast it with the term, “power-from-within,” derived from feminist activist, theorist and theologian Starhawk’s book Truth or Dare (1988), which I will use in my model of relational narrative desire.34 Patriarchy, by definition, operates as a “dominator model” through the subjugation and violence used to effect control over subjects. Such a model, clearly articulated in Brooks’s theory of narrative desire, effaces interrelationships that threaten patriarchy’s monolithic concept of power.

Starhawk critiques patriarchal power dynamics by showing how, and why, social institutions rely on domination as a politically effective means to ensure obedience. Patriarchy, for Starhawk, is only one manifestation of the power used in the “dominator” capacity. She identifies three types of power: power-over, power-from-within, and power-with (Truth 9). Power-over indicates typical patriarchal practice wherein power is enforced through violence and fear. Such power emerges from a world-view of estrangement which, in its censorship of the interrelationships between people, cultures and institutions, guarantees the perpetuation of conflict, and is at odds with relational
identity. Patriarchal subjects are embedded in systems of power-over, “indoctrinated into them, often from birth” (*Truth 9*). Power-over, exercised as unquestioned entitlement based on roles or positions of authority and held by force, resists the kinds of connections that inter/transsubjectivity foster.

In contrast, *power-from-within* evokes a person’s potential to resist such domination, and in so doing, to experience inter/transsubjective connections in relational bonds. For example, a person can resist power-over by acting consciously to effect change by inviting and integrating difference. *Power-with* signifies the social power of non-hierarchical groups when members conceive of themselves as equals, and work communally to effect change through the exchange of diverse views. In this way, each distinctive world-view is expressed, heard and respected. This exchange, which preserves individual difference within a collective, is echoed in Irigaray’s concept of “civic identity” and Jürgen Habermas’s concept of transsubjectivity, and will be addressed in the next chapter. Individuals and groups who conceptualize identity as *power-from-within* are predicated on the philosophy of *power-with*. In such groups, no leaders arise since the duties are collective; individuals function as “channels” through which new ways of resisting, responding and being can emerge. Note that this model does not preclude the existence or necessity of individuals with expertise or leadership skills. Rather, it points to a new way to negotiate individual points of view within communication sensitive to the layered knowledge of specific individuals forming the group. The goal is to facilitate an equal reception among those with greater and lesser knowledge so that all perspectives are included.

Despite Brooks’s theory’s patriarchal bias and its investment in the Freudian
power-over model of desire, when combined with Starhawk’s alternative structure of power-with/in, I believe it can still raise profound questions for the narratological analysis of modernist voice-centered novels. Reconfiguring narrative desire along relational rather than dominator lines addresses some of the questions troubling feminist narratology. For instance, can a theory of narrative complementary to patriarchal narrative desire be constructed? What theories of narrative desire emerge if female protagonists are considered as the subjects of their narrations, that is, if they are granted the subjecthood and agency historically denied them? Does the representation of narrative from a feminist perspective allow different reading positions with different values, privileges and effects? Can a theory of relational desire describe the technical strategies particular to experimental narratives, including indirection, stasis, embedding, plurality, and virtual identifications, without negative associations?36

These questions take Brooks’s gender-blind theory of narrative desire to task. Since male pleasure is what textual eroticism “looks like,” these same analytic paradigms (like Brooks’s) cause us to inadvertently resist theorising the difference of women’s pleasure (Winnet 505-6). Brooks’s model of narrative desire implies that there is an overriding psychological (white, Western) fear of reading narrative structures in alternative ways—that is, ways that could threaten or eliminate a familiarised set of pleasure-inducing dynamics. But what Brooks does not realize (or theorize) is the fact that the reading pleasure offered by plot is not universal for all readers, given that largely heterosexual, patriarchal eroticism is structurally integrated into the narratives he chooses to analyse.

By concealing textual power and control in a pleasurable desire for “mastery” of
the story, Brooks’s model emulates what Laura Mulvey calls sadism’s “demand” for
story, which “depends on making something happening, forcing a change in another
person, a battle of will and strength, victory/defeat, all occurring in a linear time with a
beginning and an end” (“Visual Pleasure” 422).37 Because plot in this case is reduced to
a series of substitutions, the ambition driving it seeks to dominate desire, even while
feeding it with phantasmic scenarios of satisfaction. In my view, this desire is inaccurate
for theorising female subjectivity in patriarchy, which has served to symbolise the “lack”
constituting male plots of ambition. Contained within hegemonic laws and structures,
female “ambition” like Julia’s (in *Bid Me*) and Isa’s (in *Between*) is greatly compromised.
The very desires or “energetics”38 that enable the male plot to proceed naturally are
greatly impeded in these female protagonists who are either subject to, or become
grounds for, the very appropriative gestures that they themselves are supposed to make.

As we will see, women writers like H.D. and Woolf express different desires of,
and narratological representations for, lack; thus, Brooks’s “reading of the plot” directly
opposes their style of narrativity and themes of inclusivity. In themes of inclusivity,
“lack” connotes partial identity, but unlike the case of Freudian/Lacanian lack, this
identity is not *wanting*. It does not seek to complete itself through or in Others; instead, it
binds with, and integrates aspects of Otherness that already exist, potentially and
virtually, within the self. Such inclusivity leads to greater self-awareness, not to self-
Other appropriation.

This difference does connote some ambivalence on the part of Victorian and
modern women authors’ “plotting.” Not possessing socially satisfying parameters for
constructing personal autonomy in an active world, the modern female SELF, and her
precursors, are frequently depicted as literally, and symbolically, lost in a sea of vague, undifferentiated desire. But this does not mean that they do not desire.

Finally, Brooks ignores the possibility that real female and male readers may read stories differently, depending on the textual possibilities for identification. For instance, in the context of dominator narrative desire, female readers can be textually coerced into making sadomasochistic identifications with female protagonists in a mimetic enactment of the violence perpetuated by patriarchy upon women. In the construction of Iser’s implied reader, for instance, feminine desire either becomes “masculinised” so that pleasure occurs from recognizing the Oedipal plot, thus reinstating the subject-object dichotomy; or, it is displaced in such a way that only sadomasochistic pleasure can occur. In this option, readers identify positively with the cruelty and violence shown towards female characters because these acts are portrayed in morally and aesthetically superior terms. As Brooks himself indicates in a later reading of Reading for the Plot, narrative with this kind of Oedipal structure does not give the female reader a place in the scheme: “no position from which to speak herself, to enter into the dialogue of transference ... no opportunity for a counter move” (“Psychoanalytic Constructions” 72). By constructing a position for a female reader through virtual subjectivity, my model of relational narrative desire resolves this interpretive dilemma.

Furthermore, because I believe that H.D. and Woolf resist sadomasochistic identification, possibly as a sign of their own liberation from phallogocentric desire, I wish to expand the parameters of what Brooks’s narrative desire means in terms of feminist economies of representation, without conceiving them, as does Nancy Miller (1988), as reflections of patriarchal power. Miller argues that the suffering of a heroine
has its “own reward” in the economy of the female unconscious (34). This suffering constitutes the heroine’s “ultimate superiority,” while guaranteeing that her ambitious wish for (real) power is manifest as a fantasy of power that revises “the social grammar in which women are never defined as subjects ... in which women can participate only as objects in circulation” (35). In my view, this argument implies that *bypassing the dialectics of desire is a feminine victory* (31-2)—an argument entirely self-defeating in terms of constructing feminine desire in theoretical terms. Miller (1996) relegates woman’s voice to the unconscious, privileging patriarchal representations of female subjectivity as *mute* . In order to be heard, women must be accepted, and treated, as subjects equal to patriarchal male subjects—a point at the heart of Irigaray’s impassioned argument for “civil identity” in dominator cultures.

Instead, I argue that modernist writers like and including H.D. and Woolf, reconfigure this view by representing alternative sources of personal and social power that resist patriarchal domination. Given their diffusion of narrative authority and use of polyvalence to emphasize identity-in-relationship, some modernist writers transform potential sadomasochistic identification into a dynamic, open-ended process that makes character judgements required in dominator models, figured by discipline and punishment, irrelevant. One quick example of such a writer is Samuel Beckett, whose trilogy, *Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable* (1951) defers moralising stances. Molloy and his parallel figures, or re-incarnations, undergo incremental states of physical degradation that, quite mysteriously, fail to threaten his/their subjecthood. Beckett’s narrator, functioning as a homogenous stylised bridge linking the three stories, thematises the characters’ increasing physical immobility. But the characters’ different states offer
different views, different kinds and forms of knowledge, as well as different desires and values. The protagonist in the last book, encased in a barrel-sign above the world, for instance, does not gain less knowledge than Molloy, who crawls along the ground, having lost his crutches and use of his legs. In this work, Beckett painstakingly diminishes the function of plot in each book so that any action that the protagonists could take is systematically eliminated. All the characters have left is voice; thus, Beckett's narrator implies that different kinds of knowledge must be reflected through different narrative mediums—in this case, through voice, alone.

Relational narrative desire, reflected in the similarities between Beckett's protagonists, reveals voice as a structural connection. It shows how the predetermined, authority-granting power positions of the Oedipal structure can be questioned and overwritten by shifting the focus to a different technique and medium. In terms of feminist narratology, it re-figures female/minority-as-"lack" to female/minority-as-unrecognised. Within a model of inter/transsubjectivity, relational desire privileges inclusivity—the ability to be interconsiderate and interaccommodating of the Other, through hearing and responding to voices signifying difference.

"The Community Mind": Relational Narrative Desire

To represent relational identity, narrative voice is stylised as a communal gathering of hybrid forms of human subjectivity: reincarnated, split, pluralised, cloned, multiplied, and/or virtualised. Experimental voice stylisation has profound effects for the way that modern authors conceive of identity as relational rather than individuated. Their movement away from the anthropomorphisation of narrative voice, and specifically, from
its illusions of singular, attributable identity, asks what narrative voices can signify, *apart from a speaking source.* Relational narrative desire perceives narrative voice as a mode of plurality, a structural bouquet of distinct subjectivities, sufficiently detached from any single source of mediation in order to become stylised in inter/transssubjective forms. A work theorizing such pluralised, collective narrative voices is J. Hillis Miller’s *The Form of Victorian Fiction* (1968). In this work, Miller points to the Victorian novel’s capacity to represent narrative intersubjectivity as the “consciousness of the consciousness of other ... a structure of interpenetrating minds ... of related minds” (2-3, 29). Miller suggests that in its extreme form, intersubjectivity may be conceived as community mind, an immanent narratorial voice the reader experiences as a pervasive presence rather than a transcendental omniscience: a “sovereign inwardness gained through perfect coincidence with the collective awareness of the community” (64-65, 68). In this case, “presence” emerges out of the reader’s attention to individual difference, rather than emerging from an authoritative voice or perspective that erases such differences in pursuit of more general, universalised knowledge.

Using Miller’s preliminary sketches for a theory capable of analysing pluralised voices, I will also add to it by considering intermediary forms of narrative voice which disembodify and virtualise identity. Once detached from the function of characterisation, narrative voices in intermediary forms can, I argue, project potential subject constructions for fictional characters. It is important to note that H. D. and Woolf do not abandon the structuring devices of narrative by using these stylisations of voice, rather they use them to question the motives that drive and control linear plot structures. Consequently, they show that Oedipal desire is an arbitrary framework for narratological analyses. Instead of
hierarchising their material in terms of action, these writers *orchestrated* novelistic voices, thus creating different ways that narrative desire and its search for knowledge can be conceived.

As Miller well understood, inter-relationality between disparate fictional subjectivities requires both a narratively discursive space, expressed by narrative effects such as proximity, distance, continuity, discontinuity, irony, and sympathy, and an interiorized space, figured by tensions and ontological boundaries between narrative voices. To clarify my definitions along these lines, *voice plurality* refers to the technical rendering of the narrative’s surface of overlapping, superimposed, juxtaposed voices on the discursive level. But the technical effect of *bonding these voices as a plurality*, evident in inter/transsubjective connections, represents the SELF as a relational identity. The relational self is cognisant of separation and individuality within the “effacement of any ontological foundation for the self” (Miller, *The Form of Victorian Fiction* 45). Thus, the self is represented as a less unified identity, but a more permeable construct able to invite and integrate self-Other relations. In terms of narrative technique, voice plurality is marked by incessant stylistic shifts between third-person narration, interior monologue forms, and intermediary forms of represented speech and thought which symbolize a collective “fusion” or sharing of two or more consciousnesses. Relational identity signifies an unstable and de-centralized self-consciousness that searches for ways to reconstruct ideological thought patterns, such as patriarchy’s prescriptions for femininity, which conceive of the Other as separate from, but connected to, self.

Although Miller’s formalist approach is limited in its analysis of narrative inter/transsubjectivity, it provides a valuable starting point for analysis of the novels
presented here. H.D., for instance, uses the term *narrative palimpsest* to define relational identity in female characters who struggle with self-development in terms of social interrelationship. She represents voice plurality through use of transvocalisation and pronominal shifts to simulate *different ways of thinking about the self*. These stylisations offer profound implications for the way the Other can be conceived by the self, who must recognize her existence in a social network that both sustains and limits her. Similarly, Woolf portrays social interrelationship as a “group mind,” an intermingling of separate, multiple, voice-centered subjectivities. Whether in dialogue, third-person narration or interiorized forms of thought/speech, Woolf’s self acknowledges itself in relation, integrating and confronting individual differences threatening its unity. Thus, Miller’s insight that narrative structures have the potential to represent interpersonal relations through the novelistic representation of interpenetrating minds effectively moves us beyond the purely mimetic function of narrative voice to its ability to represent human subjectivity as a site of plurality, signified by its partiality, temporality, and disembodiment.

**Relational Narrative Desire and the Mimetic vs Anti-mimetic Debate**

In this section, I discuss how certain modern experimental voice stylisations can straddle the mimetic and anti-mimetic modes that are usually polarised in narratological theory. Certain intermediary stylisations in the novels of H.D. and Woolf are undeniably mimetic in that they continue to evoke human subjectivity; they contain narrative voices that represent speaking/thinking sources of consciousness. But, equally, certain voice stylisations in these novels are antimimetic in that they cannot be attributed to any single
speaking/thinking source. These voices are paradoxical in that they can be attributed to *everyone* and *no one* in the text. Thus, they evoke a shared or pluralised, fictional subjectivity. By showing how narrative voice can signify pluralised subjectivities, as well as singular subjectivities, I argue that the “fusion” of narrative voice can be understood by readers as a shared narrative voice site, that is, as a communally shared subjectivity, suggested by Hillis Miller’s concept of the novel’s “community mind.”

In the debate over narrative voice’s mimeticism, narratologists’ use of “narrative voice” as a trope representing its anthropomorphism, contributes to this term’s mimetic tethering. Here, I intend to loosen, without totally dispensing with, this analogy. Debates about voice’s mimeticism, originating with Gerard Genette (1980, 1988) and Franz Stanzel (1984, 1990), have been recently developed by Richard Aczel (2001a, 2001b), Andrew Gibson (1996), and Monika Fludernik (1996c, 1999-2001). These narratologists focus on the mimetic effect of narrative voice in two ways: as ventriloquism or “over-hearing” (Aczel, “Understanding 597), or (alternatively), as a stylistically generated illusion of human voices, defined by complex, interrelated textual and contextual features (Fludernik, *Towards* 344). Woolf characterises these two approaches by dividing authors into two kinds: ventriloquists (as in novelistic impersonation) and soliloquists (as found in poetic soliloquy) (“Notes for Reading” 374). In both cases, however, narrative voice functions performatively, as a speaker/reflector function, embodied and/or disembodied according to the author’s desired degree of mediating presence.

Currently, however, postmodern narratology is shifting focus from the author to the reader. It is replacing its former questions regarding voice as mimesis with questions regarding its poesis—a term used to describe the ways and means by which readers
construct models of multiple realities based in interpretive practices (Nünning 2001). To this line of inquiry, I offer virtual subjectivity to explain how narrative voice influences readers' construction of psychic, fictional realities. As a term, virtual subjectivity helps us conceptualise and make attributions of narrative voices sourced in "everyone" and "no one." As such, virtual subjectivity, signifying an interrelational mediating source, signals narrative intersubjective or transsubjective connection. As Ryan notes in "Cyberage Narratology," narrative fiction, including early forms like epic and romance, is the "original VR technology" in its capacity for creating imaginary worlds. As such, the virtual as potential is "the mode of existence of the oak in the acorn. Just as an acorn can develop into many different oaks, depending on environmental factors, a virtual object can be actualized in many different ways" (“Cyberage Narratology” 116). In the same way, a subjectivity attributable to no one can be made to signify a plurality of different subjects (depending upon one's choice of interpretation), but such a plurality is not easily described by mimetic theories of voice. Virtual subjectivity evokes bodiless ephemera or mediating presence in narrative discourse. This impression of transparency, invisibility or ultramateriality\(^\text{42}\) of a mediating consciousness can be explained by turning to Banfield and Fludernik. These theorists view narrative voice in different but complementary ways by emphasising both its mimetic and anti-mimetic effects.

Fludernik’s (1996c) “naturalist narratology” and Banfield’s (1982) “speakerless sentences” show how virtual subjectivity can be posited in narrative. To date, their theories offer the most comprehensive study of literary voice in modern experimental novels, in both its mediated (represented) and unmediated (“interior”) forms. Their insights into the aesthetic effects of intermediary forms of narrative voice—forms which
cannot be definitively attributed to either a character or a narrator, but to a combination or "fusion" of the two—suggest how narrative inter/transsubjectivity creates an auditory and/or cognitive illusion of sharing two or more subjectivities. This effect is achieved in subtle, but complex, discursive forms in the novels of H.D. and Woolf, who radically insist on detaching narrative voice from singular mediating sources, an effect too often mistaken for textual ambiguity.

In my analysis of H.D. and Woolf in the following chapters, I oppose the current feminist labelling of women's writing as ambiguous. For example, in her introduction to Ambiguous Discourse: Feminist Narratology and British Women Writers (1996a), Kathy Mezei identifies the discourse of ambiguity as a "pervasive theme" located in women's writing at primary narratological sites: the narrator, focalizer, and character, as well as in their ideological frameworks (2). This anthology, along with another body of feminist literary criticism of the 1980s, establishes, while it attempts to deconstruct, sites of textual indeterminacy in women's writing. Mezei's emphasis on modernist women's writing as a site of "ambiguity, indeterminacy and transgression" ("Introduction: Contextualizing Feminist Narratology" 2) does not offer theoretical constructs helpful in elucidating such effects. By characterising the reading and interpretative differences associated with women's writing as a sense of general ambiguity, which some male critics have historically remarked upon and devalued. Mezei fails to theorize the nature and purpose of emergent reading that foregrounds decidability as an interpretative choice. To label women's writing "ambiguous" is unfortunate for feminist narratology. Such dismissive labels discourage rigorous examination of women's writing's structural and technical features by suggesting that they are, to a certain extent, enigmatic, beyond
Here I refrain from valorising the negatively associated descriptors historically used to devalue women's writing, like "vague," "cryptic," "incoherent," "disconnected," and "fragmentary." Instead, by applying pluralistic concepts of narrative voice to textual ambiguity (if there is any), I argue that certain passages reveal a carefully crafted mode of multiplicity and specificity which calls for different practices of literary interpretation. For instance, if the novels of Woolf and H.D. convey an "ambiguous discourse," I find myself in one of Fludernik's interpretative moves. I can only locate textual ambiguity where an uncertainty concerning the nature of narrative voice, including its origin, source, application, and thematic relevance, arises. But in dealing with the multiple modes of interpretation, and the nuances accompanying those possibilities, I find that writers like Woolf and H.D. leave little room for uncertainty, and indeed, a great deal of room better for interpretative possibility of narrative voice. Therefore, I suggest that the labeling of experimental modern women's narratives, such as Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood* (1937), as cryptic and ambiguous, re-essentialises them in non-technical terms, thus compromising the opportunity to analyse them constructively with innovative terms. Instead, I suggest that individual readers can choose to hear certain tones and stresses when interpreting narrative voice in its partialness since these tones and stresses cannot be holistically interpreted in one single identifactory mode. Plurality constitutes the thematic relevance of "ambiguous" passages in Woolf and H.D., and provides the means for textual disambiguation, as we will see in later chapters.

Often, textual ambiguity reveals a polyvalence of narrative voice created by plurality. As we will see in our discussion of Banfield and Fludernik, narrative voice,
Relational Narrative Desire

stylistically detached from speaking/thinking source(s), can represent subjectivity without guaranteeing identity. Polyvalent passages require a different sort of reading than the one suggested in Iser’s model of the implied reader. As I have suggested, decidability, rather than morality, is the key factor in interpreting polyvalence in narrative. Fludernik calls decidability an “interpretive recuperation” in that the “reading effect” of the text undergoes the interpretive strategies of the reader; these naturalise the narrative (Towards 31, 34). Given this process of naturalisation of narrative, it is nearly impossible—and irrelevant—to make moral judgements about characters like Julia and Isa, who should, in a feminist reading, be read compassionately, as subjects-in-process.46 This new reading attitude coincides with what Fludernik calls the “text-internal reader position,” according to which the reader’s projection into the text, results in an internal “witnessing” position, rather than a judgmental one (Towards 201). As we will see in the next chapter, this position emulates Starhawk’s within-position and is developed in Bracha Ettinger Lichtenberg’s (1996) concept of wit(h)nessing, necessary for understanding the narrative effect of inter/transsubjectivity.

The contrast between the acts of witnessing and judging underlies the different ways we can treat narrative polyvalence. Compared to past analyses of narrative voice polyvalence as a “dual-voice” (Pascal 1977) or variations of fictional authority (Lanser 1992), I argue that narrative voices’s stylistic capacity reflects fictional SELF-constructs in terms of partiality and relationality. Fludernik’s claim that attributions of narrative voice are “interpretative moves,” is based on the mimetic illusions of sound and embodiedness that voice-as-trope implies (“New Wine in Old Bottles” 636). However, I equally rely on Ann Banfield’s “non-natural” examples of “speakerless sentences,” in
which narrative voice (represented thought and speech) are grammatically detached from any identifiable (fictional human) source.47

Banfield's 1982 thesis, that there are "speakerless" sentences in narrative, is still quite controversial in narratological discussions. Banfield's "SELF," a term evoked frequently in this work, is a theoretical construct positing nonequivalence between the speaker and his/her subjectivity. This nonequivalence has obvious consequences for any theory of the subject. For the frequently silenced, mute female subject in dominator culture, Banfield's SELF has even more profound implications. For instance, the notion that subjectivity is not grammatically tied to a speaker, revalues female protagonists and their real women proponents as active, and effective, participants in ideology, even if their particular expression(s) are not heard.

Therefore, despite patriarchy's denial of their voices, modern women's subjectivity (in individual or collective forms) can still bring to light bodies of knowledge than have been developed by dominator systems. This view is supported by Banfield, who clearly shows that "sentences of pure narration" depend upon the presence or absence of any second person to receive such expressions. That is, successful communication depends equally upon the assumed presence of a listener or hearer as much as on a speaker. Banfield's observation can be used to support the claim that women are viable subjects (potential civil identities) in patriarchy, but with limited social agency and effect. Therefore, the right to reception—the right to be heard—is not textually assumed by authors who want to represent the social confinement of marginalized protagonists. Banfield's construct of the SELF offers new ways of conceiving and hearing voices divested of social power.
Along with Fludernik’s development of Banfield, I offer my own version of how readers may conceive unattributable narrative voice as a site of plurality and collectivity. These are voices that do not disappear, but are “of a more ‘disembodied kind’...[which] become voices by being ‘heard’” (Aczel, “Commentary” 703, 705). I propose that stylistic analyses of such voices in texts will attune the reader’s ear to “hear” multiple speaking/thinking sources prior to the act of identifying individual speakers/thinkers. This kind of narrative attunement promotes themes of relational identity which transcend classical notions of individuality.

In this case, I agree that readers certainly “hear” voices, as Aczel and Gibson persuasively argue, but add that they can do this without attributing them to singular speakers.48 But how exactly can the stylisation of narrative voice represent virtual subjectivity, and with it, the illusion of inter/transsubjectivity as a convergence of pluralised subjectivities? To determine what exactly is “heard” by the reader in an interpretive process, we need to look at how the stylistic shaping and presentation of voice posits certain acoustics in a text which, for my purposes here, create the illusion of a pluralised form of subjectivity.

**Voice-In-Relation: Gertrude Stein’s Three Lives**

For a quick example of such “hearing,” let us consider one modernist woman writer who repeatedly experimented with voice: Gertrude Stein. In her 1909 novel *Three Lives*, Stein’s narrative voice no longer functions purely mimetically, that is, to form an equivalence between abstract qualities of consciousness and formal qualities of language. Instead, Stein’s “voice portraiture” in this novel stylises voice to transform psychological
essences into narrative speech patterns which do not necessarily depict a character speaking or thinking. Stein’s narrative voice serve an aesthetic rather than representational function (Lanser, *Fictions* 13). Its aesthetic function is to characterise the protagonists with distinctive, but similar, styles of thinking and speaking. But in this function, narrative voice functions anti-mimetically; similar voice styles link protagonists who are disembodied of individual “identity.” Such a linking represents a thematic bonding between these characters, and therefore, even in its anti-mimetic function, narrative voice evokes novelistic themes by concealing or obscuring less socially acceptable meanings through such disembodiment. These themes are particularly relevant for *Three Lives* in which three different female protagonists suffer the same loneliness and social isolation.

A brief analysis of the voice structure in *Three Lives* will show how representational modes of feminine identity turn individualised subjectivity into a relational construct, a vehicle signifying collectivity. Unlike H.D. and Woolf, Stein portrays community in a negative light; she depicts modern women from a diversity of class and racial backgrounds as individuals stripped of effective agency, bound to perform repetitive, depressing tasks which demean their lives. Thus, the word “lives” in the title is ironic; for all intents and purposes, these women have no “lives” at all. This irony is reflected in Stein’s use of non-linear narrative techniques that connote regression and lack of character growth, including internal homodiegetic analepses, ironic free indirect discourse, continuous present tense, and semantic repetitions of originary starting points, which transport the reader back to square one without a “new” story direction or plot, despite the novel’s three different parts. In *Three Lives*, the three narratives, linked
in cubist structure through the homogenous stylisation of voice, depict three different women who rely on female friendship—what Juhasz calls “feminsociality” (70)—to survive their marginalisation in the fictive city of Bridgespoint. Not entirely able to objectively comprehend their individual destinies, or explain them, Stein’s characters internalise the narrative processes of fragmentation and repression required of them as subjects in patriarchal hegemony.

However, Stein’s stylistic voice similarities among the three different sections in the trilogy suggest a deep structural connection and psychic parallel between these characters despite their personality differences. Paradoxically, narrative voice here both exceeds and undermines itself: each life symbolises more than just an individual life, but in turn, each life is less than what is typically understood as a meaningful life (see DeKoven 30). Only in the reader’s mind does the narratorial voice thematise the depressing nature of the lives fated for these women, each of whom in her own way remains oblivious to the futility of her existence. Structural and stylistic repetition characterises her fixed subjectivity, rigidly immersed in despair and anger, tragically mimicking gestures of mastery. Stein’s stylistic repetition, in this case, functions as much to show what the female consciousness desires, as to show what it denies; these repetitions suggest that the protagonists cannot escape life’s undesirable experiences.

Like many experimental passages in H.D. and Woolf, Stein’s stylistic representations in Three Lives go beyond plot to curve the formal relations of a linear storyline to form an experiment in narrative voice by sliding between familiar and unfamiliar modes of narrative organisation. This emphasis on voice leaving us with a single story, although the plot details three difference lives. Stein’s stylisation of
narrative voice levels or "evens out" individual differences between these stories/lives, while at the same time, it creates semantic centers which identify specific themes regarding women's inequality. To a certain extent, this de-hierarchisation signifies a linguistic prison for these female protagonists; circumstances in these narratives differ only superficially, and the characters feel the same anguish—their individual desires are unheard and unmet.

For this reason, the individual stories do not release themselves from the narrative. Rather, narrative voice, repeating the same story in the same way, constructs an intra-psychic relational identity as virtual subjectivity. This virtual subjectivity is characterised by a connection of similarities, shared across several subjects, ethnicities, cultures, and historical periods. Operating in a triptych-structure similar to H.D.'s Palimpsest, this bond shifts Stein's text away from what Lanser calls "the heterosocial contract that has defined women's place in Western fiction" (Fictions 22), and towards the "global judgment of patriarchal practices" ("Toward A Feminist Narratology" 459). This bond symbolises resistance to certain ideological practises, as well as to individual, isolated incidences of them. Thus, the Good Anna and her ideological clones can be interpreted as a structurally-interrelated voice-collective which fails to resist patriarchy's power-over drive for mastery, since no master narrative can be distinguished from "secondary" levels of the text. In this way, Stein's protagonists can be viewed as three different women, or as three different versions of the same subject whose experience is predetermined by the way patriarchy treats her.

As the reader can see, Stein's plot is thus impressionistic; it connotes ambivalence (patriarchy's typical attitude towards women) since the characters' actions, emotions and
thoughts are filtered through voice. For this reason, the narrating voices are far more important than the events themselves. Functioning mechanically in a symbolic, iterative mode, Stein’s plot shows how ineffective actions are for protagonists, as part of the modern female condition, who can only “voice” their social paralysis. The reader neither wholly sympathises with nor criticises characters like Good Anna or Gentle Lena, but remains ambivalent about characters who are so determined to martyr themselves. This ambivalence occurs because Stein’s narrative authority is abandoned as a rhetorical pose; distributed among several characters, no single source gains an authority greater than any of the others. But equally, this multiplicity of voice is illusory, since each voice is stylistically non-individuated from the others, thus rendering identification atypical.

Let us return to Banfield and Fludernik to discuss how narrative voice can be anti-mimetic in its structural representation of social interrelations between characters, rather than representing the consciousnesses of characters. Banfield’s theory of “speakerless sentences” and Fludernik’s “natural narratology” allow us to expand the parameters of what voice means for Stein’s novel, and for narratology in general in terms of both its mimetic and anti-mimetic capacities.

In *Three Lives*, Stein uses intermediary forms of narrative voice as stylistic bridges to draw a thematic parallel between the three different protagonists, thus forming a transsubjective connection between them. Stein’s use of tonal modulation and partial or exact repetition of specific acoustic motifs (words, images, or phrases) indicates the presence of such bridges. But the distribution of these consciousnesses across the same stylistic voice lies largely, as Fludernik (1996c) argues, in the reader’s assumption of an empathetic or ironic presence (or the non-presence) of a mediating
consciousness, particularly in Stein’s use of free indirect discourse. As the reader becomes “attuned” to the similar conditions shared by the different characters in their different situations, free indirect discourse reflects the particular voice idioms, nuances and intonations of each individual character. However, based on Banfield’s observation in *Unspeakable Sentences* that first-person subjectivity, apparent in free indirect discourse, is detached from personhood, I argue that this source of meditation is virtual, that is existing in and emerging through the structural levels of Stein’s narrative.

Although meditation can be partially attributed to each character on an individual basis, the transsubjective connection that links them as a group cannot be attributed to any single speaking/thinking source.

To explain, the liberation of narrative voice from *person* is effected by Banfield’s (1987) concept of an empty deictic centre, that is, in sentences not attributable to either narrators, characters, or a combination thereof, sentences found in passages like Woolf’s “Time Passes” section of *To the Lighthouse* or in the preludes of *The Waves*. Presumably devoid of human presence, but not, as critics have argued, of human mediation (Banfield 2000, Beeman 1992, Daugherty 1991, Emery 1992, Gliserman 1983, Hankins 1993, Mi-Sook 1991), this mediating source of non-presence functions ironically as a guarantor of human subjectivity, but one that is stripped of individual identity: “there was scarcely anything left of body or mind by which one could say, ‘This is he’ or ‘This is she’” (*To The Lighthouse* 190). The same effect also occurs in certain characterisations made by Woolf; for example, her depiction of absence, symbolised by Percival in *The Waves*, is conducted solely through the voices of other characters. Woolf suggests that Percival still holds a tangible, mediating force over his friends, despite his empty chair at the
dinnertable, and his subsequent soldier's death. In comparison to *Three Lives*, Woolf's stripped, or virtual, subjectivity more explicitly indicates the presence of an anonymous, generalised mediating source, containing, but transcending individuated consciousnesses. Therefore, although unattributable sentences cannot be tied to specific, nameable, identifiable sources, they do evoke a universalising transcendence of ego which individual minds contribute to and participate in.

Banfield's argument that subjectivity can be freed from identity implies that it can also be freed from a definitive *positioning* in the socialisation processes of the symbolic order. Like a consciousness experiencing itself free of bodily concerns, familiar in high spiritual or mystic states, such a narrative voice becomes virtual, capable of assuming, or vicariously taking on, any form and/or position to conceive new attitudes and experiences that identity has not yet integrated. In the same way, Percival's absence, for other male characters in the novel like Bernard, Louis and Neville in *The Waves* "voices" a virtual subjectivity posited interrelationally, among subjects poised between life and death: "We have destroyed something by our presence, said Bernard, 'a world perhaps.' 'Yet we scarcely breathe,' said Neville" (157). Interpreting Percival's sacrifical death, his loss of life, as one that preserves their own lives, constitutes, for Bernard and Neville, relationality.

Here, Banfield's speakerless sentences signify the high mimesis of Fludernik's "fictions of language" (*Towards 15*) by emphasising the fictionality of embodiedness and the anthropomorphic nature of *virtual or imagined experience* as an integral part of consciousness. As Benjamin has theorised and as I will outline in the following chapter, virtual subjectivity, like Percival's, temporarily assumes the emotional, relational state of
non-individuation associated with the intersubjective parent-infant connection. Although this state is illusory, it permits a character's individuated subjectivity to cognitively integrate a plurality of other subjectivities.

While Banfield's speakerless sentences show how Stein's literary stylisations grammatically separate subjectivity from human consciousness, and narrative voice from identity, I argue that Fludernik's prerequisite naturalness of embodiment helps to theorise and conceptualise virtual subjectivity. Embodiment offers the illusion of a pluralised consciousness that represents characters' interrelationships, the same illusion that was created among the protagonists' transsubjective connection in Three Lives.

For instance, Fludernik's narrative analyses in "New Wine in Old Bottles" center on non-ironic uses of free indirect discourse. She interprets this effect as a representation of empathy between narrators/readers and characters. As in ironic uses of free indirect discourse, Fludernik takes care to distinguish between what must be attributed to narrators and what must be attributed to characters, thereby attributing voices to single, separate sources. Although I share Fludernik's interest in customary attributions of voice and focalisation which signal free indirect discourse, I argue for plurality, while Fludernik still searches for singular expressive modes of mediation. Whereas Fludernik analyses the inverse effect of free indirect discourse, that is, narrative instances in which the character takes on a mimetic illusion of the narrator's style, as opposed to typical instances of free indirect discourse wherein the narrator takes on a single character's voice and style, I analyse narrative instances in which literary stylisation offers multiple mimetic illusions of different mediating consciousnesses, beyond that of any one narrator or character. In these cases, a single passage, or even phrase, comes to
Relational Narrative Desire

symbolise a communal subjectivity which is both transitory and temporary, in an intersubjective connection or Woolfian “moment of being.”58

In this case, “narrative voice” demonstrates structural qualities of virtuality and morphing that Marie-Laure Ryan in “Cyberage Narratology” (1999) locates in narrative. Ryan’s analogy of a structure with multiple windows, describing how a reader can “see through” illocutionary frames in fiction, permit us to analyze characters’ emotional involvement in social inter-relations between fictional subjectivities. They allow us to examine narrative’s capacity to support contradictory interpretations. Equally, we can examine illocutionary frames, established stylistically, which form the fictional infrastructure of morphing into, and out of, different forms of subjectivity. Because there are no distinct or grammatically marked boundaries between the subjectivities in such instances, the narratological categories of intersubjectivity and transsubjectivity help to clarify the text’s technical and thematic rendering of “morphing.” Thus, inter/transsubjective forms of “voice”—whether between individuals, histories, or cultures—require descriptors for both singularity and relationality.

Contemporary narratology requires terminology that can describe techniques and elucidate themes associated with partial identity and the relationality of human subjectivity. Virtual subjectivity recognizes the possibility for multiple, and even contradictory, readings of textual passages. For Fludernik, however, this kind of reading practice is irrelevant to the interpretation of narrative voice; she claims that “it does not really matter to a reader who is speaking [in the text] ... . It does not matter who sees or who speaks because the entire point of the narrative is to give us a portrait of each character’s motivations and thoughts” (“New Wine” 636). By believing that the reader’s
concern is to “get the optimum of information by whatever means” (Ibid.), Fludernik implies that the attribution process is an arbitrary option when it comes to interpretation.

In my view, however, the question of “who is speaking” in the text matters greatly, and ultimately, to the reader, who may need to posit multiple speaking/thinking sources within variable readings. By entirely bypassing the relevance of the attribution process when it becomes difficult or pluralised, Fludernik fails to realize the structural implications of narrative voice. Within optional, possible interpretations, reading becomes an interactive task of deciding how to reconcile, or leave “open,” the shared equivalences and incongruencies of different understandings of a story’s characters. This freedom of choice moves interpretation away from strictly moralising themes and emulates themes of tolerance. Since Fludernik has not sufficiently considered narrative voice as a representational mode for plurality and collectivity unbound from a narrator’s or character’s consciousness (or a combination thereof), my model of relational narrative desire analyses mediation as a style transcendent of any one single identity. In this way, it is possible to access, and interpret, narrative voice without having to embody it.

Summary

Together Banfield and Fludernik show how narrative voice can function anti-mimetically to evoke pluralised relational identity that cannot be embodied as a specific character or narrator. Along these lines, I offer virtual subjectivity as a narratological construct to identify a source of mediation which may include more than one subject. In the next chapter, I show that the notion of a shared subjectivity, symbolised by the parent-child bond, is not a new idea for feminist psychoanalysis. It is developed in Jessica
Benjamin's (1995) theory of intersubjectivity and Bracha Ettinger Lichtenberg's (1996, 2000) theory of the *matrix*. Before turning to a detailed analysis of intersubjectivity and transsubjectivity in the novels of H.D. and Woolf, let us see what these theories offer to a narratology looking for new terms to describe the representation of relationships *between* consciousnesses where one is neither fully subject, nor entirely object, or Other. Virtual subjectivity allows us to perceive self-constructions in a relational mode; it removes narrative desire from the dominator mode by "voicing" subjectivities unrecognized by patriarchy. However, because such subjectivities are only virtual, without patriarchal encoding or legitimisation, the narrative voices representing them are anti-mimetic, existing only as a *possibility* for a new experience and stylisation of identity: they realise *partial identity*. 
Chapter II
The Illusion of Fusion: Narrative Intersubjectivity and Transsubjectivity

For we are not endlessly striving to be selves; we are always selves, but not always adequately.

William Desmond

In the last chapter, we saw how narrative voice can be detached from an embodied source of mediation and still represent identity. In this way, narrative voice serves an important mimetic purpose since it simulates "hearing" distinct, individual voices: a pseudo-auditory engagement with the text. On the other hand, narrative voice gains a distinctly anti-mimetic function; it represents a virtual enmeshment of consciousnesses, transcending any attributable speaking/thinking sources contained within the text's discursive levels. As we will see here, voice's anti-mimetic function is integral to H.D.'s and Woolf's representation of narrative intersubjectivity and transsubjectivity.

In this chapter, I explain how Jessica Benjamin's concept of intersubjectivity and Jürgen Habermas's concept of communicative action inform my model of relational desire. Through this discussion, I will develop my definitions of "narrative intersubjectivity" and "narrative transsubjectivity," indicating how these terms will be used in the following chapters. As yet, no working narratological definition for either intersubjectivity or transsubjectivity exists. Although some critics have used the term "intersubjectivity" in literary analysis, they withhold detailed consideration of its technical aspects and provide thematic studies instead, not useful for analysis of narrative discourse. I have found no study which takes transsubjectivity as a viable term for describing certain narrative voice stylisations. Therefore, since no clear narratological definition of narrative inter/transsubjectivity exists that accounts for the structural function of narrative voice, I offer one here.
I will begin by discussing existing literary criticism's broadly-based use of the term "intersubjectivity," and then I will explain how Benjamin's intersubjectivity and Habermas's transsubjectivity suggest more, and do more, for narratology than the extant literature. My discussion here assumes a co-created self or relational identity, predicated as it is on self-Other relations. As a mode of self-construction, the co-created self raises significant paradoxes for dominator generated literary representations of subjectivity.

Co-creation begins with a recognition of the individual's necessary dependence on and active engagements with others, and thus with conflicting modes of thought. In this way, the SELF is not primarily a result of self-construction, but rather of SELF-Other construction, as alluded to through the audience members' "unacted parts" affecting La Trobe's pageant (Between 112).

This raises important philosophical questions regarding the limits of identity. In a co-created SELF, for instance, do we ever know where our identity stops and that of the Other(s) begins? Can we sufficiently separate SELF from the Other without engaging power structures that produce and protect illusions of autonomous identity? Can we sufficiently assert our individuality, which is made up, in part, of Otherness? Finally, how does the concept of identity, as a state of permanent partialness, affect authoritative projections of personality, such as "parent" and "law"? My identification of the narrative strategies and effects prominent in relational narrative desire will address these crucial questions.

Assuming that relational identity exceeds singular modes of subjectivity, the co-created self aligns directly with Luce Irigaray's philosophical construct "civil identity," presented in I Love to You (1996a) and To be Two (2001b). Civil identity ensures and protects the equal right to distinct and separate subjecthoods for all persons in dominator
cultures. Because the prerequisite for narrative inter/transsubjectivity is the presence of at least two distinct and separate subjects in a subject-subject pairing, I will conclude this chapter by explaining how such a pair leads to Bracha Ettinger Lichtenberg’s concept of metramorphosis, which I use to define the psychological effect of inter/transsubjective connection. In contrast to Brooks’s theory of dominator desire, metramorphosis draws on a field of relational desire associated with the intersection of interpersonal boundaries—an intersection requiring attunement and sensitivity.

**Literary Analyses of Intersubjectivity**

Recently, literary critics have used “intersubjectivity” as a textual construct in a number of ways that emphasise its importance for describing human relations. Most of these studies are helpful for analysing the themes of novels associated with care-ethics, but not for analysing narrative techniques. For instance, relying on Carol Gilligan’s (1982) female paradigm of care and Nancy Chodorow’s (1989) theory of mothering, literary critics Barbara Shapiro (1998, 2001) and Susan Currier (1998) use intersubjectivity to describe modernist identity’s fluid boundaries, arguing for its potential regenerative powers in social relations. But their approaches, even with a shared focus on identity, remain thematic, only briefly touching on some of the narratives’ technical aspects. For instance, Shapiro argues that enslavement in Morrison’s *Beloved* forms an extreme form of disavowed subjectivity or psychic death, dramatising complex inter-relationships of social and intrapsychic realties. Her analysis of Morrison’s oral imagery supports Benjamin’s argument that human beings are innately social beings—an assumption also applied to the “tragic consequences” of masculinity in D.H. Lawrence’s “The Woman Who Rode Away.” But her analyses do little more than point to poetic images figuring
humans as social beings; they do not consider socialisation in terms of human inter-
relationships.

Along similar lines, Currier (1998, 2001) points to female liberation fables as
alternative paradigms inspired by Gilligan’s (1982) connection/care ethics. In her
comparison of Lily in Woolf’s *To The Lighthouse* to Stephen in Joyce’s *Portrait of the
Artist*, Currier’s analytical criteria for narrative intersubjectivity rest in the characters’
fantasies and use of aesthetic language. Stephen’s disavowal of his social responsibilities
within Catholic Ireland (“I will not serve”) is set against Lily’s coercion into exercising a
care ethics in relation to others. Stephen refuses such responsibilities; Lily negotiates a
way to integrate these with her own sense of self. Since Lily “includes herself in the
miracle” of the emotional connections she makes with Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay, Currier
argues that Lily forms a stark contrast to Stephen, who can only define himself in
dominator terms that lead to self-exile and social alienation (“Liberation Fables” 181).
Currier’s work aligns with the positive aspects of intersubjective bonding I advocate here,
but her narratological analysis is inadequate to the task of explaining this effect in textual
analysis. Largely paraphrasing and quoting selected scenes of *Lighthouse*, Currier fails to
examine how Woolf rhetorically and stylistically represents Lily’s inclusionary tactics.

In addition, Jane Goldman (1999) and Miriam Wallace (2000) also contextualise
intersubjectivity in Woolf’s writings in very different terms. Goldman focuses on
Woolf’s literary adaptation of the aesthetic theories of Roger Fry and Clive Bell
(“significant form”), while Wallace analyses *The Waves* by arguing for the metonymic
rather than metaphoric relationship between the characters. Goldman reduces
Benjamin’s definition of intersubjectivity to mean a general sense of community, drawing
analogies between Bloomsbury formalist aesthetic theories and Woolf’s literary reaction
Goldman’s emphasis on Woolf’s “colorist approach” transposes intersubjectivity into a feminist model of aesthetic-as-spirituality (276). In this view, Lily’s act of painting symbolizes the materiality of feminist protest, “feminist colorism,” through socio-politically drawn inter-relationships of forms (276). Specific narratological terminology has little room in this metaphorisation of modernist aesthetic theory. Here, intersubjectivity is vaguely drawn as a spiritual “communion” between two non-differentiated subjects. Without specifying linguistic or narrative markers for these communions, Goldman’s historical contextualisation of Woolf’s aestheticism fails to establish any workable theoretical framework for narrative intersubjectivity.

Miriam Wallace’s (2000) more decisive literary turn in theorising relational subjects in Woolf’s The Waves offers the best example of how relational identity can be structured novelistically. Wallace persuasively interprets The Waves’ structural aspects as a “contiguous language of image” (297), as a metonymical relation of characters’ conscious thoughts and emotions. She argues that metonymy, allowing for the irruptions and interruptions of the imaginary into the symbolic, signals intersubjective connection. But Wallace does not evoke Benjamin’s theories of intersubjectivity in her analyses; instead, she relies on Irigaray’s distinction between the metaphoric (hierarchical, masculine, individual identity) and metonymic (lack, feminine, non-differentiated identity) as figured in the Lacanian Symbolic Order. In this case, Wallace and I analyse the same effect—the narrative representation of relational identity—but through different theoretical filters; she focuses on Woolf’s specific use of metonymy where I posit narrative polyvalence to allow for a broader analysis of relational desire.

Although these works provide original approaches to modernist texts, they provide little or no narratological grounding for analysing, let alone, theorizing, shared
subjective states. This lack appears in the wordy, technically imprecise definitions used to describe innovative voice stylisations. For instance, despite her theoretical finesse, even Wallace falters when trying to describe the dialectic between intersubjectivity and subjectivity in her comparison of Louis and Rhoda in *The Waves*:

> Moments of fixed identity alternate with moments of fluid union. *[The Waves]* suggests that it is thus that identity and self, hence subjectivity, are formed and unformed in a ceaseless dynamic movement, an ebb and flow imaginary (which would merge identities and subjects) into the symbolic (which would keep things separate and bounded). This portrayal amounts to a self-conscious representation of (gendered) subjectivity as performative, realized in a work of fiction.

(“Theorising Relational Subjects” 306)

As this description suggests, even Wallace has trouble formulating and accounting for a pluralised form of narrative subjectivity, indirectly evoking the language Judith Butler (1990) uses in her concept of identity as performance, which we will later address. Wallace’s conflation of identity and self into a singular mode (“subjectivity”) is able to analyse movements between fusion and separation, but not their interrelationship.

Although she analyses separation and connection, she does so separately, and not as a mixed mode of subjectivity, or voice. Therefore, despite her valuable insights regarding material embodiment and disappearance in *The Waves*, Wallace could also benefit from a narratological model of voice that clearly describes the dynamics of plurality she perceives. In response, I offer some narratological tools to theorise formally specific narrative techniques and effects which evoke the fusion effect of narrative inter/transsubjectivity, beginning with Benjamin’s theoretical definition of intersubjectivity.
The Bonds of Love: Jessica Benjamin’s Intersubjectivity

In Benjamin’s (1986, 1988, 1994a, 1994b, 1995) psychoanalytic feminist theory, intersubjectivity is defined as a positive state of social inter-relatedness through which subjectivities merge. The object relations approach of developmental psychology,\(^5\) apparent in her writing, understands the basic feminine sense of self as connected to the world through a relational capacity, one that can commit women to certain caring relations and occupations. In contrast, some men in western patriarchy may deny relational connections as a defensive and reactive quality in their need to dominate women.\(^6\) In advanced capitalism, these gender roles, with their inherent essentialism, institutionalise notions of rationality and objectivity and need to be dismantled. One stage in accomplishing this task, Benjamin believes, is understanding intersubjectivity’s mutual recognition stage as fundamental to the development of human subjectivity.

Basing her works on Chodorow’s (1989) studies of mothering, Benjamin uses a consistent definition of intersubjectivity, particularly in its self-Other positioning. She conceives of individuality as a psychic balance of separation and connection, a dialectic between SELF and Other occurring through recognition and receptivity. Specifically, Benjamin’s intersubjective bond refers to the imaginary fusion which is assumed to occur between mother and child.\(^7\) In feminist developmental psychoanalysis, fusion refers to a special bond between two or more individuals, including the m(p)aternal bond existing in the mother/parent-child dyad during the processes of birthing, nursing and mothering or fathering. This love-bond signifies the SELF’s apprehension of its own self-imago as much as it signifies its apprehension of the Other; it integrates its self-imago apprehension as a mirroring-of-SELF by Other.
In other words, unlike the Lacanian mirror stage in which the self perceives itself as imperfect and insufficient in an alienating identity by virtue of the Other’s reflection, here, the self understands itself as a separate subject in relation to the Other. Since in this case the separateness of each subject is “mirrored back” to each other (and not just to the child), I propose that Benjamin reenvisions the Lacanian mirror-stage as two mirrors facing each other, whereby each possesses the capacity to reflect back the other’s reflection—a possibility that Lacan fails to entertain, although he does speculate on whether or not the mirror’s backing is opaque (non-reflective) or reflective, and thus capable of providing a secondary reflection of the subject. The important point here is that the “subject,” reflected in Benjamin’s mirror-stage is virtual—only a theoretical construct. It is only produced or glimpsed between the mirrors’ mutual exchange of reflections, and is, ultimately, tangential to but outside of the mirrors, and not in front of them. In this way, Benjamin’s subject bypasses the Lacanian mirror misrecognition stage, wherein the subject’s (infant’s) idealised processes of differentiation and identification cause it to see itself as a whole and autonomous being. The misrecognition stage conceals the fact that such a wholeness is illusory. In comparison, Benjamin’s subjects realise that while facing and reflecting one another, only a reflection of the mirror and not the self can be reflected back. Thus, the subject learns more about how the Other creates an imago of and for it, than it does about its own (illusory) reflection. Thus, Benjamin’s model emphasises intersubjectivity’s plurality: subjects learn about their interrelatedness by receiving partial reflections (imagos) of their selves through Others; the qualifier “partial” here transforms misrecognition into recognition because the subject perceives itself as a relational, and not autonomous, identity. In both Benjamin’s and Lacan’s theories, it is important to remember that they are always (already)
socialised, but the way in which they recognize their socialisation differs. The Lacanian subject laments its lack of wholeness and seeks completion through appropriation; Benjamin’s subject recognises its partialness and seeks identification with a like, also partial, subject through inter/transsubjective connection.

In Benjamin’s two-mirror model of intersubjectivity, then, the self recognises the need of the Other to be recognised as a subject while it itself is recognized as such.\textsuperscript{10} Benjamin’s mutual recognition stage signifies a psychic dimension in which the SELF is simultaneously differentiated and undifferentiated from the Other in a relational dialectic. In this way, the subject-subject pairing is born. Benjamin’s use of the mirror analogy also resonates with Woolf’s writing, as we will see in the bedroom scene of Between, where Lucy Swithin and William Dodge, two separate subjects, look for each other’s gazes in the same mirror, without seeking their own reflections. Thus, sharing the mirrored surface in this scene reflects the intertwining of their gazes as connected, intersubjective, partial subjects, rather than as separate subjects.

In The Bonds of Love (1988), Benjamin further argues that subjects need to develop SELF-Other relations through opportunities that allow for multiple identifications and desires. The opportunities to experience multiplicity which at the same time encompass a constant awareness of Others involved in these experiences, Benjamin argues, should be made equally available to both female and male subjects of dominator cultures. In this way, female subjects may gain agency along with the capacity to nurture; they can continue to value connection with Others over separation but at the same time explore their own powers (and identities) as agents.\textsuperscript{11} In a similar way, male subjects can be released from exclusive modes of emotional separation and detachment, associated with privileged subjects of dominator culture, which foster illusions of
autonomy. The mother, given sufficient financial and social support (a “room of her own”), can function as a figure of separation and curiosity, as well as a subject of desire, for children. The father can offer himself as a figure of identification for the daughter and son, one of separation, excitement, desire and connection with the outside world. Children would learn, Benjamin reasons, to identify with the capacities for agency and connection from both sexes. Thus, each gender would socialise in ways associated with the opposite sex, “rounding out” each subject’s ability to be intimate and to be an agent (private and public) at the same time. The greater the differences in these experiences of socialisation, Benjamin believes, the greater the capacity for learning how to empathise with multiple subjects.

Through the parents’ increased capacity for empathy, Benjamin reasons that children will be encouraged to identify with and integrate the power-giving aspects of both parents—ideally, Benjamin implies, of both sexes (although I believe the option of same-sex parents does not have to be ruled out). As a “third term” in the father-mother dichotomy, intersubjectivity—and not the child—represents the gender flexibility which disrupts Freudian/Lacanian phallic order. Children, competing for recognition of their own subjectivity, shift their allegiances between parents. Although identifying with only one at a time, they have free access to identifications with both parents. By stressing inclusivity between SELF and Other, Benjamin promotes the idea of engaging in multiple identifications which defy the dominator aspects of separation and autonomy. As Benjamin’s subject, I experience my autonomy as I experience meaningful, intimate social connection with others; only through my relationships are the differences of my individual subjecthood revealed to myself. Moreover, because I have both modes of gender socialisation at my disposal, I both court and respond to desires outside those
allocated to my sex. In describing gender differentiation, Benjamin’s ideal subject conforms to Woolf’s principle of androgeny, desirable here in its connotations of difference. I can be a more cohesive patriarchal subject, whether I am male or female since I integrate cognitive experience using both masculine and feminine frameworks of reference. Woolf’s androgeny trope is useful here.

For children, this dual-mode integration process minimises potential disappointments inherent in any idealized identifications and allows for complementary modes of gender expression. Such gender flexibility posits a capacity for improved receptivity: by knowing and taking in dual identifications, young subjects destroy objectification fantasies by discovering that Others do exist in reality (“A Desire” 93). In this way, an intersubjective ordering of psychic experiences re-positions the relationship of SELF to desire. Desire is a co-created, interdependent construct that reflects an understanding of Other in relation to SELF, allowing the subject to question whether drives come from within, or not. This questioning allows the authenticity of drives to be "tested." The subject can decide whether s/he can handle them—"whether I can contain them” or “bear them without losing or injuring myself," or not (“A Desire” 95). In Benjamin’s view, the ability to “contain” desires of Others, without feeling threatened by them, creates an ontologically secure inner psyche, an unthreatened psychic “life.” In this case, the desire for (or luxury of) “having an inside” is managed outside of the sphere of sexual difference, since it is based on a wide variety of different kinds of experiences, with equal access for both sexes (Ibid.). Thus, subject construction in Benjamin’s view, as in my model of narrative relational desire here, is predicated upon the self’s ability to experience multiple desires and to negotiate any conflicts among them.

However, one complication with Benjamin’s definition of intersubjectivity,
important for narratological description, is her view of domination, and within it, objectification. As I have discussed, most literary critics using Benjamin’s concept of intersubjectivity agree that this term signifies the construction and experience of relational identity. They claim Benjamin assumes individuals are never totally differentiated, never entirely separate, free, or autonomous. This claim is supported, but also partially challenged by relational identity. Benjamin does focus on how individuals actively engage in relationships with others, and how individuals make themselves known in these relationships through emotional connection, recognition and identification. But paramount to Benjamin’s theory is her assumption that recognition is only possible when an individual does not feel dominated by the needs of the Other. Therefore, like Irigaray, Benjamin advocates the restructuring of dominator culture so that two subjects exist. But as long as women structure and “voice” their desire(s) in ways that reflect and perpetuate patriarchy, and remain complicit with patriarchy, the prospect for mutual connection and identification is lost. Thus I believe that the paradox of complicity, which defers possibilities for intersubjectivity, is the condition challenging previous literary analyses of intersubjectivity, even parts of Benjamin’s own theory. One can only be a relational subject insofar as self-other interdependency is recognised, even if one’s recognition includes that of domination which must be accepted as a partial component of one’s subjecthood; this aspect of partialness needs to be voiced.

The Mutual Recognition Stage

To consider the role of complicity in patriarchy and the role of domination in intersubjectivity, we need to look again at the psychic aspects of intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity moves the subject out of self-centered modes of identity-construction
and into community-centered modes of identity-construction. An intersubjective dimension of relationship involves an “experience *between and within* individuals, rather than just *within*” (Benjamin, *Bonds* 125). This power to disrupt phallogocentrism’s subject-object dichotomy through a subject-subject pairing seems to have been rejected by disempowered subjects of patriarchy. In the following discussion, I refer to white, Western women as an example of such disempowered subjects, although obviously, numerous other subjects spring to mind. However, given all their supposed material privileges and social advantages, white, Western women provide the most mystifying case of complicity. The power to alter dominator power structures should, ideally, be within their grasp.

Like Irigaray, Benjamin remains puzzled by Western women’s complicity with patriarchal social structures that deprive them of personal and political power. Women’s complicity riddles Benjamin’s theory of intersubjectivity; it requires a connection between *two distinct subjectivities*; women’s complicity with patriarchy reduces two desires to one, as Irigaray (1985) argues, by reducing one of the subjects to an object. This problem is confronted by Benjamin and Irigaray in two ways that reveal important aspects of relational narrative desire: Benjamin focuses on the recognition stage of subject-Other interdependence; Irigaray applies this stage to larger socio-political contexts which structure gender relations in dominator cultures, as we will see in the next section. Both emphasize *mutual recognition* as the first stage in ensuring intersubjective connection and civil identity. This emphasis seems appropriately placed; however, both theorists seem to ignore the self-reflexive processes involved in such a stage, as I will discuss more fully in my critique of Habermas. However, because both Benjamin and Irigaray clearly articulate the nature of, and social implications for, a subject-subject
pairing in patriarchal culture. Let us see how such a pairing, despite complicity, can be posited.

Dominator models of desire, like Brooks’s model, assume the existence of only one subject and one desire; in terms of gender, the second, or female, sex reflects male desire. Given that female desire can only be expressed, and sometimes interpreted, as a “reflection” of male desire, Benjamin’s concept of intersubjectivity shows how complicity signifies an interdependency between the sexes which reinforces, but also dismantles, gender prejudices in dominator cultures. By considering the object’s (female’s) investment in domination, Benjamin (1988, 1995) identifies the contradictions inherent in feminine psychic desire. These contradictions reveal reasons why virtual subjectivity, as narrative construct, is required to mediate and navigate between conflicting desires. As noted, the capacity to integrate conflicting viewpoints is inherent to relational narrative desire; with this kind of integration, the subject relinquishes control and acknowledges where, and why, we depend on others to sustain our self-constructions with all their inherent contradictions.

Domination, Benjamin claims, begins with any attempt by either subject or object to deny dependency on the other. Such attempts mask the fact that our own existence as an independent being requires the recognition of such by the Other: “True independence means sustaining the essential tension of these contradictory impulses; that is, both asserting the self and recognizing the other. Domination, according to Benjamin, is the consequence of refusing this condition (Bonds 52-3). Elsewhere, Benjamin characterizes the assertion of independence as an absolute desire “possessing and controlling the needed object” (“A Desire” 80-81). In both places, Benjamin figures a subject’s assertion of independence as a force of coercion by which the Other is
subjugated to the subject’s desires. She confirms, like Irigaray, that objects are necessary to dominator societies as long as their Otherness is either assimilated or controlled. For example, a woman can “nowhere” assert her subjectivity in a way that makes a man’s “dependency upon her a conscious insult to his sense of freedom” (“A Desire” 80).

Psychic and physical domination,¹⁷ and by extrapolation, patriarchal domination, can be perceived as a two-way process—a system involving the participation of those who submit to power, as well as those who exercise it, since the “pain that accompanies compliance is preferable to the pain that attends freedom” (*Bonds* 5).¹⁸

Since female complicity removes the possibility of both a subject-subject pairing and the opportunity for intersubjective connection, Benjamin critiques Chodorow’s account of female psychic development. Like Benjamin, Chodorow (1989) interprets women’s complicity with self-suffering in patriarchy as their inability to address unconscious mental processes which perpetuate helplessness and dependency, rather than mutual respect and reciprocity, between the sexes. But, Benjamin refines this point by making an important distinction between complementarity (complicity) and reciprocity. Complementarity (complicity), Benjamin argues, does not ensure reciprocity; it is frequently the by-product of ordinary, intimate relationships founded on power: “one gives, the other refuses to accept; one pursues, the other loses interest; one criticizes, the other feels annihilated” (*Bonds* 65). In this case, the sense of intersubjective connection is lost: “extreme self-sufficiency leads to detachment from the other; extreme dependency vitiates the separate reality of the other” (Ibid.), a dynamic shown in Giles and Isa’s relationship in *Between*. As Benjamin argues, the painful submission to domination by the object or Other can be read as a psychic need for *recognition*, the need for the object to *find* her or himself in the subject’s response (21).¹⁹
Benjamin believes that the need for recognition is most obvious in the primordial, early exchanges between mother/parent and child. Since intersubjectivity assumes that an individual grows in and through relationships to other subjects, the (m)other with whom the child engages is also a self, a subject in her or his own right. The desire for submission on the part of the object (child) represents a peculiar transposition of the desire for her/his recognition—a desire distinct, Benjamin argues, from that for domination (Bonds 56). Recognition of the (m)other's subjectivity psychically reorients the subject’s relations to its object to a *subject meeting another subject*:

Recognition is, thus, reflexive; it includes not only the other’s confirming response, but also how we find ourselves in that response ... [It is a] need for *mutual recognition*, the necessity of recognizing as well as being recognized by the other ... it implies that we actually have a need to recognize the other as a separate person who is like us yet distinct. (Bonds 19-20, 23)

In this way, Benjamin claims that the (m)other is rarely regarded as other than an object for her child’s demands (Bonds 123-4). The paradox of recognition is that she must be regarded as a subject with an independent center outside her child if she is to grant the child the recognition that s/he seeks. In recognising the mother’s independence, however, the child is confronted with his or her dependence on her: “the need for acknowledgment turns us back to dependence on the other” (Bonds 39). Therefore, the conflict and struggle for control between the desire for autonomy and the desire for recognition can only be resolved by the total renunciation of the self and the experience of a new kind of desire (Bonds 55).²⁰

In Benjamin’s *Like Subjects, Love Objects* (1995), there is a crucial point made regarding a new form of desire. Here Benjamin acknowledges the *fantasy* (or virtual)
aspects of recognition which remain vital to the sense of subjecthood on the part of the
mother and the child. The child (object), needing to find her/himself in the response of
the (m)other can, largely, only guess, surmise, hope, and/or assume that such recognition
happens. Recognition occurs, or can occur, in this exchange, but it requires a leap of
fantasy to be actualised. For example, I can only “find” myself (find my own response
through what the other says and thinks) by interpreting and integrating the response of the
Other based on my own unspoken (subconscious or unconscious) thoughts. Even in this
case, however, fantasy is, by and large, the psychic mechanism we use for self-definition
in identity-construction. Thus, recognition-as-fantasy is not an acknowledgement of the
Other as independent subject, but a narcissistic search for ourselves—a rear-view mirror
reflecting our own identity. “We live in others,” as Lucy Swithin acknowledges
(Between 55).

Recall, however, the importance of virtual subjectivity in this acknowledgement;
we can only be self and Other virtually. In reality, we conform to a single subject
position in order to articulate our desires and subjectivity, even if this position is
sensitised to the existence of, and its relation to, other subjectivities. Thus, Benjamin
acknowledges the fantasy aspect of intersubjectivity because it reveals the reasons for
women’s complicity with domination (“A Desire” 96), an aspect carefully crafted in
H.D.’s and Woolf’s voice stylisations of narrative intersubjectivity. According to
Benjamin, fantasy accompanies the freedom of submitting to an Other who remains in
control; the desire for a safe (psychic) space which permits self-discovery exclusively
through the presence of an Other. In this case, aloneness ensures outside recognition:
“to be truly alone with oneself paradoxically requires this sense of the other’s being
there” (Ibid. 94). A subject’s fantasies of her/his independence ensures her/his intersubjectivity.

Not surprisingly, these fantasies dovetail, precisely, with the fantasies of independence voiced by many female protagonists in modern women’s writing. These protagonists, complicit patriarchal subjects, continually seek recognition from those in privileged positions—usually male characters—to acknowledge and authenticate them. As Benjamin acknowledges, simultaneously, patriarchy’s granting of recognition, in turn, depends upon female fantasies of independence, autonomy and power: “the force of desire that substantiates power, the adoration creates it ever anew” (“A Desire” 84). In other words, reciprocal recognition is as fantasised, and as illusory, as the individual’s perception of the (m)other as subject or object. Fantasy, in this case, is reality-bound; it ensures an illusion of autonomy while allowing for social and personal integration of difference.

This illusion is contained within Benjamin’s paradox of recognition. It is never clear, for example, whether children acknowledge the independence of their mothers (that is, a concept of the mother without them) (Bonds 24), or whether a mother, herself, is able to conceive of her children’s subjectivity, separate from her (“A Desire” 82). It is only certain that the Other’s subjectivity is acknowledged insofar as it ensures and provides for these needs for recognition—in other words, insofar as dependency is acknowledged. The subject-object dichotomy in intersubjective connections, therefore, is reversible and fantasised, on both sides. This amazing psychic capacity for subject construction based upon the fantasy and illusion of recognition is one way in which empathy and self-irony directly inform our sense of identity. We are able to empathise with that we attribute to others, while at the same time, but along different lines, we are
able to satirize and even objectify the very attributes that we wish to deny in ourselves that have already been confirmed through the recognition process.

In Benjamin’s theory, largely based on her contextualisation of clinical psychoanalysis with social and cultural theory, then, intersubjectivity involves the co-construction and co-creation of two separate subjects through a transforming sense of connectedness built on a self-reflexive style of mutuality. For this reason, intersubjectivity can frame self-knowing as a form of caring: “the well-being of the other coexists with self-interest” (Tomm, “Ethics and Self Knowing” 102-103). The Other emerges at the expense of a self who invests in learning from, rather than appropriating or objectifying, the object. As we will see, through inter/transsubjectivity, as H.D. and Woolf illustrate, characters still learn about themselves through patriarchal constructions for them. Although they learn to fade out (or at least tune out) certain “acoustics” that dominator culture uses to devalue them; they acknowledge their partiality and relationality within patriarchy—not outside of it. Therefore, narratively, relational desire performs a rhetoric of intersubjectivity in which traces of the phallic order remain. Captured within these kinds of rhetoric, as Susan Wells (1996) argues, are “remnants of discourses which have been transformed, foreclosed, or abandoned.” Such rhetoric never achieves triumphant “gestures of closure” (142). Thus, a complete emancipation of women in discursive spheres, including their loss of complicity, would involve fully comprehending, and experiencing, the transformative power of intersubjectivity.

Therefore, Benjamin (1986) believes that future psychological change in patriarchal culture must come from reconstructing our understanding of identity—and dependency—in such a way that conscious choices regarding the implications of
relational identity are made. She asserts that “something different” ("A Desire") would result if Oedipal sexual organization, embedded in parenting practices, was arranged such that the child could identify with both parents as subjects of desire.

To this end, Benjamin seeks an alternative mode of representing women’s desire for agency so that it does not occur through the phallus. But to this day, dominator culture is still unable to produce a female image or symbol to counterbalance the monopoly of the phallus in representing desire, the “missing piece” in Western civilization’s emphasis on rationality, materiality and individualism (Bonds 78, 83). Once found, this missing piece could figure individuality as a balance of separation and connectedness, “the freedom to be both with and distinct from the other” (“A Desire” 98).

This missing piece may well be Irigaray’s concept, civil identity, which offers us a way to conceive intersubjectivity, in social exchanges. Obviously this missing piece emerges through desire. Privileged (white, western) women who share phallic power with “their” men must also renounce their conscious or subconscious desire for domination. Let us see how this would work.

**Irigaray’s “Civil Identity”**

Irigaray’s “civil identity” signifies the right of each person in a democracy to freely access and experience his/her own subjecthood, a desire shared by many minorities who still desperately seek recognition in dominator cultures. In *I Love To You*, Irigaray argues that even white, privileged Western women living in the twenty-first century remain bereft of a civil or generic identity. A civil identity, which democracy legally guarantees to men and women as a right, Irigaray argues, protects the right to exist, and
within that right, the right to cultivate interiority. In other words, everyone has a right and duty to be what he or she desires (or even aspires) to be; and according to Irigaray, in the face of this right, hierarchical power and genealogical power "pale into insignificance" (I Love 53). This right makes respect for the Other obligatory. It replaces the "object" of the subject/object dichotomy with an/other subject while "subject-subject" erases the very need for that dichotomy. In this case, the discourse dyad "I/you" posits two subjects, rather than the workings of the incomplete economy of a single [male] subject.

Recently, Irigaray has used the concept of love (sometimes with explicit theological connotations) as the foundation of civil identity. I interpret her philosophical use of "love" as a practise of tolerance that results in tangible effects. One of these effects entails Western women's social and political negotiation of the terms upon which their voices will be received and heard by dominator cultures—a negotiation that Woolf also addressed in her 1931 lecture "Professions for Women." Irigaray's civil identity complements my model of narrative relational desire by calling for the existence of two or more communicating subjects—a number which, as Irigaray's works all argue, has been replaced by one: one subject (masculine); one desire (phallogocentric); and one voice (patriarchy's).

Irigaray's (2001b, 2002) recent works on gender construction in language focus on the impossibility of experiencing intersubjectivity within the prevailing patriarchy of Western culture, given the fact that women, and other disempowered subjects (including those with mental illnesses), are denied subjective status (see To Speak). In her anthology I Love To You, Irigaray (1996a) perceives the human capacity for
intersubjectivity, the recognition of [feminine] Other as Subject, as a necessary stage in Western social and political evolution. To this end, Irigaray postulates syntactical practises which illustrate the distinct gender differences maintaining the subject-object dichotomy, and suggests alternative psycho-linguistic constructions to potentialise intersubjectivity. For instance, Irigarary’s use of the colon (:) symbolises a paradoxical mode of connection and separation, which ressignifies metaphors of heterosexual desire in a way that respects alterity. Rather than symbolising gender equality with an equal sign which dismisses sexual and social differences, Irigaray’s colon connotes a proportional congruency that should extend to all subjects’ treatment in patriarchy. This colon also symbolises the need for Western women to continue to find their own subjective space for self-discovery that locates and maximises their gender differences.

For feminism, Irigaray’s colon symbolises the paradoxical state of social separation and connection that women need in order to develop their own subjecthood while immersed in the immediate concerns of their traditional caretaking obligations. Irigaray’s well-known critique of Freud’s Oedipal concept of femininity, Speculum of the Other Woman, clearly outlines the repercussions for women in a logocentric culture in which the monopoly of productive activity is merely the distribution of phallic power (16). In an economy of representation regulated by the paradigms and units of male subjectivity (including sexual and reproductive desire), woman is, according to Irigaray, “nothing but the receptacle that passively receives his product” (Speculum 18). This censure of the woman (“feminine/female”) in patriarchy sabotages her interpretive modalities such that she finds her desire signed up without having “begun to play” (Ibid. 22). Complicit with the Freudian-Lacanian staging of her desire, woman has traditionally remained off-stage, beyond representation, and thus beyond her claim to selfhood.
These arguments, made nearly thirty years ago, still hold true, since western culture is almost as far from women’s equality (and Habermas’ communicative action) as we have ever been. In light of this fact, Irigaray argues that despite feminisms’ many accomplishments, many men and women in the capitalist Western world still do not believe, or do not want to believe, that woman can be anything other than the “complement to man, his inverse, his scraps, his need, his other ... [w]hich means that she cannot be truly other. The other that she is remains trapped in the economy or the horizon of a single subject” (I Love 63). In this sustained desire for the auto/homo, the hierarchy of values of the capitalist game is an oligarchy; male desires continue to dominate the representational economy of monetary and social power. “The other: woman,” symbolising the respect for a sexed identity, does not yet appear in Westernised dominator culture. Presumably, the social and political infrastructure of such a culture cannot afford to recognise or accommodate difference.

To Irigaray, this situation means dominator models are paralysed in terms of ethical and spiritual development. She deprecates the lack of alterity in patriarchal culture, arguing for the recognition of a “real” other:

The lack of definition of the alterity of the other has left all thought, the dialectical method included, in a state of paralysis, in an idealistic dream appropriate to a single subject (the male), in the illusion of a unique absolute, and has left religion and politics to an empiricism profoundly lacking in ethics when it comes to respect between persons .... It is not the other we are really dealing with but the same: inferior, superior, or equal to me. (I Love 61)

Sadly, this ideological paralysis, Irigaray believes, cannot be alleviated by succeeding generations who internalise the same value systems with which they are raised. Thus,
the relation between two persons (including mother and daughter), which seems natural to the feminine must be, Irigaray argues, "reconquered" (I Love 76). Until then, daughters exist as exiles in the Symbolic Order. Women are made into a material support for male narcissism, the condition of men's subjectivity. What angers Irigaray in "Psychoanalysis and Language" is the fact that the daughter cannot identify with a desiring woman since there is nothing for her to identify with, or to have a relationship with since a "desiring woman" in patriarchy is treated as a non-entity. Therefore, the daughter cannot articulate her own desire: "the girl shuns or is cast out of a primary metaphorisation of her desire as a woman, and she becomes inscribed into the phallic metaphors of the small male" (Speculum 84; see also Irigaray Reader 74-5).

One way of reconquering or restructuring relations between persons as civil identities is, Irigaray (2001a) believes, by developing a more sophisticated understanding of the emotional or binding connection inherent in the state of love. Ideally, love ensures that the differences of subjects are treated with respect and care so that a relationship (metaphorically figured by Irigaray as "air") may be formed: "Strangers we are to one another, irreducible to the same Being. Being, then, is split in two, or, rather, is held in two and in the relation between" (From The Forgetting 313). To understand these differences, Irigaray (1991a) urges an examination of the operation of the grammar of each figure of discourse in patriarchal hegemony, including: "its syntactic laws or requirements, its imaginary configurations, its metaphoric networks, and also what it does not articulate at the level of utterance: its silences" ("The Power of Discourse" 124). Irigaray believes becoming attuned to the auditory aspects of communication will reduce dominator society's specularisation of women and enforce a hearing of femininity which potentiates the opportunity for intersubjective connections. In this way, as Woolf
prophesied in *A Room of One’s Own* (1929), women will torch the “proper terms” and “well constructed forms” which ensure their subordination; they will create a grammar in touch with feminine styles of relational thought and expression: “a simultaneity and fluidity which is never fixed in the possible identity to itself or some form of other” (Irigaray, “The Power of Discourse” 126).

Historically, then, according to Irigaray and Benjamin, energy in the Western world has been inefficiently directed, and even sacrificed, denying the development of multiple, different subjective modes for both male and female subjects. By reconfiguring the phrase “I love you” as “I love to you” ("je t’aime" to "je aime à toi"), Irigaray positions the “you” as a subject who is not spatially assimilated in relation to the “I.” Her syntactic separation suggests a movement towards the you-subject, rather than the constitution of the “you” by the action of the “I” (*I Love* 102). In this case, Irigaray’s linearity of expression reads metaphorically, signifying the nature of the relationship as a desire for inclusion.

Like Benjamin, Irigaray (1996a) identifies recognition of the other as subject as the key to forming intersubjective relations in patriarchy: “spiritual progress can then be understood as the development of communication between us” (my emphasis, *I Love* 104). Recently, she has focused her research on the problem of how intersubjectivity is affected by sexual difference and manifested in discourse. Her research of mixed-sex conversations examines men’s difficulties with indirect communication, and women’s difficulties in representing themselves or other females as subjects. Irigaray concludes that women seek communication from male subjects whose interests are not in intersubjective exchanges, and who, due to their social and economic investment in egoism, are more oriented to the past, than the present or future. Furthermore, men rarely
seek dialogue and remain within a collectivity that is "poorly defined but marked by the masculine gender" (I Love 95). In Irigaray's view, men's teleology implies an abandonment of immediate communication, and therefore, of intersubjectivity: "Among themselves, men hardly say a word to each other. They talk about the incidental aspects of daily life, they argue, but they do not communicate. They pass on news, and comment upon it "(I Love 100-1). Instead of talking, Irigaray claims, men set off "in quest of an oeuvre"—they set off to find something to do—an activity which allows them to alienate themselves from one another and their own inner lives. Thus, Irigaray believes that men deny themselves the benefits of communicative exchanges that serve as communion—for example, the discussion of their own emotional weaknesses. Such discussions threaten notions of self-autonomy constructed upon egoism (the male ego). In male exchanges, dialogue does not constitute an intersubjective connection because the Other is foreclosed as a predetermined, masculinised, patriarchal subject.

Barred from emotional and spiritual forms of interpersonal connection, male subjects of dominator culture are equally denied subjectivity. Through cultural conditioning, men cannot reciprocate or perhaps, even recognize emotional realities that they have systematically repressed, or denied.34 Indifference, the absence of emotional reality in male subjects, has traditionally been interpreted as a psychological strength when, in fact, it signifies the denial of what Benjamin sees as the capacity for recognition, and thus for reciprocation.

Communication remains a key factor in theorising feminine desire for both male and female subjects in dominator cultures. As Irigaray reminds us, communication is the only means holding the potential to ensure mutual recognition and respect (I Love 100). The high value placed on communication leads us to narratological ways of configuring
positionality within existing theories of narrative desire.

**Narrative Transsubjectivity: Habermas's Communicative Action**

A final addition to my model of narrative relational desire is a definition of *narrative transsubjectivity*. Transsubjectivity, emerging from Jürgen Habermas's philosophical concept of communicative action,\textsuperscript{35} parallels both Benjamin and Irigaray's construction of love as recognition. Habermas's communicative action theory focuses on the interrelationships of subjects in communities who are united by a common goal, geography and/or ideology similar to Starhawk's *power/with* model of community. Thus, narrative transsubjectivity is a wide-scale intersubjective connection of a group of distinct subjectivities. Habermas (1987a, 1987b, 1987c) conceives of transsubjectivity (and intersubjectivity) as paradigms of mutual understanding useful for daily language practices. Like Benjamin, he argues that inter/transsubjectivity signifies an interrelationship between subjects in language, structured by a system of reciprocally interlocked perspectives among participants ("An Alternative Way" 296-7, 324). In such a structure, the ego is situated interpersonally, "as a participant in an interaction from the perspective of alter" (297). The subject straddles *two* self-sustaining modes of identity; it is granted subjectivity as it engages, phantasmally, with Others.

Habermas (1987c) reminds us that social integration *via* transsubjectivity can only be symbolically structured; thus, narrative transsubjectivity is *virtual* in its representation of a communal voice binding distinct subjectivities (*Communicative Action II* 55). Transsubjectivity creates the illusion of human subjectivity in a plurality of voices, sometimes stylised as an anonymous voice-source, or as a cacophonic voice
Relational Narrative Desire

montage trangressing historical, cultural, and interpersonal boundaries. In both styles, I argue that narrative authority is diffused through voice shifts which signify an interlocking, interpenetrable network of relations, structurally evident in the time stretches in both Woolf’s *Orlando* and H.D.’s *Palimpsest*, two texts which re-embody a single character across different centuries.

Habermas suggests that individuals owe their identities exclusively to their identifications with, or internalisations of, collective identity. Narratologically, transsubjectivity “gathers up” or fuses separate voice-strands in a single convergence. This convergence represents individuality contained within collectivity, that is, the contradictory desire for connectedness and the need for separation. Since the emergence of personal differences is undermined by real and symbolic similarities, transsubjectivity signifies both anonymity and universality. Personal identity, Habermas claims, “is a mirror image of collective identity” (*Communicative Action II* 58)—an unsettling fact for Miss La Trobe’s audience members when her mirror-bearers confront them with undesirable, but undeniable, images of their social inter-relationships.

Habermas’s paradigms support the anti-mimetic narratological shift in which voice becomes a site of subjectivities, rather than a fixed representation of consciousness. Like the anti-mimetic view of narrative voice, Habermas’s mutual understanding evolves into a more comprehensive communicative form of reasoning, a move which bypasses Nietzsche’s exclusion model of domination and subjugation. Habermas’s communicative action assumes that participants are more interested in reaching an understanding than in coercing Others to accept their own views. The process of reaching an understanding differs significantly from “exerting influence upon one another with a view to consequences” (*Communicative Action II* 10). Habermas realises that the
degree of understanding reached varies greatly, depending upon how actors can co-operate and harmonise their strategic negotiations, concerning prospective outcomes. In this style of communication, harmony emerges from a consensual understanding concerning the reversibility—not the hierarchy—of the communicative roles, including those of speaker, addressee, and observer in all exchanges. A basis of shared understanding allows participants to communicate in relation to one another. Habermas’s communicative action also emphasises reciprocal recognition for each subject in a transsubjective connection. With this emphasis, communicative action supports the subject’s recognition of the Other as Lichtenberg’s “attunement,” distinct from, but like, itself; one cannot claim one’s individuality unless it is recognised as such (see McAfee 29).

Although Habermas provides a solid foundation for my narratological concept of transsubjectivity, some important qualifications have to be made before we move on to analysing novels in the next chapter. Habermas’s concepts of inter/transsubjectivity contain several flaws based on his neglect of some critical psychic elements associated with communication: namely, the influence of gender, the subject’s tendency towards self-reflexivity, and the danger of Other-objectification. These are all aspects that need to be considered in a mutual recognition stage. Without addressing these oversights, I believe we lose the ability to distinguish, in narrative, whether or not the inter/transsubjective connections represent successes or failures in achieving social intimacy, while at the same time, maintaining self. To adjust Habermas’s theoretical concepts, I rely on one more theorist: Judith Butler.

Adjusting Habermas
The question of how, and why, mutual understanding can, on its own, successfully alleviate or circumvent the necessarily narcissistic, self-reflexive nature of desire is left unanswered by Habermas, who assumes that structures for mutual understanding are inherent in communicative acts. For instance, in perceiving SELF as co-creation, Habermas tends to idealise relational identity, entirely ignoring the potentially negative effects latent in inter/transsubjective connection, including self-dissolution, self-reflexivity, self-loathing, and personality ritualisation. H.D. and Woolf, however, do not. In fact, for H.D. and Woolf, these negative effects are valued signifiers of co-creation. Like Benjamin's maternal connection, Habermas's communicative action idealistically assumes that understanding between different subjects can occur—that it is the "inherent telos of human speech" (Toward A Rational Society 91). His idealism, however, need not detract from our model of narrative inter/transsubjectivity, which emphasises the desire for connection, albeit in imperfect communicative forms. Thus, I wish to "temper" Habermas's idealism in several ways that will more closely align with my model of relational desire. This model accommodates undesirable, and even threatening, effects of inter/transsubjectivity that Habermas and Benjamin distance or ignore.

Habermas idealises the human potential for inter/transsubjective connection by glorifying, and glossing over, the complexities in the mutual-recognition process. In contrast, narratologically H.D. and Woolf do not execute scenes illustrating perfectly harmonious relational identity, nor do they present any idealistic fusion of distinct subjectivities; "fusion" does not magically occur at the communicative level. Instead, these authors suggest, quite clearly, that such connections are achieved by an enormous psychic effort and active desire on the part of all subjects involved. Thus, their novels attest to some of the "real life" difficulties in achieving inter/transsubjective connection
and in acting as a relational subject. Such achievements require the very qualities which Habermas ignores: a secure ontological self and the capacity for feeling genuine empathy. Such security derives from the attention to gender, the presence of virtuality, and the acknowledgement of inter-objectification in the mutual recognition stage.

_Gender in the Mutual Recognition Stage_

A gender-neutral version of intersubjectivity alone cannot ensure the conditions necessary for installing a woman as a respected subject in communicative actions. Habermas ignores the prerequisite need for dual-subjects by failing to consider the inequality of minorities in dominator cultures. His gender-neutral concept of intersubjectivity depends upon patriarchy’s assignment of “speaking parts,” as if language were a “neutral carrier” of communicative intent (Wells 116). For this reason, Habermas’s theory does little to disrupt the prejudices inherent in the discursive roles assigned to men and women, where the latter function exclusively as recipients. Habermas himself notes that communication involves various interactive functions, including the speaker’s expectation and anticipation of the listener’s reaction, role-taking, and truth-telling. But he fails to remark on the fact that these functions have, historically, conformed to expectations arising from dominator culture’s gender biases and criteria: children are told to be quiet; women are praised as good listeners. As H.D.’s and Woolf’s characters demonstrate, however, the characters’ navigation through certain self-reflexive strategies cannot be evaded, and are, indeed, prerequisite to establishing the consideration of gender in inter/transsubjective connections. This fact is acknowledged, as we will see, by Butler.

One drawback of Habermas’s communicative action lies in his presupposition of
a prelinguistic, intersubjective "core self," with a universal desire for recognition from a universal community; subjectivity, in this case is an achievement that can be attained (McAfee 35). In other words, identity is a social achievement which SELF must develop by negotiating autonomy and soliciting recognition from unlimited communities. Paradoxically, however, this universality of achievement overlooks the very aspect of difference he theoretically seeks. He fails to recognize the fact that female subjects of patriarchy cannot assume their social achievements will be valued, and instead must confront the very real possibility that they will be devalued. Thus, Habermas inadvertently imposes disembodiment on female subjects, whose bodily and affective needs/desires are "intimately bound up with" dominator-culture's devaluation of women's capacity for rational reflection and action (Cooke 179, 184).42

Additionally, Habermas's communicative action is too suspect, and too invested in dominator models when it comes to moral accountability in its neglect of gender. Habermas's communicative action does not depend on the truth or rightness of the content of the self's choices, decisions, judgments or actions. It shifts an individual's critical, reflective capacity away from the identity-making process "in accordance with what is right or good" (Cooke 188). But this dimension of self-authorship, or what Cooke calls the subject's rational accountability—the ability to defend one's own self-interpretations and value system—is ultimately integral to one's civil identity. Ironically, Habermas himself evokes this critique by arguing that since morals have "cognitive content," they are more than just emotional expressions (Moral Consciousness 70): "Something of the penetrating power of primordial sacred powers still attaches to morality; it permeates differentiated levels of culture, society and personality in a way
that is unique in modern societies" (Communicative Action II 92). However, when such moralising systems are detached from the representation, as in Woolf's and H.D.'s novels, new organisational forms of making sense of the texts emerge for the reader outside of morally evaluative modes.

*Virtuality in the Mutual Recognition Stage*

Another tempering of Habermas's idealism in the narratological model I offer here is to realize that subject-sharing is virtual—the implications of which, I believe, are not fully explored by Habermas. In his assumption that everyone "must be able to adopt, at least virtually, the attitude of someone who participates in the communicative practice of everyday life," Habermas moves communicative action into the realm of social subjective fantasy (my emphasis, Moral Consciousness 48). Everyone must be able to suspend, at least temporarily, their own subject-constructedness to vicariously imagine the attitudinal experiences of Other(s).

This virtual subjectivity does not fully originate with SELF or Other, rather, it is located in a fantasised integration of both mediating sources. Philosophically, the integration effect of inter/transsubjectivity denotes moral mobility and unconditional openness to Otherness: an internal wholeness of being and external harmony with being, a "fitting relation" between an individual's positive affirmation of selfhood and what is appropriately being other than oneself (Desmond 5, 146). This integration, or adaptation, as Habermas (1981) attests, "is not tantamount to self-objectification" ("The Paradigm Shift" 515) since acts of anticipating, simulating, and even incorporating, the expectations and reactions of the Other fail to emulate the exact nature of the self-
consciousness with which the subject subconsciously or unconsciously "finds" itself mirrored in the Other, simultaneously as a differentiated and undifferentiated subject. In this light, it is important to remember that, for Habermas, in this integrative fusion, participants are united by something in their common social world and something in each's own subjective world (Communicative Action II, 392). This transgressive sharing of Lichtenberg's borderline spaces, as I will discuss soon, suggests that since no one (single) subjective world should or could be privileged, plurality must be invited and tolerated.

Inter-objectivity in the Mutual Recognition Stage

The final way to temper Habermas's glorified vision of fusion in transsubjectivity and intersubjectivity is to turn to Judith Butler, whose notions of self-reflexivity reveal a sophisticated understanding of the contradictory, inner psychic processes inherent in intersubjectivity. Butler's examination of the paradoxes arising from self-reflexivity in the identity-construction process qualifies Habermas's assumption of perfect connection and seamless integration of self-Other. Habermas goes so far as to attempt to entirely dismiss self-reflexivity from his communication model by characterising it as a "self-idolizing" function or compulsion that the subject carries on and conceals from itself ("An Alternative Way" 308, 323). He reasons that the subject can avoid the compulsion to objectify by conceiving the Other as a "self-relation," that is, a partaker and co-creator of subjectivity, rather than a passive recipient and interpreter of discourse.

In contrast, Butler figures desire as a psychic struggle. In her view, subjects must transform self-reflexive coping defense mechanisms into receptive channels for integrating Otherness; this transformation lies at the center of her concept of gender as
The Illusion of Fusion

performance. Butler (1987, 1990) suggests that despite the positive benefits of inter/transsubjective connection, certain degrees of inter-objectification accompany mutual recognition. This view tempers the suggestion that all and any inter/transsubjective connections are devoid of negative aspects. In Butler’s view, any inter-objectification of SELF and Other necessarily constitutes an initial phase of intersubjective connection later transcended, and moved through, when mutual recognition sets in. In inter-objectification, the subject’s potential expansion via Other lapses into a mode of self-reflexivity. The subject inscribes “Other” dimensions into the SELF. Objectification only occurs if the subject cannot recognize the Other’s need for recognition.

Such single-lane intersubjectivity fails, since this asymmetrical connection signals a loss of interdependence. The protagonist, objectifying herself as if her objectification was made through the Other, loses the opportunity for intersubjective connection. This stage is certainly predominant in Palimpsest, Bid Me, Lighthouse and Between in various characters’ failed intersubjective connections, failures marked by negative figures of Other by self: Hipparchia’s figures of Olivia, Julia’s figures of Bella, Lily’s figures of Mr. Ramsay, and Isa’s figures of Dodge. Because H.D.’s and Woolf’s narrative voice stylisations in the interobjective stage form a stark contrast to those emerging in the scenes of narrative inter/transsubjectivity, let us examine Butler’s description of this stage, as it bears directly on the scenes discussed in the chapters to follow.

Arguing against essentialising, unifying categories for woman and identity as a normative ideal, Butler’s well known theory of gender as a “free-floating artifice,” independent of sex, attests to postmodern conceptions of a destabilised identity. Butler’s deconstruction of the embodied, abstract, masculine, epistemological subject leaves
gender as an open coalition, a doing that affirms that identities “are alternately instituted and relinquished according to the purposes at hand” (Gender Trouble 16, 25). Butler theorises a culturally engendered, performative body that constantly invents, and reinvents, its own identity within a plurality of discursive and social contexts. In other words, she posits a relational identity since a performative body experiences its identity in terms of partialness.43

In her exposition of Hegelian desire,44 however, Butler attributes self-consciousness and its reflexivity to the problem of negativity, the vacuity and negation of the self—what the self does not have is what it desires (Subjects of Desire 9). In this negativity, self-identity emerges through its mediations of difference: “satisfaction of desire is that transformation of difference into identity” (Subjects of Desire 9, 18). Desire becomes the principle of self-consciousness’s reflexivity (inner difference) founded on the apparent contradiction between self-sacrifice and the attainment of a self-sustaining being (Subjects of Desire 42). But unlike Habermas, Butler rejects the notion of identity as an expression of autonomy because its inadequate integration of values evokes multiplicity, fragmentation and fluidity—values which supplement, she believes, rather than undermine self-identity.45

With this difference, Butler’s conception of intersubjectivity indicates a rhetorical move in which consciousness, in search of self-recovery, still reaches “its most sophisticated development in Understanding,” in its self-conscious effort to “think inner difference, the mutual implication of opposites, as constitutive of the object itself” (Subjects of Desire 27). Temporary, transient moments of (mutual) inter-objectification are part of this process, and are integral to the model of narrative relational desire. Because they signal moments in which the subject questions her/himself in a state of
reflexive self-consciousness, inter-objectifications reveal the intrapsychic difficulties in the subject’s efforts to adopt and share Otherness. Momentarily, the subject must function as a simulated Other, based on its identifications. The difficulty of making an inter/transsubjective connection without at least adopting some form(s) of objectification (including inter-objectification) may be impossible. But these processes need not preclude or compromise the opportunity for intersubjective connection. Butler’s realisation of inter/transsubjectivity as a dialectic of subjectivity and intersubjectivity—of connection and separation—supports the ethics of care in relational identity.

In its mediation of difference, that is, in its internalization of Otherness and its externalisation of subjecthood, the subject experiences ambiguity in its desire for inclusive being. It wants to be connected, and it wants to be separate. Thus, once more we see that ambiguity need not be the confusion of conflicting desires, as some critics of Woolf’s fiction suggest it is, but may be rather, the unexpected union of separately maintained, signifying planes. Such a union carries its own special brand of narcissism. Recognition of the Other, Butler believes, begins as a subject’s narcissistic project which fails as an ability to recognize the freedom, activity, and independence of the Other. Self-estrangement or objectification of the Other occurs since the subject must recognize the Other’s process of self-estrangement. It must become, as I will argue in my analysis of H.D.’s and Woolf’s novels, empathetic, become “other to itself in order to know itself” (Subjects of Desire 7, 50):

If desire is realized in otherness, and this otherness reflects itself, then the otherness that desire seeks must be another self-consciousness. Hence, the only
true satisfaction for desire is to be found in an object that mirrors the reflexive structure of desire itself. (Subjects of Desire 40)

This claim once again evokes Benjamin’s intersubjectivity and our two-mirror model of narrative desire in which each mirror reflects back (social) integration of self with imago, and not just imago. To repeat, such desire is not the Freudian/Lacanian desire of Brooks’s model, which seeks to master, and indeed harness the object’s energy for its own use. Rather, the subject perceives in its reflection the knowledge about self that the Other holds. In other words, it learns from it. Through temporary inter-objectification, the subject’s reflection teaches the subject about its own need to separate and its own desire to connect. Without this recognition of relational desire’s self-reflexivity, a combination of assimilation and projection—in my terms, virtuality or harmonious unity—inherent in the inter/transsubjective connection of communality, is denied.47

As we can see, Benjamin and Habermas’s recognition processes with Bulter’s modification, depart dramatically from the appropriative processes of Brooks’s narrative desire, wherein self is constituted through Other, and not, as suggested here, by recognition, and mirroring, of the Other(s)’ self-constituting strategies in the subject’s integration of difference. In Brooks’s theory, difference is valued self-referentially—as Other, that is, as a non-relational subject. In contrast, relational subjects undergo a specific process of individuation where being individuated requires more than just being different from others; it means “gaining subjectivity in its own right” (McAfee 30). Therefore, with the tools that classical and postclassical narratology have offered us so far. Let us survey the strategies and effects used to represent this special form of individuation in narrative relational desire.
Narrative Strategies for and Effects of Relational Narrative Desire

Now that I have outlined the theoretical, and to a certain extent, thematic, grounds of narrative relational desire, I want to introduce its generic technical features, examined in my analysis of H.D.’s and Woolf’s novels. The narrative strategies and effects, presented in the following table, depict narrative representations of inter/transsubjectivity and indicate the styles of narrative grammar that predetermine, and limit, interpersonal boundaries of fictional subjectivity/subjectivities in narrative discourse. They mark how narrative voice stylisations can represent relational identity.

Let me preface the table by providing an overview of the narrative effects that we have identified so far in relation to inter/transsubjectivity. As we have seen in Chapter I, the narrative illusion of a communally-shared mediating source presupposes a virtual subject position, whose “I” is in a constant state of grammatical reconfiguration, thus giving the impression of an open, plural identity. As we have also seen, since narrative voice can be represented in a literary text without necessarily being granted identity, we can “re-embodi—or at least re-cloak—virtuality in terms of what it means for subjecthood, and now, what it means for the civil identity of patriarchal subjects who are denied a “voice” in dominator cultures. This collusion of the praxis of narratology and feminism’s critique of hegemonic ideology suggests the question how might a reader detect, and indeed, identify, the presence of two distinct subjectivities in a text?

I believe the following stylisations form the acoustics for relational narrative desire. For readers unfamiliar with any of these narratologic or stylistic terms, it is helpful to visualise a single narrative voice in a processual chaos as it vies for its own
style among other voices it is distinct from, but bonded to. In narratology, such “vying” of stylistic differences almost always raises a warning flag; it marks ideological gaps between voice and perspective, which are, ultimately, gaps for irony. But because voice stylisation in relational narrative desire values inclusivity, irony gains a very special function in H.D.’s and Woolf’s novels. For them, irony is empathetic; many narrative techniques are devoted to creating this effect.

Lastly, it should come as no surprise that for the representation of narrative inter/transsubjectivity, Woolf and H.D. favour third-person narration with its grammatical and stylistic capacities for reflecting intermediary forms of voice and tense, and for embedding (both parenthetical and unmarked). This flexible style of third person narration reflects intentional cognitive and psychic dimensions of SELF, wherein expressions of, and figures for, the first-person I can be stylistically inflected with “Otherness,” thus retaining the framework of individuation while at the same time simulating the integration of other identifiable voice/perspectives, or those attributable to a more generalised, anonymous Other, as indicated in the neutral pronoun “one.” In addition to third-person narration, Woolf and H.D. rely on narrative techniques commonly associated with modernism, including fragmented interior perspective, shifting focalisations, interior monologue, impressionistic sensations and/or perceptions, and juxtaposed temporal/spatial co-ordinates to break down grammatical interpersonal boundaries. These more readily-identified techniques appear in the following stylisations which, I argue, getting back to Fludernik, work mimetically to create the impression of a permeable, transgressable SELF, open to integration of Other(s’) co-creation process.

In the following table, these technical stylisations of voice symbolise a
contractual, negotiable construct, caught in intense struggles to voice "identity" in dominator cultures. Notice that these techniques, although mimetically immersed in specific characters/narrators, signify mediation styles—not mediation sources. Because narrative inter/transsubjective connections are reflected in styles of voice which can be individuated as easily as they can be non-individuated, they occur when two or more subjectivities, sufficiently disembodied, participate in mutual recognition processes. Take a close look at the narrative strategies and effects in the table on the next page that we will use to identify intersubjectivity and transsubjectivity in H.D.'s and Woolf's novels in chapters to follow.

To remind us, all of these strategies and effects are relational desire's key narratological concepts: virtual subjectivity and polyvalence. Virtual subjectivity is a textual projection of Benjamin's bonding in that it warrants, and allows for, the fusion of distinct subjectivities. With virtual subjectivity (and its varied styles, intersubjectivity and transsubjectivity), voice can be detached from the mimetic function of representing identity. Detached from definite sources, narrative voice symbolises a field of porous interpersonal voice boundaries, signalling polyvalence and multiple, possible attributions.
### Table: Narrative Strategies & Effects for Relational Narrative Desire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NARRATIVE STRATEGY</th>
<th>VOICE STYLISATION / TECHNIQUE</th>
<th>RELATIONAL NARRATIVE DESIRE</th>
<th>NARRATIVE EFFECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voice Transference</td>
<td>Verbal: word or phrase originating in a character’s or narrator’s speech or thought, transposed into a different style of voice attributable to different character(s) or narrator(s) in a different spatio-temporal deictic (location and time period); must be attributed to more than one source</td>
<td>Exact, or almost exact repetition of original (with a different context) “bonds” with successive sources</td>
<td>An acoustic illusion of voice shared among more than one subjectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figural: figurative image or motif originating in a character’s or narrator’s speech or thought recurring with similar or different connotations in a different source of mediation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A voice or voice rhythm “overheard,” remembered, and stored in memory</td>
<td>A virtual bridging or connection of voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unexpected/unknown structural parallels between incongruent mediating sources</td>
<td>A shared subjectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Desire for inclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice Transvocalisation</td>
<td>Use of discontinuous levels of narrative, resulting from the removal of connectives and framing devices which govern personal and impersonal forms of narration and which signal marked boundaries for attribution</td>
<td>Minimal plot/action</td>
<td>The fluidity of identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shifts between interior, first, second and third person forms of narration</td>
<td>Lack of event hierarchy, and an evenness or flattening of voice; free exchange of different levels of authority among voices</td>
<td>The presence of two or more consciousnesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Signals a change in source of narrative voice by:</td>
<td>Virtual transgression of interpersonal speech/thought boundaries</td>
<td>A “co-operative aspect” of verbal interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a) simulating the deictics (“here/now”) of Other’s point of reference; or,</td>
<td></td>
<td>Equality among subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) “looking through” self’s boundaries and revealing what is beyond them from the self’s point of reference; e.g., a virtual boundary crossing,</td>
<td></td>
<td>A shared subjectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*continued...*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NARRATIVE STRATEGY</th>
<th>VOICE STYLISATION / TECHNIQUE</th>
<th>RELATIONAL NARRATIVE DESIRE</th>
<th>NARRATIVE EFFECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voice Integration</td>
<td>Non-ironic (empathetic) free indirect discourse, e.g. one character imitating the Other's idiom, intonations, voice rhythms or pattern of reasoning in a mode of sympathy for the Other</td>
<td>Intersubjectivity</td>
<td>A simulation of &quot;Other&quot; held within self, or &quot;Self&quot; held within Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marked or unmarked embedded words or phrases signifying singular, identifiable voices or anonymous, collective voices</td>
<td>Integration of Self/Other</td>
<td>The recognition of Other &quot;within&quot; self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Singular pronouns without clear antecedents</td>
<td>Desire for recognition</td>
<td>Intimacy, or a confession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Desire for inclusion</td>
<td><em>The Other in/as if subject or, The subject in/as if Other</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice-in-Process</td>
<td>Unanswered interrogatives</td>
<td>Represented thought or speech &quot;outreach&quot;</td>
<td>The subject as open and incomplete with a permeable identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ellipses</td>
<td>Desire for multiplicity, possibility and inclusion</td>
<td><em>A relational identity</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Virtual dialogue</td>
<td>Pluralised subject</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed-mode, hybrid voice stylisation; e.g., one sentence containing interspliced fragments of direct dialogue, interior monologue and free indirect discourse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice Reflexivity</td>
<td>Proper noun, or name, used as repeated self-reference in interiorised speech or thought</td>
<td>Inter-objectification</td>
<td>The representation of self as a third person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fantasy: &quot;role-playing&quot; of Other in represented thought</td>
<td>Self-detachment; voice separated from &quot;body&quot;</td>
<td>A distancing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Objectification of Other; body without &quot;voice&quot;</td>
<td><em>Seeing oneself as &quot;subject,&quot; or as civil identity from the perspective of the Other</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>May signal &quot;failed&quot; inter/transsubjective connection, or just one stage in a successful inter/transsubjective connection</td>
<td><em>continued...</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NARRATIVE STRATEGY</td>
<td>VOICE STYLISATION / TECHNIQUE</td>
<td>RELATIONAL NARRATIVE DESIRE</td>
<td>NARRATIVE EFFECT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communal Voice</td>
<td>Transvocalisation:</td>
<td>Transsubjectivity</td>
<td>A community / group mind; collective consciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a) pronominal transposition from singular to collective with the same phrase or sentence; e.g., “s/he,” “they” to “one,” “we,” or;</td>
<td>More general, “historicised”</td>
<td>The sense of self-transcendence, universalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) ambiguous or plural pronouns lacking clear antecedents, or collective nouns with plural verbs</td>
<td>consciousness with knowledge/wisdom beyond that which can be attributed to a single voice source</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voice montage of short, rapid stylistic shifts of voice; may contain intertextual or extratextual allusions</td>
<td></td>
<td>A spiritual, mystical connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Metanarrative reference to “voice” as a noun or personification</td>
<td></td>
<td>Seeing self as part of community and community part of self</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During Brooks's reign of the Plot, the narratological devices above were often overlooked as extensions of direct dialogue or characterisation, instead of an alternative narrative modality of representation. They have been long overlooked as significant evocations of relationality.

I will conclude this section by suggesting that the techniques cannot be analysed separately from the thematic effects they create. As Woolf's and H.D.'s novels repeatedly point out, subjectively-shared states cannot be taken for granted, and must be achieved with effort and understanding by all subjects involved. Therefore, when I characterise the effects of different stylisations of inter/transsubjectivity, I will distinguish between different stylistic effects. I will categorise Woolf's and H.D.'s inter/transsubjective connection either as successful or failed. Narratologically, the degree to which a narrative intersubjective or transsubjective connection is successful depends on the degree, and nature, of "fusion" or self/Other unity suggested by the
narrative discourse.

Successful Inter/transsubjective Connections

Successful narrative inter/transsubjective connections promote feelings of intimacy, empathy and connectedness between self and Other. These feelings of unity between Self and Other can be both illusory and transitory. They can be severely compromised, contained, or even disapproved, by dominator powers. Successful intersubjective connections characterise a subject’s acceptance of her or his social interdependency on others.

For example, if a fictional subject recognises similarities of the SELF in the Other, without objectifying those similarities (in a process of inter-objectification), and integrates this recognition within a framework of individuation (difference), then the connection is narratively successful. The subject’s self-awareness is enhanced to the point that previous negative psychic pre-conditioning is lost. In its place stands a virtual mode of subjectivity which successfully integrates multiple (Other) perspectives of the Self into its self-construction process.

Failed Inter/transsubjective Connections

Failed inter/transsubjective narrative connections can represent a subject’s fear of relationality, and fear of relational identity. Failed inter/transsubjective connections represent missed opportunities for intimate social connection between subjects, resulting in alienating self-Other objectification or in an inter-objectification that does not progress to a restorative feeling of unity. Such a failure may evoke self-loathing or self-disparagement, or an attitude of extreme (and even painful) self-consciousness, usually
reflected in emphatic uses of first-person pronouns with distancing effects (a division between “I” and “me”). In failed connections, the self is asocial, permanently cut adrift from Other(s), as well as from the feeling of an authentic inner self.

Note that attempts at narrative inter/transsubjective connection may fail for several reasons. The opportunity for social intimacy or, alternatively, a confrontation of difference, may not be recognised as such, or seized as such. For example, in Woolf’s *Between*, Isa chooses to walk by the greenhouse to avoid confronting Giles and Mrs. Manresa with their adulterous behaviour when it is clearly disrespectful of her. No event “happens” in terms of plot because Isa walks by; this event of her “walking” is represented in terms of voice—that is, as her inner meditations as she walks by. Moreover, this scene does contrast, poignantly, with her successful intersubjective connections with Dodge. Or, the possibility for social connection may not be mutually desired; such an attempt at connection terminates in a self-reflexive process. The subject sees SELF-in-Other in the Lacanian mirror from which no recognition from the Other occurs. Thus, the subject fails to grasp her/his *imago* in the Other, and loses the opportunity to learn from the Other, unfortunately sacrificing greater self-expansion and self-development.

But with failed connections, Woolf and H.D. question the romanticisation of self-Other unity by critiquing the loss of individual difference. They emphasise the dangers of extreme selflessness and ego-dissolution caused by over-identification. For instance, in the precarious, quasi-lesbian relationship that she posits between herself and Mrs. Ramsay in Woolf’s *Lighthouse*, Lily feels that her autonomy (and civil identity) could be threatened if she internalises Mrs. Ramsay’s condemnation of her as a failed woman—that is, a spinster. Consequently, only in Mrs. Ramsay’s presence does Lily
feel less “womanly;” Lily’s attraction to, and over-identification with, Mrs. Ramsay is based on her romanticisation of Mrs. Ramsay’s maternal status. Thus, this intersubjective connection between them fails—nothing happens, despite Lily’s desire to will intimacy into being. But countering Lily’s romanticisation with her shrewd critique of Mrs. Ramsay’s character, Woolf portrays Lily as a relational subject permeable enough to merge, but distinct enough to maintain her different value system and personal self-worth.

Finally, although Woolf and H.D. suggest that inter/transsubjectivity necessarily entails recognition and identification, they also argue that reciprocity of the Other by the subject cannot be guaranteed. The negative effects of failed intersubjective connections can move into the darker Sartrean paradigm, as Butte (1996) suggests. Often Sartre’s negative aspects are borne out in Woolf’s and H.D.’s depiction of inter/transsubjectivity in recurring painful, paradoxical states of ecstasy and anguish, infused with impersonal transitoriness and loss of singular voice. Unlike any ideal fusion, the process of “becoming by othering” entails periodic psychic regressions of memory, the inability to recoup individuality from communal imbeddedness, and/or an inner sense of self-dissolution, the effect of spreading subject-construction to encompass several positions, a contradictory positioning easily noted in Miss La Trobe’s anger and her love-hate relationship with her audience: “Audiences were the devil. O to write a play without an audience” (Between 130). Thematically, scenes like these indicate H.D. and Woolf believe that failed attempts at inter/transsubjective connection are just as important as those that succeed, since they still symbolise the potential for human connection, inclusion and unity. Thus, failed intersubjective connections are narratively valued because they symbolise potentialities or possibilities for a character’s psychological
growth.

Now that we have identified the technical features of narrative inter/transsubjectivity, I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the psychological effect of inter/transsubjective connection. What do such connections offer to humans? Why are they desired? How can their overall effect be described in psychological terms?

Ideally, inter/transsubjective connection effects a psychological shift or change in the subject's reasoning processes on an emotional level. This is why some of the most important scenes in the novels of H.D. and Woolf depict the protagonist "softening" towards her antagonist, thus resulting, as in the cases of Isa and Giles and Julia and Bella, in a life-changing moment of forgiveness. To more concretely visualise, and more specifically articulate, the actual dynamics involved in such a psychic shift, or transformation, I will use the aesthetic theories of Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger, and in particular, her feminist theories of matrix and metramorphosis, which so eloquently capture and represent the intangible processes of subject construction in the modernist psychological novel the formalist grammar of structuralism cannot analyse. Lichtenberg's (1996, 2000) paintings and multi-media works are pictograms (relational zones) which illustrate her theoretical elaborations of shared, transgressive psychic states analogous to those suggested by the narratological techniques I describe here.

**Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger's Matrix: Metramorphosis as Self-Transformation**

Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger's concepts of matrix, a psychic borderspace of encounter, and metramorphosis, a psychic creative borderlink, helps us visualise the co-emergence and co-fading of plural subjectivities in inter/transsubjective connections. Her matrix, a sub-symbolic filter, defines the feminine as the basis for a stratum of subjectivity; it
symbolises the human capacity to create and nurture psychic alliances.\textsuperscript{54} As both an aesthetic principle and social structure, Lichtenberg’s matrix signifies the co-existence of two (or more) subjects within one notational space, (such as a dialogue, text, or canvas). Her theoretical construct, \textit{borderlinks} (or borderlines), signifies interactive spaces emerging from the intersection of interpersonal boundaries.

The matrix—an unfixed, subjective space—supports my narratological construct of virtual subjectivity by allowing connections to be sustained between partial-subjects and partial-objects. For instance, in Lily and Mr. Bankes’ conversation about Lily’s painting in \textit{Lighthouse}, Woolf depicts the characters resisting the desire to control the conversation in order to reach a predetermined end, such as an evaluative judgment of Lily’s painting, or her painting ability. Instead, Woolf depicts their conversation as an unfixed, co-created, interrelational verbal space in which each subject evades the dominator role, using “seeking,” interrogative modes, which deprive both subjects of individual power. However, this deprivation of individual power fosters a greater feeling of community between them. Lichtenberg’s (1996) matrix also parallels and informs the theory of relational identity I suggest here as an \textit{alternative} to dominator desire, one that does not eliminate the relativity of Lacanian desire: “The matrix is not the opposite of the Phallus; it is, rather, a supplementary perspective. It grants a different meaning. It draws a different field of desire” (“Metamorphic Borderlinks” 125).

This desire, located in an intra-uterine encounter or a shared borderspace (link-lane), transgresses and precedes the phallic notion of Oedipal subjectivity (femininity/masculinity). Lichtenberg suggests that the feminine participates in the Lacanian symbolic by using “other passageways from the \textit{real}” (“Metamorphic
Borderlinks” 126). *Distance-in-proximity*, an addition to the Oedipal relations of union-as-fusion and destructive rejection, Lichtenberg argues, should not be perceived as a position opened by loss, but rather is one in which loss is “there from the start” (133), thus allowing partial-subjects and partial-objects an enlarged hybridised, multiple, divided, subjectivity of joint borderspaces and exterior/interior borderlines. Note that these borderspaces and borderlines are co-created, and “not to be understood as a simple addition of the non-I to the I” (133).

In this view, Lichtenberg interprets Freudian/Oedipal lack as division between the sexes traced “from a masculine perspective,” whereas the matrixial passage to the symbolic precedes and transcends this division, “introducing an-other perspective and different feminine perspective of non-Oedipal sublimation” (“Metamorphic Borderlinks” 147). In this case, Lichtenberg contends that the idea of metamorphosis transforms the Lacanian conception of Woman as Other into “*Woman as other kinds of relations*” (149) since a partial subject, conserving what the unknown internal/external other has lost, can have “borderline contact with the loss that another has experienced, with the Other’s trauma and phantasy” (153). The fusion of plural subjectivities can be experienced as a creative, or conversely, a traumatic, joint borderline space. Whether creative or traumatic, desire in the joint borderline space rejects drives and desires association with assimilation and destruction (Pollack, *Differencing* 34-35). Here, the intention is for subjects to co-exist, rather than negate, assimilate or appropriate one another.

Lichtenberg visualises the matrix as a prismatic sphere connoting constant change of self-other relations in an “attuning” process. Psychic transformations that occur in this sphere are termed *metamorphosis*, involving “both action, perception, inscription and
memory of borderlinking and of distancing-in-joining” (Florence & Foster 176). This definition evokes my concept of virtual subjectivity in the model of relational narrative desire. The matrix prism marks the mind’s unconscious space of the I’s simultaneous co-emergence and co-fading, and the uncognized non-I, is neither fused nor rejected, but rather engaged in a continual attuning of distances in proximity. This “attuning” is borne out in the conversations between characters like Isa and Dodge, who merge in their differences as well as their similarities. Furthermore, metramorphosis, a non-cognitive mode of knowledge, represents a shared “wit(h)nessing-together” — actual narrative inter/transsubjective connection in our model of relational desire — carrying “freight that a linear story cannot transmit” (“Transgressing” 188). The partial subject, or co-created self, recognises the Other through certain styles of identification which emulate what Lichtenberg (2000) calls an act of wit(h)nessing. By witnessing specific conditions in which others makes themselves in an inclusionary mode of being with those others, a co-created self forms identifications intermediated from both sides: from self, from other. Lichtenberg believes that, globally, we carry the enormous weight of/for the other in wit(h)nessing, in clearing the path to matrixial alliances that confront the limits of shareability (“Transgressing” 198). She conceives of the act of wit(h)nessing as both an ethical and aesthetic application (199). The ethical and aesthetic idea of responsibility to the unknown Other is expressed, Lichtenberg argues, with signifiers of the feminine (203). Thus, Lichtenberg’s metramorphosis signifies the process of self-transformation that occurs through wit(h)nessing, whether it be one of celebration or trauma. In this signification, metramorphosis figures the relational self as palimpsest; the subject is inscribed with traces of others, whether known or anonymous, just as others are inscribed
with his/her traces. Lichtenberg, then, proposes that a “transsubjective matrixial alliance” forms, indelibly linking self and other together.

Lichtenberg describes the active attunement of self to Other in metramorphosis as a “borderline” which can be clearly demarcated in terms of interpersonal boundaries, but at the same time, it is neither solid nor permanent. Instead, it is porous, temporary and transgressable ("Transgressing" 129). Experientially, a borderline is sustained by shared borderspaces, distinguished as differentiation-in-co-emergence and distance-in-proximity. Note that Lichtenberg uses the inclusive conjunction “and” to describe these borderspaces, implying that subjects can co-emerge, superimpose subjectivity (and identity constructions), without self-dissolution. They can be separate and connected—but at the same time, distant. Thus, although Lichtenberg’s matrix signifies plurality, it is important to remember that “each matrix is a singular or unique ensemble” ("Metamorphic Borderlinks" 127), thus accounting for specific context, as does Habermas, by acknowledging the intersection of distinct, but overlapping, planes of interpersonal relations.

Lichtenberg argues that borderline figures, like Tiresias and Antigone, and in this work, Julia, Isa, Swwithin and Dodge, symbolise the act/state of “transgressing within-to the feminine.” This phrase evokes Lacan’s precept that neither sex can access knowledge of femininity because feminine sexuality bears an impossible rapport with the Other, due to the structure of the Symbolic and the Unconscious; for example, Tiresias experiences feminine difference sexually with a knowingness that it is “out of reach” ("Transgressing" 188). In this way, heterogeneity, by definition, escapes the Imaginary and the Symbolic due to its futile attempt to articulate difference within a register of
With this argument, Lichtenberg proposes the Lacanian implication that woman, at least partially, escapes the phallic structure. Woman is a *phantom subject* by virtue of her participation as an object in what she calls the phallic subjectivising stratum marking and regulating sexual difference ("Transgressing" 186). This view indicates that even though women may be denied recognition in patriarchal culture, they still have the right to civil identity, and should not be treated as objects. Thus, Lichtenberg evokes the conditions under which female subjects negotiate their right to subjectivity, and intersubjectivity, a *rapport* of borderlinking through metramorphosis: "the mental swerving-in-borderlinking with the other—opening a distance-in-proximity while separating-in-jointness with/from the other, or borderlinking while differentiating" ("Transgressing" 188). In this way, Lichtenberg’s matrix parallels Benjamin’s intersubjectivity. The subject must be sufficiently distant and engaged in order to account for the co-emergence or co-fading of several subjects as partial subjects and partial objects. The desire to *join-in-difference* and to *differentiate-in-co-emerging* are complementary, but not always harmonious, processes that ensure the recognition of distinct subjectivities. Since no subject or Other is absolute or separate, they are partial entities. As partial entities, however, they can create, and sustain, communication networks between them, thus providing "encounters" of subjectivity—just as disembodied entities do through voice representation on the Internet everyday.

**Summary**

The theorists discussed in this chapter, as well as the narrative techniques depicting
relational narrative desire, clearly characterise subjectivity and intersubjectivity as interdependent. One must first be granted subjecthood—civil identity—in order to manifest an intersubjective connection. Someone has to have somebody to merge with. For this reason, intersubjectivity can never be a permanent threat to individual subjectivity, but rather, it guarantees it. Thus, intersubjectivity affirms the call for civil identity and challenges the need for an object-Other in dominator cultures. Only a set of equal conditions can ensure that each subject is granted the right to her/his subjecthood, including the right to speak, to act, and to be different. Difference guarantees the presence of at least two distinct and separate subjects needed for intersubjective connection. (h)nessing symbolises one attitude that can be evoked in the confrontation and psychic integration of difference.

In the upcoming analyses of novels, I argue that Woolf and H.D. represent at least two subjects, and voices, in narrative inter/transsubjectivity. Usually, they represent more than two. Thus, they represent multiplicity as an inherent part of identity and desire which does not threaten self-dissolution. H.D.’s Hipparchia preserves her Grecian identity within Roman occupation; in Palimpsest’s final scene, this preservation is figured as Hipparchia within Julia. Woolf’s Miss La Trobe counters her audience’s potential disillusionment by emphasising how it is bonded through its shared differences: from one another, and from herself.

Together, Lichtenberg, Habermas, Irigaray, and Benjamin argue that subjectivity is manifested through our relations with others. Subjectivity involves a claim to identity, a partial claim that continues to negotiate the recognition and integration of difference. Mutual recognition among H.D.’s and Woolf’s characters causes them to acknowledge the undeniable similarities they share with one another, thus entirely de-railing the model.
of dominator narrative desire. Characters feel compassion for one another, who suffers in a like manner, as a like subject. But since the relational subject cannot be permanently sustained through intersubjective “rubbings,” H.D. and Woolf depict virtual subject(ivities) as a narratological construct to negotiate new modes for relational identity. In so doing, their works attest to the psychological difficulties experienced by modern women as they attempted to resist sexual objectification and patriarchal appropriation. In the following analyses, I consider both the regenerative, expansive effects of inter/transsubjectivity, as well as the disappointing effects of failed connections. Both stylisations represent the psychological effects associated with relational desire in its paradoxical longing to connect with the Other without losing hold of the SELF that grounds this longing.
Chapter III
Intersubjectivity and Transsubjectivity in H.D.'s *Palimpsest* and *Bid Me to Live*

This search for historical parallels,
Research into psychic affinities,

Has been done to death before,
Will be done again;

No comment can alter spiritual realities
(you say) or again,

what new light can you possibly
throw upon them?

My mind (yours),
Your way of thought (mine),

Each has its peculiar intricate map,
Threads weave over and under

The jungle-growth
Of biological aptitudes,

Inherited tendencies,
The intellectual effort

Of the whole race,
Its tide and ebb;

But my mind (yours)
Has its peculiar ego-centric

Personal approach
To the eternal realities

And differs from every other
In minute particulars

As the vein-paths on any leaf
Differ from those of every other leaf

In the forest, as every snow-flake
Has its particular star, coral or prism shape.

H.D. "Tribute to the Angels"¹
Narrative Palimpsest: H.D.’s Relational Identity

In “Tribute to the Angels” (1945), H.D.’s persona paradoxically refutes and insists on the integration of difference. Both Palimpsest (1926) and Bid Me to Live (1939) anticipate this postmodern concept of self as an inauguration of ideological polyvalence and self-reflexive pluralism. Never entirely of “one” mind—“my mind (yours) / Your way of thought (mine)”—the persona abandons individualist illusions of identity, acknowledging its own non-individuation. This amorphous state allows the persona to renew constantly her personal approach “To the eternal realities” by acknowledging her relationality to “you” and the “new light” that such a relationship, with its rethinking of identity, sheds.

The persona reasons that such an integration of the personal into the interpersonal and into larger universal truths leads to acknowledging difference. Each approach, leaf vein-path or snowflake not only has its own “particulars,” but also its own complement (“star, coral, or prism shape”) granting its own individuality. Thus, the persona H.D. creates in “Tribute” values the subject-subject pairing that reduces egoism and grants the experience of intersubjectivity, the interweaving of self and Other. Through the shifting coalitions of “historical parallels” and “psychic affinities,” the persona remains secure in her knowledge that her own “minute particulars” differ as “the vein-paths on any leaf / differ from those of every other leaf.”

H.D.’s novels Palimpsest and Bid Me to Live advocate the same attitude towards difference; they reject domination and nurture compassion. To accomplish this, they offer plot structures and discourse textures totally opposed to Brooks’s model of dominator desire. H.D.’s disassembling of Oedipal narrative shows that no single identification of narrative voice is desirable. By resisting voices that express singular
identity, H.D. deliberately challenges the reader’s expectation of, and pleasure in, identifying with her heroines, thereby revealing profound insights into how relational desire is conceived and “voiced” within patriarchy. In both novels, a different form of sociability predicated upon narrative relational desire emerges. H.D.’s representation of intersubjectivity and of both successful and failed connections, occurs in three distinct stages: identification, recognition, and metramorphosis. We will consider each stage in terms of how it influences H.D.’s portrayal of narrative relational desire.

Compared to her poetry, H.D.’s novels have received little critical attention; some of her novels, like Palimpsest, are now out of print. Yet H.D. was just as experimental in her fictional forms, and used the term “palimpsest” to describe her novel writing style. Palimpsest refers to the act of imperfectly erasing a voice, moving it over to make room for another, and then superimposing a voice on top of the erased original. H.D.’s palimpsest uses the stylistic intermingling of voice to symbolise as inclusionary the interdependence of self-Other and desire. Thus, as a prismatic bonding of pluralised voices, H.D.’s palimpsest represents one subjectivity through another. H.D.’s depiction of overwritten identity is relational, evoking different layers of subjectivity that can accommodate both virtuality and relationality. H.D. also uses palimpsest in her prose to reflect traces of patriarchal domination; the commanding, dominator presences of “les autres" layer the narrative, allowing the reader to distinguish between the kinds of voices occupying characters’ consciousnesses. This acoustic effect suggests without relational desire, women in patriarchal societies are far from liberated.

As I mentioned, no serious narratological analysis of narrative voice stylisation as intersubjectivity in the novels by H.D. has yet been made. Literary critics who have
considered H.D.'s narrative style and strategies\(^5\) focused on the formalist concerns inherent in H.D.'s palimpsest, including her attraction to the trilogy form and its intertextual connections. They also note H.D.'s representations of psychic terrains, but fail to describe their narratological architecture. Deborah Kelly Kloepfer (1989, 1990), for instance, calls H.D.'s narrative voice style a "double palimpsest," a layered conflation of "photographic negatives"\(^{(192)}\) represented through alternating stylistic combinations of private lexicon, disturbed syntax and embedded refrains. But since she believes that H.D.'s narrative techniques ultimately maintain the mimetic parameters of voice, she is forced to admit that it is "very difficult to talk about consciousness in H.D." ("Fishing the Murex Up" 195).\(^6\) Lisa Rado (2000) goes further to argue that since H.D. herself is "unable to locate a singular human identity" (70), her narrative strategies defy singular modes of attribution; Linda Wagner-Martin (1989) suggests that even H.D.'s method of characterisation becomes "worldplay" (149). These positions minimize the effect's importance and its value for serious narratological consideration. In my view, with their shared emphasis on the singularity of voice, both approaches offer nothing to illuminate inter/transsubjective techniques or themes in H.D.'s novels.

More recent H.D. literary criticism focuses on H.D.'s "whiteness," her ideological positioning as an elite figure in the *Imagiste* group, a woman in a male world of words and wars. This body of criticism makes both feminist and historicist analyses of H.D.'s complex status as an artist struggling to liberate herself from the structures and styles associated with her male counterparts (primarily Ezra Pound, Richard Aldington, Cecil Gray, and D.H. Lawrence). Feminist literary criticism focuses almost exclusively on H.D.'s substantial poetic oeuvre, arguing that, as a white Western woman, she is
frequently complicit with masculine structures of dominance (Witte 1989; Miller [M.] 1997; Curry 2000). This argument seems well-founded. In attempting to accommodate the constant critiques of her work from Pound and Aldington, H.D. felt she compromised her artistic integrity. Only by moving out of the sphere of their influence, personally and professionally, did H.D. feel that she reached her full artistic potential in writing—Sapphic poetry, Greek mythological poetic trilogies, and voice-centered novels.

A substantial body of feminist criticism of H.D.'s novels also testifies to her turbulent personal life. Devastated by the war and her husband's infidelities, she felt victimised by patriarchy and sought psychoanalytic counselling with Freud during 1933-1934. Such autobiographical criticism interprets H.D.'s radical experimentation largely within the context of the roman à clef genre, once more depriving novels like Palimpsest and Bid Me of the serious narratological treatment they deserve. Caroline Zilboorg (1992), for instance, suggests that H.D.'s fiction is largely a fabrication "on top of the facts," a highly dramatic account of her own enmeshment in a "mixed bag" of relationships (Richard Aldington 64). In this view, H.D.'s novels detail her identity-crisis as she sought power and recognition as an independent artist (Rado 62); her protagonists are merely pseudonyms for her own identity. But I believe that the feminist interpretations of H.D.'s female characters as victims of romantic thralldom—a page lifted from H.D.'s own life-story—fades as alternative discursive possibilities, offered through intersubjective connections, are narratively manifested outside the patriarchal arenas of conformity and obedience. In my view, H.D.'s preference for the roman à clef genre shows that her own autobiography, a perpetual rehashing of the same events, devalues the same old plot and plot structure. Each of her novels tells the same story.
So, if *plot* is not H.D.'s chief narrative interest, then perhaps voice is. Therefore, while I recognise the displacements and transpositions from H.D.'s psychobiography to her novels, I consider voice her most important narrative device.

Recent historiographic interpretations of H.D.'s prose also fail to consider her use of narrative voice. These interpretations focus on her use of *Hellenism*, or on her socio-politicisation as a war-civilian. Tate (1996) relies on historical and biographical details of H.D.'s war experience to show how female subjectivity was constituted in relation to war. Regarding *Bid Me*'s characterisation of male and female subjects, Tate argues that Julia is characterised as a civilian war neurotic, embodying her husband's war trauma (255). This interpretation paints a negative picture of Julia's character. In addition, Tate, like Zilboorg (2001), depends largely on characterisation and plot summary to advance their arguments, and pays no attention paid to how narrative voice represents Julia's ambivalence toward the "invisible suffering of others" (257). Zilboorg takes a slightly greater interest in *Bid Me*'s narrative techniques—its intertextuality, anticlosure, and circularity—but only as they emerge discursively, "a confusing space between historical reality and jumbled artistic representation" and splitting partnerships ("The Centre" 29). However, no narrative analysis supports this claim, and her observation of H.D.'s patterns of multiplicity and openness is strictly confined to the text's themes, not to its structural aspects.

Meredith Miller's (1997) reading of *Palimpsest*, Part III ("Secret Name: Excavator's Egypt") and Renée Curry's *White Women Writing White* (2000) can also be contextualised within the contemporary critical interest in ethnicity, and specifically in H.D.'s literary projection of a white mythology. Miller interprets H.D.'s contradictory
relation to European appropriations of Eastern (primarily Egyptian) culture as a gendered conflict representing male and female modes of possession and control, polarised between indecipherability (mystery) and corruption (Western capitalism). Miller argues that although H.D. acknowledges, and perpetuates, what she believes to be white women’s unavoidable complicity in masculine structures of dominance and hierarchies—an unmistakable conclusion here as well—she argues that H.D. reveals the peculiar, paradoxical “strength” of Western women’s “compromised” tourist or international communities within foreign countries. However, Miller concludes that, at best H.D. offers “inexact” differences from whatever the dominator culture offers, because feminine power cannot be separate from, or innocent of, colonizing patriarchal Europe.

Along these lines, Renée Curry argues that H.D.’s whiteness, connoting a perfection inseparable from a “positively masterful” existence of dominance, merely intimates the figuring of “black” (Afroasiatic) Greece without fully integrating its meaning into her symbolism (White Women Writing White 25, 74). Although I support this general interpretation of H.D.’s symbolism, later in this study I more explicitly locate H.D.’s “whiteness” within the communicative strategies of subject-subject pairings that counter such interpretations of white dominator culture, and of H.D. as a symbol of total complicity within this culture. One persuasive example of this alternate reading is found in Palimpsest, Part II, where the Jewish Ermy converses with the white poet Raymonde.

Out of all the available criticism on H.D., feminist psychoanalytic studies of H.D.’s poetry and prose from the 1980s and 1990s are most useful for the narratological approach I employ here. These studies persuasively argue that H.D.’s novels offer a
powerful critique of male-centered literary traditions. However, they focus almost exclusively on H.D.'s bisexuality and her use of Kristeva's semiotic language, and her strong departures from the heterosexual romance plot to a maternal quest plot searching for female bonding. Despite their close attention to the mother-daughter attachment as paradigm for subjectivity, their works do not contextualise H.D.'s themes within Benjamin's concept of intersubjectivity because of their emphasis on pre-Oedipal subjectivity, and not civil identity. As such, they fail to interpret H.D.'s narrative representations of impersonal, androgynous (detached/disembodied) subjectivities as alternative methods of granting female protagonists voice and agency.

The only existing study correlating Habermas's concept of transsubjectivity with H.D.'s work can be found in Georgina Taylor's *H.D. and the Public Sphere* (2001). Taylor analyses the network of exchange between H.D. and her contemporary women writers through little magazines and anthologies. She argues that instead of being at the margins of modernist projects, women writers like H.D. formed a counter-public sphere, pursuing totally different issues and ideas that have simply been misread. I support the desire to reclaim voice for modern women authors, but I move Habermas's communicative action, a democratic exchange of discursive rationality out of the political realm, and into the psychological realm. By doing this, *Bid Me* and *Palimpsest* can be read as modern psychological novels.

**H.D.'s Characters**

Before turning to a detailed analysis of H.D.'s novels, something needs to be said about H.D.'s characters as signifiers of relational identity. As in Stein's *Three Lives*, H.D.'s
characterisation represents a webbing of social inter-relationships. H.D. creates a structural link between different characters by drawing parallels between them. For instance, in *Palimpsest*, the same Hellenic consciousness is embodied in three different characters. H.D. suggests with this link that self-preservation emerges out of a communally shared subjectivity largely unchanged through different historical time periods, and therefore immune to social conditions.

Here, I agree with H.D.’s biographers; her characters recur as marginally more or less *the same type*—the same personalities differently embodied. But in my view, the compulsive recurrences or character-types thematise the progression of sameness through difference. The repetition of sameness is central to her representation of narrative intersubjectivity and transsubjectivity since intertextuality is realised through voice. Furthermore, this cyclic reiteration of character-types forms a hermeneutically-sealed narrative that allows the reader to posit transsubjective connections as well as intertextuality between H.D.’s novels. In *Hedylus*, for example, Hedyle, Douris’s Athenian courtesan, shares undeniable characteristics with Hipparchia in *Palimpsest*, Part I.\textsuperscript{17} Thus, H.D.’s thematic insistence on sameness through difference—Hedyle as Hipparchia and Hipparchia as Hedyle—figures difference as superficial and transitory. Instead, value is placed on the tolerance of such differences. In this case, debating whether the subject can ever be located, entirely, in any structure of differentiation becomes irrelevant.\textsuperscript{18} Differences between different protagonists are collapsible since each undergoes the *same* excruciatingly frustrating attempt to gain recognition and their voices heard.

On one hand, this universally-stylised female consciousness suggests that H.D.
pessimistically conceived modernism as a new setting or stage for the same acts of patriarchal appropriation and aggression. In this case, relational narrative desire is figured as an extension across multiple historical periods and multiple subjectivities.\(^{19}\)

But each protagonist shares in the task of liberating her voice from a dominator culture that silences it. On one hand, H.D.’s mesmerizing obsession with sameness reflects the paralytic state of modernist women’s liberation. On the other hand, H.D.’s insistence on the continuity of consciousness suggests both faith in resistance and hope in change—for newness—for *real change*. This hope is most evident in her innovative styling of narrative voice the intersubjective connections dismantling the subject-other dichotomy.

As in Woolf’s novels, H.D.’s characters display two contradictory impulses—one that openly accommodates multiplicity and one that holds onto a private, cryptic space.\(^{20}\)

In this way, they display the capacity to be connected and to remain separate. In the following analyses, we will see that in H.D.’s *subject-subject* pairings, each character learns to recognize and respect these impulses. Therefore, I shall focus on how H.D. narratologically posits two distinct subjects in the novel’s pivotal conversations between Julia and Bella, and later, between Raymonde and Ermy. For instance, in the next section, Julia begins as a victim of patriarchy’s disavowal of female civil identity. I will explore how she is denied love, agency, and reproductive capacity. But as she develops as a relational identity, Julia begins to heal through *metamorphosis*; she is not a victim. H.D.’s intersubjective webbing of Julia’s character develops her as a co-created self, and through this, Julia minimizes the psychic trauma caused by her relationship with her husband, Rafe, the most threatening dominator figure in her life.
The *Rafe and the Not-Rafe: Julia’s Repression in Bid Me to Live*

By representing Julia Ashton as a relational subject, H.D. develops intersubjectivity as an irrefutable linking of similarity and difference. The narrative intersubjective connection analysed in this section details Julia’s metamorphosis as she deals with the negative cycles of her psychic repressions. Julia’s spiritual “rebirth” constructs her as a relational subject, capable of empathy and self-love. Metamorphosis occurs when, while grieving the death of her stillborn child, she is confronted by Bella, her husband’s mistress. The conflicts of war are represented through these characters’ antagonism—they share a tenement building in Queen’s Square enduring the German bombing of London in World War I. Julia’s metamorphosis occurs within this enclosed space, alternately figured as a room/tomb/womb; these figures develop the novel’s rebirth theme of Julia’s hope for future happiness. In her inter-relationships, Julia must realise her right to subjecthood and at the same time expand her empathetic awareness of Others.

*Bid Me To Live* was started in 1921 and finally published in 1960. It is a psychological portrayal of a woman attempting to hold onto her marriage during wartime. “Superficially entrenched” in a London flat she shares with people who betray her while her husband soldiers off to war, she perceives her own flat as a public highway or theatre stage devoid of “inner sanctity,” where everyone—except herself—has her or his own entrances and exits (*Bid Me* 11, 85, 90). In this setting, the absence of her husband, and the resulting lack of intimacy forces Julia into depression. Alienated from her husband, she experiences profound difficulties in accepting the “soldier” in Rafe; it is as if a new identity or personality had been grafted onto the same body. Julia’s difficulty in accepting Rafe’s personality change is represented as a difficulty in communication,
figured as a recession of voice combined with incremental degrees of disembodiment:

She [Julia] was listening to his [Rafe's] voice in his voice, a voice in a shell; his actual voice was coarsened, his throat hardened, but in his voice was his voice, echo. She was listening to that; she would hear that, that was the reason for her marriage, had been the reason for her near-death; the reason for her escape, emancipation, inspiration. (Bid Me 15)

Like Hipparchia in Palimpsest, Julia attempts to locate a modicum of her romantic idealism in Rafe, searching for a "reason" in her marriage, an "inspiration." By using free indirect thought or interior monologue to modulate this passage, but also by strictly adhering to third-person narration through the repeated pronoun "she," H.D. characterises the difficulty that Julia has in feeling intimate with a husband who is increasingly distant from her. Third person narration suggests that she knows he has changed; free indirect thought reflects her wish that it wasn't so.

Through her perception of Rafe's voice as a buried voice, a "voice-inside-a-voice," Julia seems desperate to believe what Rafe says, or, alternately, to be genuinely interested in what he says. By erasing the content of the voice, and rendering only a "voice-impression" of Rafe, H.D.'s narrative stylisation here indicates that Julia seeks sameness in her memories of Rafe: "She was listening to that; she would hear that, that was the reason for her marriage." H.D.'s repeated "that," grammatically functioning first as an object, and then as an emphasised subject, suggests that Julia lies in wait, listening for a particular "voicing" in Rafe that has been dubbed- or written-over. Because she listens for the "echo"—the voice that "was his voice"—Julia consciously denies the obvious differences in Rafe that she clearly, and ironically, hears—especially
in his voice. Therefore, as Fulker (1993) notes, Julia herself continues to offer him the “continuity of herself, the same self beside him,” without articulating her different feelings or inner changes (“Not-War” 60-61). As a result, Julia represses both her knowledge of Rafe’s change and the misery it causes her.

This denial of Rafe’s difference, however, cannot be extended to Rafe’s physical attributes. The once emotionally-sensitive Rafe is lost, encased in his physically hardened, overly sexed, uniformed body (Bid Me 29, 39). Julia’s oscillating states of denial and awareness, Susan Stanford Friedman and Rachel Blau DuPlessis (1986) suggest, describe her situation as symbolic of the adult realm of “confinement and compromise” epitomised in Western marriage. For instance, Julia has to admit (to herself) that Rafe has become another person, other than the one she had married; she feels confined in a marriage that she knows can only result in further emotional devastation.

However, for my purposes, what is important in this passage and others like it is that H.D.’s stylistic choices render Julia’s psyche as one consciously aware of its compromised desires, even as she denies herself her own right to subjecthood. This awareness is most evident in the narrative discourse representing her psychic chaos prior to her intersubjective connection with Rafe’s mistress, Bella. Rejecting the stability of an authoritative narrator, as well as the hierarchical plot structure that such a voice necessarily imposes, H.D. portrays Julia’s consciousness as a rapidly alternating orchestration of perspectivised voices, with inner and exterior focalisations that do not conform to any one tense or perspective. For example, statements attributed to Julia’s interior monologue may cede to second-person pronominal addresses, while a virtual
Intersubjectivity and Transsubj ectivity in H.D.

authoritative voice, containing only traces of Rafe’s voice, offers observations and upholds values directly opposed to Julia’s. This convoluted medley of voices is narratively represented as a muted argument occurring in Julia’s consciousness:

You could not argue. His moods were more violent. He was not really the young officer on leave; that was not Rafe. Then if that was not Rafe, well, let it be not-Rafe; the disintegrating factor was the glance, the look, the throwing aside of the uniform and the turn of the head, a stranger standing over by the book-shelf, was Rafe Ashton. That is my husband, that is the man I married. The stranger became singularly strange, his language, his voice, the thing he brought into the room. Well, can you blame him? He was colourating to what he was, who is Julia Ashton to deny that? (Bid Me 45)

Here, Julia’s psyche searches for labels to identify Rafe’s characteristics so that, once classified, they can be compartmentalised: accepted, rejected, identified, or disidentified with. However, and important for our purposes here, in this passage, H.D. signifies Julia as a relational identity. Julia seeks to understand Rafe from his own perspective (“...can you blame him?”). However, at this point, Julia resists articulating her disenchanted feelings about him, and so H.D. represents Julia’s compromised desire by using unanswered interrogatives that stylize Julia’s excuses for her husband, thus limiting Julia as an agent possessing any power to change the situation.

Now let us take a closer look to see how H.D. stylises Julia’s reflections in terms of narrative intersubjectivity. The narrative tension in this scene rests largely on H.D.’s fusion of SELF and SELF-as-Other figures for Julia, which cognitively integrate the external-internal views as a non-differentiated “one.” This fusion is primarily
accomplished through H.D.'s suggestion of a virtual subjectivity, inherent in the narratee "you," which also functions as the alter-ego of the "I," alternatively called "she" or "Julia Ashton." Here H.D. represents Julia's reasoning processes as a virtual dialogue—ultimately, a conversation with herself. But this dialogue does not use typical interior monologue style since H.D. wants to represent Julia's self-detachment. In this stylisation, H.D. suggests that Julia objectifies herself by her own self-references in a reflected perspective of the Other, as well as extending these objectifications to the Other—the "stranger." This self-objectification and its projection signals Julia's inability to conceive of herself as a civil identity while she remains in her current situation.

In the passage quoted above, H.D. largely portrays Julia's awareness of the growing distance between her and her husband through increasingly distant pronouns that signal various gradations, and various kinds, of objectification. The opening second-person pronoun "you," which would typically indicate the presence of a narratee, who, in this case, would presumably be a sympathetic ear listening to Julia's predicament, functions doubly as a self-reference, thereby splitting Julia's identity into an "I" and a "you." The only self-referential use of "I" in this passage occurs in the brief segment of interior monologue—a segment that H.D. uses to momentarily reassert Julia's subjectivity: "That is my husband, that is the man I married." This momentary appearance of Julia-as-subject is appropriately placed, as Julia insists on sameness—in the form of a historical truism ("that" is her husband, whom she did marry)—while confronting difference. Although Rafe is the same, for example, Julia cannot help recognising his personality differences.
However, the self-referential “you,” ostensibly a term that Rafe himself would use in speaking to her, sheds a slightly different light on the way that Julia conceives of herself as a subject. In arguing for Rafe’s change, the narrative voice asserts factual information (“His moods were more violent”) in a style that increasingly simulates Julia’s free indirect thought/speech, and/or interior monologue—“well, let it be not-Rafe.” Paradoxically, H.D. evokes a perspectival style that grows increasingly closer to Julia’s consciousness at the same time that it, ironically, reveals her own psychic self-estrangement. For instance, the second-person pronoun “you” emphases the tragic condition of Julia’s loneliness. Since she has no one to talk to, the “you” signals the lack rather than presence of a narratee, thus symbolising what seems to be the universal condition for women in patriarchy—their voices go unheard. Alternatively, as self-reference suspended in a virtual dialogue with herself, the second-person pronoun “you,” while courageously expressing the truth of the situation (“You could not argue”), also signals her first stage of objectification. A virtual “Julia” befriends herself as a way to soothe her fear and loneliness.

Next, H.D. makes a subtle shift to free indirect discourse to represent Julia’s reasoning as she attempts to partition the husband-Rafe from the soldier-Rafe (the “Rafe” from the “not-Rafe”). This subtle shift in narrative stylisation accurately reflects the psychic shifts that Julia must make in her reasoning in order to “accommodate” or integrate this new spectre which is/was her husband. After identifying the “not-Rafe,” the speaker confronts the “disintegrating factor” which deconstructs such classification: “the look, the throwing aside of the uniform and the turn of the head, a stranger standing over by the book-shelf, was Rafe Ashton.” Unable to deny the signifiers, or the
reminders, of Rafe’s husband-identity, Julia is forced to acknowledge the truth: “That is my husband, that is the man I married.”

Note here that the choice of “that” over “this” here connotes significant alienation. “This” would suggest the psychological intimacy of drawing near him in her assertion, while “that” objectifies Rafe as one distant and unconnected. From this point on, Accordingly, H.D. switches out of interior monologue into third-person narration at this point, and towards the end of the passage, changes again to free indirect thought; this dramatises Julia’s growing psychic distance from a “stranger”—this “thing,” whom she both recognises and dislikes: “The stranger became singularly strange, his language, his voice, the thing he brought into the room.” The next voice style is even more impersonal and accusatory in its direct confrontation, “Well can you blame him?” Instead of refuting this question, Julia internalises its tone and content, objectifying herself as a non-entity through a third-person reference to herself: “who is Julia Ashton to deny that?”

Alternatively, this question can be read more positively by emphasising the universalisation of the question inherent in H.D.’s use of the verb “is” instead “was.” If the question was “Who was Julia Ashton to deny that?” then it stylised as free indirect thought, with the past tense indicating the presence of the narrator’s mediation. However, in its present form, “Who is Julia Ashton to deny that?” can be read as interior monologue, intimating an anonymous, third-voice (not Julia’s and not the narrator’s), posing what comes to be an existential question. In this case, the question occurs to Julia as a universal, philosophical enquiry, thus suggesting that she has real insight into her own autonomy, an insight that directly affects the way she finally relates to Bella.

Either way, by playing on Julia’s name-as-subject or as self-transcendence, but at
the same time denying herself any right to experience and act out of that subjecthood, H.D. effectively dramatises Julia’s emotional paralysis. Julia’s virtual dialogue codifies Rafe’s movements with a cryptic symbolism, representing the tenuousness of their relationship and her desire to remain distant from him: “...don’t for God’s sake, take that book now off the shelf, don’t turn now and be Rafe; stay away, don’t mangle my emotions any more” (Bid Me 46). This imperative interior monologue voice, compromised by the pleading tone but ultimately trailing off into silence, reveals the extent to which Julia surrenders her right to subjectivity to the her husband’s sexual desire for a mistress. Here, the imperative style of voice confirms, rather than challenges, Rafe’s domination of Julia, while the virtuality of the dialogue effects a chilly irony.

In this portrayal of Julia’s voice, H.D. also uses transvocalisation to dramatise the self-shattering of Julia’s psyche. Transvocalisation’s dissolution of the marked boundaries inherent in compartmentalised thinking simulates the fluidity and fusion of shared consciousness. Here, shifts between personal and impersonal forms of narration—including first and third person, interior monologue, free indirect thought and third-person narration—create transvocalisation. These effects allow H.D. to de-emphasise, or conceal, connecting devices that should, or could, signal these stylistic changes. Thus, Julia’s inner discontinuity with herself reflects her identity in its partialness; Julia can see herself as an “I” or a “Julia Ashton” alternately, not simultaneously, acknowledging their identities’ incommensurability and their partialness.

Additionally, H.D.’s use of transvocalisation creates a co-operative aspect in the narrative’s verbal interaction so that an impression of fused consciousnesses is simulated by Julia’s integration of “speech” into what is presumably her own listener’s
response—an effect that Richard Watts (1987) likens to a “veritable conversational fugue in miniature” (“Sharing” 45): “Then if that was not Rafe, well, let it be not-Rafe.”

H.D.'s transvocalisation here creates a constant shifting of narrative voice that crosses, and by crossing, fuses the different auditory registers of voice and their different modes or styles of access to inner consciousnesses, to different styles or ways of thinking about the problem. Focalised by Julia, these narrative voices move across subjective territorial boundaries of personality and impersonality (“That is my husband...The stranger). Furthermore, by adopting Rafe’s psychic deixis (the Other’s “here” and “now”), the deixis of “the young officer on leave,” as its point of self-reference, and then attempting to deny this position (“that was not Rafe”), the narrative stylisation further emphasises Julia’s inability to reconcile herself to her unhappiness. This impression of “looking through” subjective boundaries, figured by the implied interplay of glances across the room, however, shows that Julia is also bonded to Rafe through her nostalgic feelings for him. Thus, even in this passage, H.D. emphasises Julia’s non-individuation from Rafe, a state causing her psychic trauma.

Finally, we need to consider how many speakers are represented here. Is this passage, for instance, an uninterrupted representation of Julia’s inner consciousness; or is it other than, and more than that? If this passage is interpreted as a single, interiorised voice, then the narrative voice could be Julia arguing a court case with herself in a desperate effort to hold onto a semblance of her marriage. In this interpretation, the voice is stylised in a fashion similar to Hipparchia’s Palimpsest when she becomes delirious, losing control of her linguistic and psychic reality. However, since stylistically, no stable reference is in place regarding person, which fluctuates from second to third to first
person, or perspective, which slides along a scale of internal, external and intermediary perspective, or time, which slips from past to present address, this passage has to be interpreted as a multiplicity of voices. In this case, the convergence of narrative voice signifies Julia’s voice as only one of a plurality of voices competing for attention and validation. H.D.’s stylisation here reflects Julia’s voice as one conditioned by, but also interdependent on, the voices of Others—that is, on her socialisation.

This reading also accounts for the conversational tone and direct addresses: “Well, can you blame him?” In this case, the multiple styles of voice—incantations, inflections, appeals, and interrogations—reflect a concerted effort to justify and condemn the changed man, “not-Rafe,” at the same time. This conflicting desire makes sense, narratively, in that it reflects Julia’s love for the “Rafe” and her dismay towards the “not-Rafe.” Whichever framing device is favoured, the effect of voices’ radical destabilization represents the degree to which Julia is psychically traumatized by her unhappy marriage.

As this passage and many others like it demonstrate, Julia represses emotional vulnerability by using her “detached psychological equipment” (Bid Me 13). Narratively, H.D. represents Julia’s strategies of repression through recurring ellipses, hiatuses of linear thought, and parenthetical embedding. Parenthetical embedding contains reported or quoted statements of dialogue in order to convey emotional truths: “It was shut in her as other things were shut in her because ‘the war will be over’ (The war will never be over)” (12). This reiteration of an already stale cliché contributes to the reader’s impression that Julia’s mind is operating largely out of a subjective void, made worse by conditions of war. Through these stylisations, H.D. implies that Julia’s inner authentic self is entirely repressed, and very depressed.
Relational Narrative Desire

Obviously, Julia’s psychic void compromises the extent to which a reader may identify positively with her. For instance, H.D. stylises Julia’s patronising tolerance of her husband’s betrayal as sado-masochistic re-enactments of “rejection” scenes. “If she had not condoned (she believed the word was) Rafe’s relationship with Bella,” states the third-person narrator, “she would never have touched bed-rock of desolation” (Bid Me 148). Here, the stylisation of Julia’s depression in impersonal third-person narration symbolises a patriarchal internalisation of punitive authority that instills self-control. The fact that she takes little issue with this line of thinking is reflected in H.D.’s use of parentheses which, more or less “embed” and bury Julia’s own needs. Julia does not take issue with her husband’s right to betray her, but sadly, she can only argue with the word “she” chooses to describe it: “(she believed the word was).” With these internalisations, H.D. characterises Julia as a woman in denial of her own subjectivity when it is split apart from her husband’s.

Also frustrating for reader identification is Julia’s superficial acceptance of Rafe’s extra-marital love affair, conducted under the same roof. The reader wishes that Julia would be less forgiving, completely forgiving, or entirely unforgiving. In her ambivalence, Julia neither completely ends their relationship, nor offers the intimacy that Rafe believes is lacking. To a certain extent, her acceptance of Rafe’s affair effaces her subjecthood; she accepts it on the basis of his needs, not hers. However, despite her effort to reconcile herself to this thought, Julia’s dependence on Rafe a coveted symbol of her desire, is shaken when she acknowledges that her position as “wife” in the tenement building is a charade—a reflection of the very phallogocentrism which denies her the fulfillment of her desire. This acknowledgement, as we will see, does not occur until a
pivotal conversation between Julia and Bella mid-way in the novel.

“Chasing Gold Flame”: Intersubjective Connection in *Bid Me to Live*

Because Bella Carter symbolises the stereotypical mistress in a heterosexual love triangle, the reader may expect, and even find her to be, on first reading, superficial and self-serving—a strong contrast to Julia, obviously more intellectual and creative. But through the Bella-Julia encounter, H.D. narrows the gap between these two subjects to the extent that they become inseparable “photographic negatives” of one another. Through Bella, Julia finds a hidden source of empathy inside herself which she uses to heal the pain caused by her marriage. Through Bella, Julia is able to alleviate the psychic pressures of her denial, as well as restructure her ego through intersubjective connection. Their conversation thus dramatises their difference and their unexpected similarity—Let us see how.

*Identification*

Like Julia, Bella is a self-exiled American in Britain, but presumably without the social status securing her inclusion in the artistic, elite community in the Queen Square flat. Characterised (by Julia) as morally reprehensible, a wax-work caricature of Eros, Bella initially strikes Julia as a pitiful figure, one easy to ridicule and dismiss. Largely described by third-person statements focalised by Julia, Bella is a “girl clown” in a ballet, a frightened “animal tied up in clothes, pretty clothes, a deer, a gazelle,” doomed to self-extinction (*Bid Me* 89, 91). However, Bella is able to give Rafe something that Julia cannot—a sexual affair that contains the power of forgetting present reality (*Bid Me* 71).
As Friedman (1990b) notes, Rafe justifies his affair with Bella by resorting to the ideological split in cultural representations of women: "Bella satisfies his body, Julia his soul" (*Penelope's Web* 147). However, Bella is also able to give Julia something that Julia, by herself, cannot provide—the experience of herself as a partial, relational identity existing in community.

In the conversation in Part VI, Julia symbolises the "good wife" betrayed by her husband, while Bella symbolises the young, self-serving mistress who steals Julia’s husband from her. In this case, Julia feels as though she is audience to a stage performance by Bella who appears as her very opposite—"rose-red" and "oriental," in comparison to her own "rose-white" and "nordic" complexion (*Bid Me* 98). Their conversation, like the one between Raymonde and Ermy in *Palimpsest* Part II, reflects an oscillating balance of social power. Julia’s power originates in her legal and spiritual claim to Rafe, while Bella’s power is founded in her physical hold over him.

This distribution of power pivots on a public-private dichotomy structured into the negotiation of spoken and unspoken statements. Julia holds power over Bella due to her greater knowledge of Rafe’s private character; Bella holds power over Julia as she is a public sign of Julia’s presumable failure as a loving wife. This private-public dichotomy surfaces in the narrative situation and its dialogues. For instance, Bella enters Julia’s room uninvited. She invades Julia’s private space and the first hour that Julia has had to herself for days (*Bid Me* 90). Interpreting Bella’s presence as an invasion, Julia initially turns her away. However, the opportunity to open an intersubjective connection recurs with Julia’s next statement: Bella’s name.

By suspending the interpretative framework of a third-person narrator which would
objectify Julia’s reluctance here, H.D. moves directly into representing Julia’s thought—specifically a memory from the night before of Rico’s imitation of Miss Ames—a cruel parody which Julia herself re-enacts with her refusal to speak with Bella. Julia sees her own treatment of Bella mirrored in Rico’s behavior towards others that she inwardly, and morally, rejects. Her failure to respond to Bella would constitute what Gibson calls a failure of relation to the Other, “a turning away from the primary relation, which is of course the ethical relation” (Towards 87). Therefore, Julia, by her own reflections on sameness and difference, realises the impropriety of not allowing Bella to enter: “This was another scene, another set of properties” (Bid Me 90). Thus, although feeling contempt for Bella, Julia suspends this negative feeling so that a borderspace, an “other” scene, may take place.

Since Julia cannot control her emotions, her searing, silent critique of Bella begins as soon as she is in the room. This critique is also expressed in her veiled spoken comments. Here, H.D. uses third-person narration interspersed with Julia’s focalised, figurative objectifications of Bella. These objectifications reflect Julia’s private disgust with Bella, an emotion undercut by Julia’s observation that despite her confident outward pose, Bella appears “frightened” (Bid Me 91). Thus, Julia’s interior monologue begins to reflect a mixture of contempt and pity for Bella:

Why couldn’t she keep to her odalisque rôle, with her tight-pulled dark eyes and those two hairpins stuck in at the back of her long bob which she had screwed up into a tight knot with those pins, stuck in at a perfect marionette angle, making her look like Madame Butterfly.30 Well, someone had to be Butterfly…. (95)

By arguing that someone must take on the role of victim, Julia attempts to discredit the
Relational Narrative Desire

destruction that Bella symbolises in relation to her marriage to Rafe. Bella must be
given, Julia reasons, due to her ignorance of men and her willingness to be used for
sex. Therefore, even at this early stage of their exchange, Julia, has a fleeting moment of
compassion, like a parent for a child, while she underscores their differences.

While Bella may appear to be the disempowered subject here, I argue that she
actively negotiates a change in Julia’s scathing treatment of her. Although Julia has the
social advantage over Bella, she is also impeded by her own self-inferiority. In this way,
Julia’s negative feelings toward Bella are frequently reflections of her own relational
inadequacies. Following Benjamin, for instance, we can argue that as Julia denies
subjectivity and agency to Bella, she denies them to herself (“Authority Revisited” 41).
Julia’s denial of Bella’s subjectivity makes her feel as though there is nothing she can do
to control the situation, and that there is nothing she can say. Sitting face-to-face with
Bella, she feels that she sits “alone in the midst of this confusion” (Bid Me 85). However,
through metamorphosis, when Julia grants agency and subjectivity to Bella, she herself
is transformed by acknowledging their inter-relationality. In this way, H.D. credits voice,
and specifically, voice in conversation, with the power of relational narrative desire. This
power begins with recognition.

Recognition

By withholding possibilities for the reader to identify definitively with either character in
this scene, H.D. equalises them in order to critique their struggle for power. Bella
contends that Julia “tyrannizes Rafe’s soul,” while Julia concedes that Bella helps Rafe
“forget.” Julia’s defensive statements, ones that reclaim her relationship to Rafe by
drawing attention to objects in the room ("I got them [Venetian glass] with Rafe;" *Bid Me 93) restate what Bella probably already knows, or would not care about. Therefore, these "arsenal" statements are wrongly (and even comically) interpreted by Bella as Julia’s desire to become more intimate with her. In reading this scene, we encounter a dilemma in Iser’s theory. Although Bella is certainly characterised, and even caricatured, as an immoral, or amoral, subject, she seems oblivious to this characterisation, and fortunately, immune to Julia’s deliberate rudeness. In this interpretation, the reader does not want to identify with either character—certainly not with the stupid Bella, who does not realise that she is being duped, nor with the cruel, cowardly Julia, who cannot even say what is on her mind.

Such is the nature of this paradoxical struggle for control over the conversation, and its suspended identification possibilities, that the scene’s tension breaks with Bella’s blurted admission that she never meant to “break across a man and his wife” (*Bid Me 93). With this statement, Bella asks Julia for forgiveness out of respect for her position as Rafe’s wife. When Julia answers her with another diversional (parenthetical) statement indelibly linking her to Rafe, husband to wife—“(This Vermouth reminds me of Rome. We always had a glass before lunch—)”—Bella responds with one word of concession and agreement: “Yes” (93-94). Bella’s concession creates a borderlink in the same way that Julia’s act of inviting Bella in does. Here, Bella acknowledges that she perceives Julia’s feelings from Julia’s perspective, and furthermore, that she agrees with them: “yes.” Her concession implies that since she herself would feel the same way if she were Julia, she feels compassion for Julia’s unhappiness. In this response, Julia sees Bella “as if for the first time” (94). In other words, Julia realises that her treatment of Bella causes
Bella the same pain that Rafe has caused Julia. This realisation causes Julia to identify with, rather than objectify, Bella. Bella, Julia realises, has never been her antagonist.

Once Julia identifies with Bella, she is no longer capable of objectifying her. Instead, she explores the nature and extent of her compassion for Bella, realising that they both suffer from Rafe’s selfishness. Julia’s compassion forms a matrixial effect across several subjects in relation to trauma—herself, Bella, Rafe, and later, their unborn children; thus, trauma is, as Lichtenberg’s matrix implies, shared as a webbing of subjectivities in which each subject helps “process” trauma’s psychic effects. Each subject in this case is a partial subject, participating in the sphere of trauma. Julia’s initial stance of self-pity wanes when she realizes the interdependency and communality of all the personalities involved: “Everything’s very difficult for everybody,” she says to Bella. “Someone had to come into their lives,” she thinks *(Bid Me* 96-98). By generalising Bella’s position with the word “someone,” and by gathering their personal differences in the ambiguous plural pronoun “they,” Julia acknowledges the fact that her flawed marriage—and not this affair—threatens to extinguish her individuality.

Based on Julia’s compassion, I oppose Deborah Kelly Kloepfer’s (1989) claim that Julia is trapped in an unhappy marriage due to the fact that she is unable to formulate or articulate an identity (*The Unspeakable Mother* 91). In this case, I think that Julia covertly, but clearly, voices her identity as a relational identity. I also disagree with Teresa Fulker’s (1993) belief that Julia is incapable of being anything “but passive and reactive” (“Not-War” 65). Instead, I argue that at this point in the narrative, Julia accurately perceives and articulates a shared borderspace, an identity that takes into full account its sameness with Others, as well as its differences, and formulates a relational
identity. But both Kloepfer and Fulker assume that there is only one kind of identity: singular. So although Kloepfer calls Julia’s sense of identity a space of “aborted maternity” by emphasising its lack, equally it can be interpreted as a virtual subjectivity able to integrate “otherness.”

I support this interpretation because Julia’s recognition of her sameness with Bella performs what Hanscombe and Symers (1988) call an identification necessary for a “spiritual fitness” (Writing for Their Lives 15). Spiritual fitness refers to a form of interdependency that nurtures both independence from others and connection to others. By perceiving her similarities to Bella, Julia acknowledges her own responsibility in making her marriage with Rafe a failure. This acknowledgement, formed only by her recognition of herself as a relational being, allows her to psychically “fit” with Bella in this scene, and in later scenes with Rafe, as she leaves him.

Julia’s identification with Bella in her progression towards metamorphosis is signalled by the transformation of the figures she uses to characterise Bella: from “butterfly” to “beetle” (Bid Me 96-99). As Julia replaces the Madame Butterfly metaphor with the beetle metaphor, ironically, the “hardening” of the image symbolises a softening of Julia’s antagonism. The butterfly metaphor symbolises Julia’s belief that Bella has betrayed her. However, by reenvisioning Bella’s filmy surface as a protective coat of armour, Julia realises that Bella also suffers, and is “hardened,” by taking up the role of mistress imposed upon her:

...Butterfly?

She was a beetle with a hard shell, her green silk might have been plate metal. She seemed metallic, as she sat there...She moved with set precision, as if
she knew her part very well, but was having stage-fright. (96)

Bella’s precise movements and “recited” lines indicate to Julia that, like herself, Bella is detached from her own emotions. Behind her tonelessness, Julia imagines, is a systematic repression of emotion. Bella’s “toneless one-tone voice,” symbolising her detachment, explains her capacity to depersonalise others, like Julia and Rafe, for her own use.\(^{31}\)

Furthermore, in a more paranoid reflection, Julia believes that “there was a catch somewhere,” that “Bella was not just surface-Bella, green beetle, encased. The beetlewings were fluttering, the beetle-claws were unfurling. The insect had a scorpion sting, or had it? Something’s got to be done about it this time” \((Bid\ Me\ 99)\). At this point, Bella figures Julia’s fear of recognising her as a subject—a recognition which would oblige her to identify with, and ideally, to respond to, Bella’s plight. H.D. represents Julia’s fear through internal queries that defer this realisation: “Why should she be afraid of me? Does she expect me to flare out at her, at this moment?” \((Bid\ Me\ 96)\). Here, Julia fears that in identifying with Bella, her own sense of identity would be threatened; she would have to surrender what little hold she has on her pride. This impression grows as Julia figures Bella as an “unfurling” beetle, an image literalised and actualised by Bella’s confession to Julia regarding her past abortion.

Julia’s fear signifies intersubjectivity’s opposing force, a contraction of subjectivity, which Lichtenberg calls “retirance.” Although retirance signals a possible metramorphosis, it is manifested as a psychic withdrawal or disappearance of the “I,” a “contraction,” where elements are partly created and partly abandoned with being-together (my italics, “Metamorphic Borderlinks” 153-154). The subject desires, but
fears, connection. Retirance is figured here in images of self-hardening and self-protection—a metallic armour-ing of I—symbolises Julia's extreme over-individuation, the same characteristic that Hipparchia suffers from in *Palimpsest*.

By treating Julia as a confidante, Bella forces upon Julia a recognition of undeniable similarities between them, thus undermining Julia's pose of self-pity. Bella's confession mirrors Julia's pain. When Bella begins to speak about her abortion, Julia's feeling that "really this was the last straw" (*Bid Me 99*), evokes her recurring thought that no one—especially Rafe—can be sensitive to her own emotional reality concerning the loss of her stillborn child. H.D.'s insertion of Bella's abortion narrative opens Julia's repressed memories, and the feelings these memories evoke regarding her own experience of a stillbirth. Thus, retirance here is represented by Julia's emotional coldness. Instead of being moved by Bella's plea for empathy, Julia is insulted by what she imagines to be her tactlessness. This feeling, however, changes as further details provided by Bella confirm a parallel narrative in Julia's mind, one narrative which structures and symbolises their intersubjective connection.

**Mutual Recognition**

Stylistically, H.D. distinguishes the mutual recognition stage from the identification and initial recognition stage by emphasising the profound emotional connection between Julia and Bella: their shared loss of children. Although the loss of a child through stillbirth and an abortion may seem moral opposites, here H.D.'s narrative voice stylisations emphasise their same end result: the women's shared grief for their unborn children. It forms an ineffaceable link between them.
In this passage of the novel, H.D. represents Julia’s changing feelings towards Bella through a rapid, variegated shifting of intermediary forms of interior narrative voice. H.D destabilises personal forms of reference by shifting from third, to second, to first-person narration so that the reader cannot determine whether or not Julia is continuing to objectify Bella, or whether she is, in fact, objectifying herself based on past memories of her own traumatic birthing experience:

“You see I might have had ut [sic],” as if all this time (how long ago was it that Bella had had that operation?) she had been brooding. Yes, brooding, like an animal, gazelle. Some brooding deer-like animal had been hurt, horribly and it was all the same to her ... . But this was dreadful. Bella had been slashed about by unauthorised abortionistes—are any ever authorised? ... My God—was Bella telling Julia or about to tell Julia that it was happening again? (99-100)

Again, H.D. uses hybrid interior monologue incorporating a wide range of narrative voices to reflect Julia’s panic at hearing Bella’s account of her abortion, an account which causes her to sympathise with Bella, but at the same time fear that Bella may be carrying Rafe’s child. Thus, Julia fuses Bella, her aborted child, her potential fetus, and herself into one figure: “Some brooding deer-like animal had been hurt, horribly...” (99). In using this communal figure for all of them, Julia acknowledges their shared pain; they have all suffered a horrible death. In this way, H.D. depicts within Julia’s interior monologue a mode of inclusivity, which structures all potential subjects in-relation.

Through this effect, H.D.’s figural polyvalence creates a sympathetic bond between the two characters that extends to their unborn children. Julia’s superimposition of the past upon the present also occurs in medicalised female body imagery symbolising their
shared pain. For instance, since this passage is presumably focalized by Julia, the mixed-mode statement which precedes it, “The Vermouth was chasing gold flame, then (a sip) gold flame round an empty (her body) test-tube” (*Bid Me* 97), can also be read as Julia’s focalisation. Based on its context, this statement comments both literally, on Julia’s sensation of drinking alcohol on an empty stomach, and figuratively, as she remembers her stillborn child. An “empty test-tube,” her glass, the one given to her by Rafe, symbolises their childlessness and failed marriage. The conversation itself, she feels, is a “test,” a dangerous experiment “chasing gold flame.” On the symbolic level, she too feels “empty”—a body slashed and devoid of child. For this reason, Julia feels as if she is Bella, and thus can no longer deny her her sympathy.

But additionally, and more importantly, this mixed metaphor passage shows Bella’s generous nature. Bella gives the help that she is in the act of requesting. For instance, with the surreal image of the Vermouth “chasing gold flame,” the reader is reminded that Bella had run to get the Vermouth (“her-mouth”) out of consideration for Julia’s stress. Bella realises that Julia needs a drink; Bella puts herself in charge of getting one for her. Bella, therefore, is partially (if not totally) responsible for Julia’s physiological change, and later, her psychic change, which the intoxication represents. This sensory image also anticipates Bella’s next points in conversation. Rafe is a “gold flame” being chased by Bella; he surrounds her emotionally numb body which the abortion has rendered “empty.” For all intents and purposes, Bella is also a “test-tube,” emptied by medical intervention. The slurring together of these distinct, figurative images, relevant for both characters, foreshadows the intersubjective bond they achieve through metramorphosis.
The next stage of recognition occurs as Julia realises that, during her abortion, Bella has been victimised. Julia’s previous depersonalizations of Bella reflect a mixture of objectification and empathy when she begins to grant Bella subjecthood: “Some brooding deer-like animal had been hurt, horribly” (Bid Me 99). By recognising Bella’s anguish—the same anguish that she herself experienced over the loss of her stillborn child—Julia experiences the self-reflexive stage in intersubjective connection. In terms of narrative voice, this self-reflexivity stylistically links the two subjects together. For instance, when relating the details of her abortion to Julia, Bella uses the word that has been haunting Julia’s mind for last few pages: “horrible” (100). By voicing the very word that characterises Julia’s past feelings, Bella expresses and “becomes” Julia’s consciousness. This link develops as Julia sees Bella’s suffering as symptomatic of the unjust treatment of women in patriarchy, thereby reducing Bella’s own sense of guilt: “But this was dreadful. Bella had been slashed about by unauthorised abortionists—are any ever authorized?” (100). With this thought, Julia remembers the dispassionate nurses treating her during her own stillbirth. In this way, recognition, founded on sameness, disassembles the power structures of dominator-desire in this conversation. Instead, recognition ensures an equality between like subjects, who remain distinct from, but connected to, one another through their different, but shared, experiences.

Metamorphosis

Julia progresses towards metamorphosis when she sees Bella cry. By watching her cry, Julia is forced to recognize Bella as subject, and gain insight into a subjectivity different from her own. Since it was “the first time that Julia had ever seen her narrow eyes widen,
had seen tears in those eyes” (Bid Me 101), Bella’s crying undermines the “odalisque pose” in which Julia had wrongly cast her. Crying, Bella openly expresses the self-pity and sorrow that Julia feels. In this case, Julia’s objectification of Bella is cut short: her initial objectification, attributed to Rico, is stopped in his tracks by Julia’s realisation that any objectification is reductive and dehumanising:

Rico made neat pictures, put Bella on a band-box, painted her on a fan. But opening the fan, there were other dimensions, layers of poison-gas, the sound of shrapnel, the motto that ran across the top of the fan when it was open was I have a rendez-vous with death. Bella had known that boy, too, in Paris. (Bid Me102)

In this reflection, Julia includes her fantasised projection of the “boy” who impregnated Bella and was then killed in the war, thus adding a virtual bond between the boy and Rafe. Thematically, this virtual bond suggests that going to war and being a soldier is not just a matter of becoming hard and cold, thus challenging Julia’s previous judgment of Rafe. The (moral) question, and more importantly, the (moral) judgement of what Julia would do in a similar situation, given that she shares similar circumstances now that Rafe is at war, becomes irrelevant. Julia clearly acknowledges that there are “other dimensions, layers” accessible only through an empathetic mode of communication and reception. By understanding Bella’s fear from Bella’s perspective, Julia learns that she has a valid reason to talk with her: they need to decide what to do about Rafe’s return.

Resuming the original topic of conversation—Rafe’s self-serving motives—H.D. represents Bella as achieving a successful intersubjective connection. She articulates what Julia thinks, and thus, exposes for and to Julia the futility and failure of her own repressions. When Bella states, “He doesn’t really love me...When he is with me, he is
thinking of you... You tyrannize his soul; he loves my body, but he isn’t all there, half of him is somewhere else” (Bid Me 102), she is a co-emerging I, a mirror reflection of Julia’s inner consciousness. In the sentence, “This is what Julia herself had said, or thought rather, having no one to whom she could possibly say it, about Bella” (102), a shift to third-person narration authorises the accuracy of this shared thought. By recognising that they are like subjects, Julia applies this comment to her own character, achieving mutual recognition in a mirrored identification. As Benjamin implies in “Authority and the Family Revisited,” here Julia not only assumes the “attitude of the other” as her own, but also assumes “responsibility for others’ acts as inevitable responses” to her own behavior (39). In other words, she sees that she has treated Bella wrongly and understands how she cannot be a good wife to Rafe.

In this exchange, Julia realises that Bella integrates her trauma in a way that Julia does not. Julia can now integrate this new piece of self-knowledge in relation to her failed marriage: “She told Bella, ‘But it’s the same with me. I never feel he is thinking of me now. It’s almost better when he’s not with me’” (Bid Me 102). With this statement, Julia shows the courage to become “other” to herself, and to realize that she has the right to construct her life so that it contents her. From this point, Julia feels that in facing Bella, she is “looking at herself in a mirror, another self, another dimension, nevertheless herself. Rafe had brought them together; really they had nothing in common. They had everything in common” (Bid Me 103). With this thought, Julia perceives herself in terms of integration. In her conversation with Bella, she has learned about another dimension of herself, which is, “nevertheless herself.” By successfully integrating the perspective that Bella brings upon her character into her own psyche, Julia
affirms the right to be the same as, and different from, Bella, as well as the right to become “other” than what and who she was.\textsuperscript{35}

In her new-found appreciation for Bella as subject (“You knew where you were with Bella;” 103), Julia understands that patriarchy, symbolised by Rafe’s desires, sets them up in opposition and competition. She realises that Rafe looks upon both of them as “abstractions,” as “WOMAN of the period, the same one” (103), eradicating their individual differences, and treating them as objects to serve his needs. With this realization, Julia lets go of her antagonism toward Bella and directs it toward the real person responsible for causing such pain. As Friedman observes, this moment of sisterhood reconstructs the conventional triangulation of desire in the novel so that Rafe, even with his power to choose, is “momentarily rendered impotent” (\textit{Penelope’s Web} 147). Julia’s thought that “this thing couldn’t go on” (\textit{Bid Me} 103), no longer applies to Bella’s invasion of her space, but instead to Rafe’s need to preserve the same framework of their relationship when he has so blatantly abandoned all responsibility for it. This awareness enables Julia to move to Cornwall, begin a new relationship, and pursue her writing.

\textbf{Intersubjectivity and Transsubjectivity in H.D.’s \textit{Palimpsest}}

Now that we have considered a successful intersubjective connection, I want to draw attention to three scenes in H.D.’s 1924 novel \textit{Palimpsest}: one, a failed intersubjective connection between Hipparchia and Marius; two, a successful intersubjective connection between Hipparchia and her mother (also named “Hipparchia); and three, a transsssubjective connection between three female characters bonded in a love triangle:
Raymonde, Ermentrude, and Mavis. The first scene is important for its portrayal of Hipparchia's inability to progress beyond the interobjectification phase and into the identification stage and her failure to become a relational subject within the novel. The last two scenes are fascinating to analyse because they depict the recognition stage of intersubjectivity in terms of mirror-imagery, also used in Woolf's *Between*. In the first of these, Hipparchia figures her self-reflection in a pond as her mother, a transference which allows her to individuate from her mother, and to acknowledge her love for Marius. In the second of these mirror scenes, Raymonde superimposes her own traumatic memories of her husband's affair upon Ermy's account of her own betrayal, and confronts her repressed memories. Both of these scenes represent intersubjectivity, and transsubjectivity, as bonding and blurring of superimposed interpersonal boundaries. Reflecting both positive and negative outcomes of narrative inter/transsubjectivity, these scenes are valuable illustrations of relationality and non-relationality, excessive individuation and absolute non-individuation. On both theoretical or textual levels, the following analyses demonstrate that narrative relational desire affirms the right to civil identity for patriarchal subjects.

*Palimpsest, Part I: Failed Intersubjective Connection*

H.D.'s *Palimpsest* trilogy (1924) consists of three linked narratives depicting the female consciousness in three different historical periods marked by the violence of war. Like Gertrude Stein's *Three Lives* (1909), *Palimpsest* presents parallel but distinct stories of three protagonists placed in different settings and time periods: the Roman Empire (c.75 B.C.); London, following World War I (c.1916-26); and Egypt, with the opening of King Tutankhamun's tomb (1925). All of these narratives display similar stylisations of
narrative voice and a female protagonist with the same Hellenic consciousness. With this structural link, H.D.’s protagonists symbolise sameness-in-difference. The same identity, in three different incarnations, represents the unchanging conditions of women in patriarchal cultures. In this section, I will focus on *Palimpsest*, Part I, wherein the Greek poet Hipparchia rebels against her Roman captor, Marius Decius, during the Roman campaign in Greece against the Mithridates. H.D. presents Hipparchia’s rebellion in two narrative voice styles: one that openly resents Greek oppression under Roman rule; the other, a restorative voice of translation which emerges out of this conquest. However, in terms of intersubjectivity, Hipparchia’s subjugation under Marius signifies a failure of relational desire. The relationship between Hipparchia and Marius, predicated upon the desire for domination, destroys their chance for an intimate, loving relationship.

From the start, the relationship between Hipparchia and Marius is defined by H.D.’s voice stylisations in terms of dominator desire. Hipparchia’s rapport with Marius is made from a disempowered position. He is the authoritative, male figure of the Roman military’s ruling power; she is his Greek courtesan, a poet rescued and maintained for his pleasure. Hipparchia’s attempts to reverse the dominator power structure of their relationship is partially effective; by acknowledging the fact that Hipparchia denies him her love, Marius ironically realises that he is slave to his desire for her. Thus, on one level, their gender inequality and its frequent reversal suggest that they share the capacity for intimacy and intersubjective connection.

Therefore, following Hipparchia’s disillusionment with Verrus, Hipparchia believes that she loves Marius—and to a certain extent, this is just what he wants. Thus, mid-way in Part I, H.D. depicts a climatic meeting between the two characters, wherein the possibility for their union, in accordance with an Oedpial-plot logic, is anticipated. But
this union fails to manifested, and in fact, through the failures in communication during this meeting, their relationship is destroyed beyond repair. H.D. suggests that although Hipparchia feels love for Marius, at the same time she cannot perceive herself as a partial, relational subject. Feeling threatened by Olivia’s relationship with Marius, Hipparchia tragically fuses her self-identity with her figures of and for Olivia; her over-identification and lack of individuation prevents her from loving Marius since she denies herself a separate and distinct subjecthood.

Unable to surrender her illusions of autonomy, Hipparchia tragically compromises the potential for subject-subject pairing in their union. Shortly after her meeting with Marius, and Marius’s rejection of her, Hipparchia falls into a delirium which, in terms of its narrative stylisation, represents her non-relationality as her self-identity trails off into an uncharted field of otherness. As in Gilman’s “The Yellow Wallpaper” (1892), Hipparchia’s fever is stylised as an interior monologue that reveals its double positionality; she is both the sender and receiver of her own message. In her crisis, Hipparchia experiences her identity in Alice-in-Wonderland figures that are both collapsible and expandable, but not relational: “without Marius to protect her, who, who was she?” (Palimpsest 76). However tragic, Hipparchia’s delirium also symbolises her rejection of her previous framework for self-construction. She realises that she must construct her identity outside of the parameters of masculine authority and desire. Let us see how this pivotal meeting between Hipparchia and Marius leads to such a restorative conclusion.

Hipparchia-as-Olivia

As a Greek poet under Roman rule, Hipparchia clearly symbolises the dangers of interobjectification that Butler identifies in terms of fear of the Other. To dramatise
Hipparchia’s fear of self-Other interdependency, H.D. represents the manifestation of relational identity in surrealistic, hallucinatory dislocations. These dislocations form an agonized borderspace of nightmarish, superimposed identities, glued together: Hipparchia-as-Olivia-as-Hipparchia [mother], and, as we will see in the next section, Raymonde-as-Ermy-as-Raymonde [Mavis]. Let us see how H.D. stylises Hipparchia’s fear in terms of narrative voice.

Hipparchia’s jealous antagonism towards Olivia, Marius’s mistress, is ironic. Although Hipparchia refuses to be Marius’s mistress, she feels angry and threatened because he has another one. And she loathes Olivia for being so smug and complicit in her submissive role as object. These feelings prevent Hipparchia from feeling compassion for Olivia, as well as for Marius. Also ironic is Hipparchia’s figure for herself as Hipparchia-as-Olivia. Through this figure, she constitutes herself as a virtual subject in a virtual love-bond, her fantasy of being Marius’s partner, totally divorced from reality. Thus, for Hipparchia, virtual subjectivity is experienced as a traumatic detachment from self. In this case, relational desire figures a terrifying sense of an unrooted, floating, virtual, potential identity that Hipparchia can neither successfully integrate into her relation with Marius, nor master as a part of herself since she despises it in her rival, Olivia.

Hipparchia believes that the only way she can preserve her identity is to protect the differences between herself and Marius. Therefore, when Marius states, “Olivia loves me” (*Palimpsest* 64), Hipparchia fails to point out the differences between herself and Olivia (assert her right to subjecthood), as well as fails to perceive the *similarities* between herself and Olivia (as *like* subjects in loving Marius). She also fails to question
Marius to see whether or not this feeling is mutual, and whether or not he loves Olivia, thus denying him his subjecthood as well. Instead, she jumps to the conclusion, quite wrongly I believe, that Marius loves Olivia in return. This assumption symbolises her self-annihilation as a distinct subjecthood, shown by the respect given to her by Marius in his letter. Thus, ironically, by interpreting Olivia as the object of Marius’s love, Hipparchia forsakes the opportunity to become the subject of his love. Through her lack of communication, her self-insecurity and fear of dependence, Hipparchia is unable to perceive herself as a subject. As such, she sabotages the potential for their intersubjective connection. Instead, Hipparchia persists in ironically reminding Marius of her autonomy, considering her actual state as a political prisoner.

As we can see, in this intersubjective connection gone very wrong, Hipparchia, like Woolf’s Rhoda in *The Waves*, fails to individuate herself as a distinct subject with whom Marius can unite. Moreover, the potential union between Hipparchia and Marius is marred by her political “place” in the Roman empire which situates her as Marius’s slave, despite the nature and depth of their personal relationship. Consequently, in a hallucinatory sequence, she reflects on herself as her own “dark Olivia.” Here, Hipparchia perceives Olivia as a reflective surface: “She saw Olivia as Olivia must see Olivia” (*Palimpsest* 65)—not as a distinct subject. To Hipparchia, Olivia symbolises a mirror reflection of masculine desire and consumption, a plenitude in being “whole-heartedly” a woman who adequately reflects Marius’ sexual power back to him (24). Although she may be right, Hipparchia fails to individuate herself from Olivia’s conception of womanhood by recognizing her own identification with that seductive image, even more alluring given her failed relationship with Verrus. In this way, Hipparchia forsakes her inner authenticity by internalising the patriarchal standard (and
H.D.'s stylisation of Hipparchia's negative, dispassionate attitude towards Olivia forms a traumatic borderspace. Instead of co-joining, this borderspace is appropriated by Hipparchia's fears and insecurities, and thus the opportunity of becoming a con-joined identity is lost. Hipparchia's inability to create a shared borderspace posits her as a non-relational subject. Not daring to rival Olivia's passion for Marius, nor being able, like Julia, to identify with the similarities of their characters, Hipparchia's subjective SELF-Other boundaries blur in a lack of individuation, causing an involuntary fusion (and confusion) of multiple identities that Hipparchia herself cannot fully integrate. H.D. represents Hipparchia's failed relational identity as a visually disturbing, virtual subjectivity; Hipparchia experiences this as terror of non-individuation, a projected self-objectification she attributes to Marius:

She [Hipparchia] saw with her own eyes, with the eyes of Marius, with the dark eyes of Olivia, Olivia. She saw Olivia as Olivia must see Olivia. Seated in a low chair with small feet crossed, cornelian encrusted. Gazing with vacant, shallow great eyes at an image that shone back from the polished metal that a slave held. She could see with the dark eyes of Olivia, Olivia satisfied...Mingled in some horrible phantasy, vision superimposed, she saw with her own eyes, white Hipparchia who from her own ice and green sea-water looked out to regard, as her reflected image, dark Olivia. (*Palimpsest* 65-66)

Here, the merging of distinct identities in this borderspace is syntactically represented as a set of reflexive statements: Hipparchia sees "Olivia as Olivia must see Olivia." H.D.'s strategic use of repetitive pronominal references and nominal refrains stylistically blurs SELF and Other. Hipparchia realises that she sees herself in Olivia (as her own Other),
and that what she hates in Olivia, she also hates in herself (self-in-Other) as a symbol of lack. H.D.’s disturbing psychic superimposition of these two identities emphasises the necessity for Hipparchia to secure her own process of individuation—a process undercut by her own self-doubt—she does not know Marius’s feelings for her. Thus, although Hipparchia is threatened with an unexpected “torrent of unassailable longing” for Marius, only Verrus can voice her feelings towards him: “you love Marius” (*Palimpsest* 61). Unable to voice her love, and through this denying Marius’s subjeckhood, Hipparchia can only reflect Olivia’s dominion of Marius in horrific overidentifications, closing off any opportunity for intersubjective connection.

H.D.’s depiction of Hipparchia in this scene suggests that although we may be our own Others, the dimensions of Others that we contain may not necessarily ensure our ability to experience intersubjective connections. These dimensions may be experienced as various forms of self-objectification, manifest in feelings of self-loathing, ritualised behaviors, or lack of intimacy. H.D.’s characterisation of Hipparchia here resembles Woolf’s practise of discerning, in social surfaces, possibilities for interpersonal connection while at the same time noting the displacements, projections, and transferences needed to sustain this connection. In these instances, both Woolf and H.D. suggest that the desired effects of inter/transsubjective communication—annihilation or strengthening of SELF—depends upon the negotiation and balance of SELF’s authentication within intersubjective exchanges, as well as its capacities for, and knowledge of, empathetic connection.⁴¹
Hipparchia-as-Hipparchia

A subtle and more complex example of H.D.’s use of fantasy to represent the self-reflexivity of interobjectification in the recognition stage of intersubjectivity occurs when Hipparchia meditates on memories of her mother. Reflecting on her satisfaction with the more “intellectual” Verrus, Hipparchia gazes into a pool of water, contemplating her reflection. By seeing her mother in her reflected form, “a mirrored separate entity” (Palimpsest 54), Hipparchia realises that non-relationality entails self-detachment—a lack of warmth:

The image that gazed up at her from an autumn salt pool was an image of Hipparchia. There was a frail silver Hipparchia to be engraved, the standard of all her undertakings. Hipparchia regarded cold Hipparchia. “I kept no tunic with bright gem....So she saw (in that spread length of calm sea-pool beneath her) a mirrored separate entity.” (53-54)

Since Hipparchia has been given her mother’s name (“Hipparchia”) H.D.’s use of polyvalence in this passage posits the protagonist Hipparchia alternately as subject and object: Hipparchia-poet, Hipparchia-daughter. H.D. stylises Hipparchia’s meditation with intermediary, hybrid narrative voices that explore and superimpose Hipparchia’s personality similarities and differences from her mother. In this way two separate but related identities regard one another as distinct subjects, signifying a mutual recognition constitutes Hipparchia’s forgiveness of her mother and herself. This recognition of her subjecthood leads Hipparchia to act on her desire to meet with Marius.

But first, Hipparchia’s mirroring evocation of m/other as herself temporarily objectifies, for her, her own subjecthood as phantom and role model. As Hipparchia
gazes at her own reflection in the pool, she criticises her fears of intimacy, an ironic echoing of Marius’s earlier criticisms of her (“cold Hipparchia”). By acknowledging the emotional detachment in herself that she also despised in her mother (“Hipparchia regarded cold Hipparchia”), Hipparchia ceases to repudiate her mother—a change symbolised by her imitation of her mother through casting off her Grecian garments (Palimpsest 53-54). Disrobing, Hipparchia identifies with her mother’s choice to renounce worldly goods (“I kept no tunic of bright gem...nor the myrrh-scented diadem”) so that in reported speech, “I” gains a double-reference: daughter-as-mother, and mother-as-daughter. Reported speech later shifts to third-person narration to represent Hipparchia’s objectification of her disembodied image, which the narrative voice refers to as an “it,” a “mirrored separate entity” (54), picturing both her and her mother as Platonic simulacram, both phantom and reality, “an entity with no original” (Pireddu, “H.D.’s Palimpsest Texts” 7). As in Hedylus, this reflection symbolises Hipparchia’s self-reflexivity and identification, thereby connoting inclusivity, relating the inside to the outside (distance-in-proximity), without having to reconcile them.42

Enthralled with projections of, and substitutions for, SELF, Hipparchia’s fantasy pluralises the subjective positionings symbolised by her name, so that no single image of her identity captures her completely: “Hipparchia, gazing at Hipparchia, saw that Hipparchia was some abstraction, no warm honey-coloured goddess upon whose golden thighs and white-flower body small gold hornet-wisps of Love should settle” (Palimpsest 54). This segment suggests that Hipparchia obtains an objective view of her own non-relationality. She perceives as one who is unloved, and possibly not one who could be loved; thus, her intrapsychic surfaces are used to deflect relational connections.
However, because this view is her own self-objectification, she divides into three Hipparchias: the one who gazes at non-relational Hipparchia who could become a relational Hipparchia if upon her body “small gold hornet-wisps of Love should settle.”

Thus, in this scene, plurality is suggested, while ironically, the experience of identity-in-relationship is denied. Additionally, Hipparchia’s individuation here signifies the danger of interobjectification. By seeing herself as too much a separate entity, Hipparchia denies to herself her own potential for relationality, and denies her need for love from Verrus and Marius. H.D. stylises Hipparchia’s interobjectification of self by self in a polyvalent invocation of her name: “Hipparchia gazing at Hipparchia, saw that Hipparchia was some abstraction, no warm honey-coloured goddess upon whose golden thighs and white-flower body small gold hornet-wisps of Love should settle” (Palimpsest 54). Although Hipparchia positively constructs herself as a separate subject here, she does so by “abstracting” her identity, denying self-Other dependence, and disembodying her subjectivity—she is no “warm honey-coloured goddess” with “thighs” or “body” upon whom “Love” should, or presumably, could, settle. Thus, Hipparchia’s extreme individuation causes her to question her motives for loving Verrus (“Haven’t I other things to do?”) and in fact, to doubt her love for him (“But she did love him”) (55). This questioning leads her to singular identity—to her decision to love self and deny Otherness: “She saw Hipparchia and loved Hipparchia.”

Hipparchia’s extreme over-individuation is stylised by H.D. as recurring interrogatives and the third-person narrator’s interventions: “Is it worth it? Can I stand it? Why struggle with it?...Must she so to herself justify herself?” (Palimpsest 55). In this, Hipparchia objectifies herself for herself with the sudden transposition of “I” into
“she,”—a self-distancing of freeing the narrating SELF from the experiencing SELF.

According to Stanzel (1984), such an “I,” akin to that found in autobiography, takes refuge in the “she” to protect herself from the onrush of feelings (*Theory* 102-03). Stanzel associates this shift in reference with childish language or a pathogenic split personalities: “the mind of a child when it is not yet conscious of itself as an individual” (*Theory* 106), that is, when it is in a state of non-individuation. This lack of individuation comes back to haunt Hipparchia when she meets again with Marius. Here, Hipparchia-as-subject is suspended between the fear of extreme individuation and total non-individuation. H.D.’s transposition signals Hipparchia’s differences from the main female influences present in this scene (Olivia, mother, Sappho), while positing similarities that confirm her as a partial, relational subject. Realising that love does not entail separation but relation, H.D. uses quoted thought to suggest that Hipparchia’s spiritual capacity—her “overmind”—rescues her in this scene, as if “a wraith, an image that had advised her as a temple oracle” (*Palimpsest* 56). Hipparchia’s thought finds a “voice,” thereby merging her powers of intellect with her emotional reality (55).

With these subtle narrative voice stylisations, H.D.’s characterisation of Hipparchia illustrates Lahcen Haddad’s (1994) definition of fantasy as a “retracing of the history,” a backward movement of memory that allows the subject to come to terms with her or his desires (82). As we have seen, fantasy is necessary for inter/transsubjectivity as a deconstructive effect. Fantasy dismantles subjectivity as the desire for autonomy by exposing the gap between the real and the imaginary, between desire and its consummation. From this perspective, Hipparchia’s fantasy furnishes the connection—the virtual story sequence with its virtual subjectivity—between what can
be derived from the Real as an alternative reality, and what “really” exists.47

In this way, this scene promotes an intersubjective view of individuation involving fantasy. As a paradoxical shield from and bastion of the real, fantasy offers H.D. the narrative mode to represent Hipparchia as a subject who desires, but who cannot achieve relationality. In this function, fantasy infiltrates and opens multiple spaces where a unity of desire has been assumed,48 but where in fact, a plurality of multiple desires exists. By representing virtuality and fantasy in her narrative styles of intersubjectivity, H.D. presents a different mode of desire that, tragically, Hipparchia perceives but cannot embody. Therefore, she is a “phantom” subject; she wants to connect, but tragically, does not know how. By not knowing how, she forfeits the “knowingness” that comes from a love-bond, from caring.

Transsubjectivity in Palimpsest, Part II

In Palimpsest, Part II, H.D. also represents the co-created SELF through an uninterrupted, forty-page scene of a single conversation between two women in London. An American poet named Raymonde Ransome (pseudonym Ray Bart) is visited by an acquaintance, a Jewish actress named Ermentrude Solomon (nicknamed “Ermy”). Ermy relives Raymonde’s past trauma, the infidelity of her husband, thus these two characters are constituted by H.D. as like subjects. In their conversation, narrative transsubjectivity posits an ethics of care. As Ermy cares for Raymonde’s past sufferings, the initially indifferent Raymonde begins to care for her. H.D.’s narrative stylisation in this part of the novel represents a different modality of knowing than the one figured in Brook’s model of narrative desire; however, this modality is described in Winnie Tomm’s “liberation ethics.” As Tomm suggests, knowingness (of self and Other) requires a
connectedness "between subjective awareness and reflective description of the knower" ("Ethics and Self-Knowing" 108). Based on a relationship between self-awareness and reflective description—that is, the subjective "knowingness" of the Other from the subject position of that Other—a subject cares for the Other.

Tomm’s care ethics precludes an “I”-centred identity since such an identity signifies exclusion, not inclusion. H.D.’s use of “I” as a signifier of exclusion lies in her voice stylisations questioning the “I” as a stable embodiment of fixed subjectivity. Like Woolf, H.D. signifies the act of self-reference (naming) as a branding of subjectivity with the patriarchal SELF in singular, not multiple, terms. In this case, the “I” betrays the SELF’s partialness by compromising its possibilities and its creativity. According to H.D., the female “I” must be sacrificed because, by its definitive positioning, it reflects and perpetuates dominator models of subjectivity, along with their reductive conceptions of SELF. In the following analysis, Let us see how Raymonde negotiates the first-person pronoun in the narrative grammar of recognition to see herself “mirrored” as a relational identity and not as an exclusional “I.”

*Going “Hard with a Little Click”*

During their conversation, Ermy symbolises Raymonde’s Other. At the same time, Ermy is in exactly the same state as Raymonde was when her husband betrayed her; thus, Ermy emulates a part of “Raymonde” previous life that Raymonde attempts to forget. But through her conversation with Ermy, Raymonde recalls her husband Freddie’s adulterous affair with her friend Mavis Landor—an affair which destroyed Raymonde and Freddie’s marriage. But because Mavis is now having an affair with Ermy’s husband, Ermy goes
to see Raymonde. When, with much reluctance, Raymonde *recognises* her undeniable similarities with Ermy and, perhaps more importantly, *with Mavis*, H.D.’s stylisations structurally link these three women together in a transsubjective bond.

Let us focus on the stylisations which depict the “I” as inclusionary. Initially, Raymonde resents Ermy because she violates her space. Ermy openly discusses matters which Raymonde prefers to keep private. Raymonde feels obliged to confide in Ermy, but refuses to; she wants to keep her repressions intact. Raymonde’s aggressive stance towards Ermy does not melt until metamorphosis, until Raymonde realises that she *herself* is the cause of her own problems with Freddie, just as Julia is the cause of her own problems with Rafe. Only when Raymonde recognizes Ermy as a similar symbol of marital betrayal does she move out of self-pity and into a borderspace of psychic integration.

H.D.’s depiction of Raymonde’s identification stage parallels Julia’s, particularly in its poetic figurations of transformation that clearly reveal her initial desire to dominate. H.D. represents a dramatic shift in this desire by figuring a softening or liquefying of subjectivity. By replacing figures of hardness and protection with those of permeability, H.D. depicts Raymonde’s interpersonal boundaries, signified in the “I,” as porous and transgressable. Previous to metamorphosis, Raymonde’s desire to dominate, and reduce, Ermy-as-subject is apparent. For instance, when Raymond suggests to Ermy that Ermy’s *husband*, and not Mavis, instigated the adulterous love affair “for the sheer pleasure of watching Ermy squirm” (*Palimpsest* 122), readers are well aware of the fact that she withholding the sympathy that Ermy craves. Raymonde’s direct question to Ermy (“didn’t he perhaps...fall...for her?”), deliberately intending to hurt her, characterises Raymonde
as an immature avenger of her own emotional devastation. In short, she treats Ermy as an object. H.D. uses a passage of mixed metaphors to show how Raymonde projects her own self-loathing onto Ermy, thus confirming Raymonde’s non-relationality:

Raymonde felt herself go hard with a little click. She, felt herself, in one second, neatly encased in a neat little steel costume, not armour so much as something neatly falling, looking devastatingly simple and water-cool but not water-cool nor water-texture. All suave and smooth and turning, as a river-creature, to each mood of each new caller, Raymonde knew her movements. All slim and indecisive and malleable, Raymonde had her sudden swift decisions and her sudden hardening. Water-cool, slim and tenuous, easy to turn and change to the very thought of any chance acquaintance, she could occasionally go steel and arid. Cold and cruel. Calculating as any Hampstead Jewess. She felt this, felt that Ermy was not realizing it, could not realize so swift and artful a decision in one so malleable. “I mean didn’t he perhaps absolutely from the first ‘fall,’ as they say for her?” Raymonde questioned. It was not Ermy so much she was thinking of. Hard and cruel. It was not really Ermy she was steel against. It was Raymonde.

(Palimpsest 122)

In this segment, H.D. uses figuration to accomplish two purposes: one, to create sympathy for Raymonde, and two, to criticise her cruel treatment of Ermy. The third-person voice here figures Raymonde as a half-organic, half-metallic soldier-river-creature. This figure clearly acknowledges Raymonde’s repressions, particularly what is pitiful within them. At the same time, the figures stress the emotional coldness of Raymonde’s non-relationality—its calculated awareness and self-knowledge, implying
that her stance is defensive and self-destructive.

This stylisation's dual effect of sympathy and repulsion, reflected in the interplay of Raymonde's name as subject and object, represents Raymonde's self-reflexivity. Raymonde's self-reflexivity transforms her antagonism into a recognition of the Other. For instance, the metaphors of "steel" indicate the ruthlessness of Raymonde's responses. She deflects any and every comment that threatens her fragile construction of self-identity, framed, but ultimately unprotected, in its illusory autonomy. Thus, although Raymonde is a deft manipulator of conversation, her strategies are lost upon Ermy, who sees through them as strategies of deflection. Raymonde's rhetorical "diving" power is persistently undermined by H.D.'s inclusion of repetitive modifying adjectival phrases accompanying each figurative image ("not armour so much as something neatly falling"), thereby limiting the control that Raymonde believe she exerts here as one who knows "her movements."

H.D.'s style of narrative voicing in this passage "softens" Raymonde's hard social surface. Her use of Raymonde's free indirect thought which simulates, but does not "take on, the authoritative style of third-person narration, suggests that Raymonde is not as powerful in this situation as she pretends to be, or would like to be. In fact, this style implies that Raymonde exercises little, or even no self-control, over the negative associations that her social behaviours here connote. When she feels herself "go hard with a little click," the use of third-person narration suggests that Raymonde's coping mechanisms engage involuntarily, without conscious control. H.D.'s stylisation here shows Raymonde as an insecure and needy character, a direct contrast to the self-assured posture she projects. In this way, Raymonde's negative portrait confirms her need to
Relational Narrative Desire

transform non-relationality into relationality. At the same time, Raymonde realises that it is not “Ermy she was steel against,” but “Raymonde.”

By realising that she is her own enemy, Raymonde then integrates a series of self-Other recognitions that reconfigure her identity in a relational mode, paralleling the hallucinatory superimpositions of Hipparchia and Olivia, but with a significant difference. In the safety of intersubjective connection, symbolised by Ermy’s caring presence, Raymonde challenges her own inauthenticity. H.D.’s stylisation here represents Raymonde’s social poses as a seamless illusion of false autonomy, poorly constructed from internalised reflections of SELF that Raymonde attributes to Others.

When her final attempt to deflect the topic of conversation from her emotional reality backfires, Raymonde realises that Ermy has opened the “flood gate” to the “prodigious story,” “the hydra-headed vague monster,” the whole subject that she had “to the present, so skillfully evaded” (Palimpsest 107, 101). H.D. represents a borderlink here by including Raymonde’s symbolic gesture of stretching “humanely” to light some candles, thus finally welcoming Ermy into her space. From this point, their conversation becomes a borderspace of interlocution and interpolating consciousnesses as Raymonde finally voices judgment of Mavis’s treatment of Ermy, and by association, of herself: “How could she? Why did she?” (107).

The borderspace bonds these two subjects transsubjectively since Mavis is included as part of the empathetic bond between them. Thus, Raymonde and Ermy are able to forgive Mavis in a way that Hipparchia cannot forgive Olivia or Marius. Therefore, although the narrative stylisation in this passage resembles Hipparchia’s hallucinatory superimpositions, H.D.’s emphasis on the mirror-imagery which “binds”
them is also very distinct from Part I; let us see how.

In this recognition stage, the borderspace is manifested through visual images figuring a hallucinatory superimposition of Mavis upon Ermy, and then successive superimpositions of Mavis and Ermy upon herself. These superimpositions, like those of Hipparchia and Olivia, are narratively sustained through H.D.'s stylisation; it partially dissolves the triangular configuration of Mavis-Ermy-Raymonde, metramorphosing them into a communal subjectivity. Raymonde's recognition of their similarities creates a transsubjective connection. This recognition so dramatically challenges Raymonde's identity that she is severed, at least in terms of narrative grammar, from the past, indifferent Raymonde.

Let us take a moment to further scrutinize the technical stylisation of Raymonde's disembodiment. Ermy works to extract a confession from Raymonde in a way that moves her from egoistical self-pride to transsubjectivity. In the first stage of narrative transsubjectivity, self-reflection superimposes Raymonde's perceptions of Ermy's figure, and then turns to Ermy, whose subconscious thoughts and memories are still attached to Freddie. While Raymonde searches Ermy's experience for an answer to her own past concerning the "indissoluble problem of Mavis," paradoxically she finds that "her own eyes...answered her" (Palimpsest 117). In this extreme psychic-splitting, Raymonde, "who emerged along with Mavis and with Ermy," is the one "uninvited to her own teatable" (118). This paradoxical personification and objectification of her undesirable past self as a third-person—a persona-Raymonde distinct from SELF-Raymonde—opens a virtual subject position (borderspace), allowing Raymonde to situate herself relationally, both against the cruel Mavis, but towards the restorative Ermy. Thus, H.D.'s
characterisation of Ermy as Raymonde’s mirror “gives back” to Raymonde Raymonde’s own reflection—“sheer Raymonde”—in an accurate, objective personality profile:

Ermy (a highly refined surface) collected, concentrated, gave her back a self that she had so long let drift under the drug and anodyne of London. Ermy gave her not so much Ermy or Mavis as sheer Raymonde. Frighteningly, in avid clarity, Ermy gave her Raymonde and so clear did that Raymonde seem that again Raymonde turned (changing sides, changing now the angle of her observance with almost every heart-beat) against Raymonde....Raymonde facing straight on that past Raymonde now wanted to forget her [Raymonde of long ago]. Facing Raymonde she wanted to forget her. (118)

Blending third-person narration with free indirect thought here, H.D. skillfully represents Raymonde’s subjectivity as a mode of plurality, primarily through the reiterations of her name “Raymonde.” Her name functions literally as a proper noun (a “stable” identity), and as a metaphor (the partialness of identity). Although Raymonde is still characterised as a reluctant participant in this conversation, the reader notes, through the interpretation of Raymonde’s prismatic self-references and the third-person narrative’s objective references, her growing desire to socially interact with Ermy in a more sincere, authentic way.

Now we can see more clearly how Raymonde-as-subject and Raymonde-as-metaphor fuse in this passage through Ermy’s ability to “conjure” absent figures. By continuing the narration of her story. Ermy, a “polished surface,” functions as a mirror reflecting Raymonde’s past self who had also been cruelly betrayed by Mavis. Ermy suffers the same fate that Raymonde suffered years ago. For this reason, the narrative
begins to fuse their two separate subjectivities, but first, H.D. turns to explore and narratively “touch” the self-shattering mechanisms that partition Raymonde’s identity in multiple facets: the Raymonde who gazes at Ermy (and thereby, at Mavis); the Raymonde drifting in London; the “sheer” Raymonde, who participates in society; the clear and undiluted Raymonde of long ago that the present-day-Raymonde wants to forget.

Although Raymonde’s self-division promotes modernism’s popular conception of a fragmented self here, it also indicates where, and why, Raymonde is capable of transsubjective connection. The fragmentation of Raymonde’s identity reinforces the partialness of it, and symbolises the task placed upon her to integrate partiality in a relational mode. By clearly delineating the “kinds” of selves that she has generated, and more importantly, by understanding their inter-relationships, Raymonde is characterised as one who acknowledges her self-as/of-Other: “so clear did that Raymonde seem that again Raymonde turned (changing sides, changing now the angle of her observance with almost every heart-beat) against Raymonde” (118). In this statement, H.D. emphasises the inter-relationship between Raymonde’s partial selves as a negotiation and equalisation of power and agency among them.

Because H.D. needs a perspective that can “voice” the relationship between Raymonde’s subjectivity and objectivity in her self-references, she modulates third-person narration with free indirect thought to the extent that they are virtually and stylistically seamless, signaled only by grammatical irregularities (“gave her back a self”). Here, a loosely maintained third-person narration marks the beginning of Raymonde’s psychic shift, and a change of attitude as she begins to see herself in an
objective light. The “clear Raymonde”—“that” Raymonde—that Erny reflects back to her, replaces and “turns against” the inauthentic present-Raymonde that Raymonde had constructed in the past. The fusion of the present-Raymonde with the authentic-Raymond, beyond the Raymonde that she wants to forget, however, does not occur until the mirror scene. Raymonde’s revisionary power, then, thematises H.D.’s intersubjective connection as a dialectic between self and other. Raymonde realises that it is through Ermy that she herself is unquestionably changed for the better. The conversation that they share turns into a moment in which “all of her values altered. In a flash Raymonde altered” (Palimpsest 126-127). Realising that her past response to the betrayal was not “good enough” (127), H.D.’s depiction of Raymonde’s recognition shows how identity can integrate an Other’s similar experience.

Unlike feminist theories advocating the idealistic fusion of two subjectivities, here H.D. depicts a mode of transsubjective connection that ensures individuality within unity, and distinct subjectivity in love: “Love Mavis. Love her. Love Mavis....But stand apart and out of it—” (Palimpsest 158). In this example, fantasy offers H.D. the narrative mode for imitating intersubjective connection, and engaging in self-reflexivity as a healing power wherein the Other functions as memory-tracker and mirror in identity-formation. By Raymonde’s capacity for “joining with-in” the Other’s [Ermy’s] trauma, Raymonde joins matrixially in a connection both empathetic and painful, sharing trauma across borderspace.

The Mirror Scene

H.D.’s representation of Raymonde’s actual metamorphosis begins with her portrayal of
the prelasparian moment before the two betrayals. These moments are figured in a reflected image of all the characters involved in the love-triangle. To relive masochistically her own past, Raymonde obsessively questions Ermy regarding her visit to Mavis’s country estate, Eastacres, seeking an exact “picture” of how Ermy appeared beside Mavis while gazing into a mirror at Eastacres. Stylistically, this scene, that is, Raymonde’s interpretation of Ermy’s representation of the scene, superimposes the present conversation’s content on Raymonde’s memories. In this overlapping borderspace, Raymonde realizes her own character similarities to Ermy and to Mavis, thus she experiences herself as a virtual subject through Ermy’s (psychoanalytic) reconstitution of the scene for her. From this point on, Raymonde reclaims the right to subjection previously denied through her, confronting the reasons for her repressed self-loathing and self-blame.

Through H.D.’s detailed visualisations of the women’s similarities in this scene, including their exact locations before the mirror, their accessories, and the lighting, the characters’ identities become fused. Raymonde reinserts her own memory of standing beside Mavis before the same mirror into Ermy’s narrative. In her obsession to relive details of the exact scene, and to emotionally reinsert herself in it as well as “recover” her memory of Freddie, Raymonde attempts to recall what Mavis told her when they were gazing into the mirror. The initial opposition placed between Ermy and Raymonde by Raymonde, at this point dissolves in a series of linked hallucinatory superimpositions so that their character-parallels are undeniable, refracted through a third position:

“By the way Ermy. Tell me again about it. What exactly was it Mavis did say by that mirror?” Raymonde for about the twentieth time returned now to this, for of
all the tangle of over-detail Ermy had spun, one picture stood most definite. It was symbolical almost. It was Ermy looking at Ermy and it was Mavis who stood and looked at Mavis in a mirror. It was Ermy facing Ermy and Mavis facing Ermy and Mavis. By some over-subtlety of sympathy, Raymonde seemed to see Ermy with Mavis' eyes, see Mavis with Ermy's and see each with her own covertly self-appraising glances. (Palimpsest 129)

The "most definite," almost symbolical picture here evokes Benjamin's two-subject mirror. Rather than two subjects gazing at their own reflections, or at each other's reflections, H.D. represents Raymonde's visualisation of this scene as a triangular, transsubjective connection between subjects and imagos so that no explicit differentiation between them exists. In the first statement, the subjects gaze at themselves: "It was Ermy facing Ermy and Mavis facing Mavis." However, by reconfiguring the directions of the gazes in the next statement, the narrative voice, focalised by Raymonde, suggests that while Ermy remains a distinct subject ("Ermy facing Ermy"), the villain, Mavis, becomes a split subject. In this split, Mavis faces "Ermy and Mavis," as if she were a second Mavis, one embodying, and objectifying, the immorality of her own actions.

In this stylisation, Raymonde's focalisation indicates what she herself learns from Ermy. By "facing" Mavis, Ermy forces Mavis into accounting for her actions, as well as taking responsibility for them. Furthermore, with her "some over-subtlety of sympathy," her empathy, Raymonde includes herself in the scene as a virtual subject. When Raymonde sees "Ermy with Mavis' eyes" and sees "Mavis with Ermy's," she engages in a self-reflexive positioning which allows her to transsubjectively connect with both subjects. Thus, H.D. posits an inter-relationship between three like subjects in a shared
borderspace. By seeing Ermy with Mavis’ eyes, Raymonde is able to recognise Mavis’s needs, and finally to understand why Mavis might do such a thing. Additionally, by seeing Mavis with “Ermy’s eyes,” Raymonde learns, and admits, that Mavis has wrongly betrayed her friendship. Thus, Raymonde gains “objective” knowledge about herself in a way that does not objectify anyone. This transcendence of interobjectification constitutes for Raymonde a new dimension of self—her metramorphosis, which results in her ability to forgive, and to love, Mavis.

In this way, although “Mavis” becomes the transsubjective, universal signifier for acts of selfish betrayal, she is also, like Bella, a pitiful figure, requiring compassion, not condemnation for “facing up” to her actions. Thus Raymonde figures her as a series of Mavises seeing other Mavises: Raymonde “saw Mavis seeing another and another and another Mavis than the one she frankly (seeing then to poor Ermy, rather pitiful) decried there in the mirror. Mavis was secure with another series of reflection” (Palimpsest 129). Here, Raymonde realises the illusory aspect of Mavis’s autonomy in a mirroring image of infinite regression: “Behind Mavis they stretched, all the others, all the other Mavis-incarnations” (129). Thus, the “truths” gleaned through this mirroring process reveal to Raymonde alternative ways of structuring her experience and identity so that the repressed hostility felt towards Mavis ceases. Thus, in its self-reflexive capacity, H.D.’s style of transsubjectivity exposes aspects of relational identity that remove its destructive interobjectification effect. It provides possibilities for the self, which, to a certain extent, come from beyond the self.
Summary

H.D.'s experiments with narrative inter/transsubjectivity challenge the notion of Western individuality as the exclusive authorised version of subjectivity. Her novels radically challenge this notion by representing inter/transsubjectivity as psychic expansions of an amorphous identity which constitute the self as Other and the Other in self. This partialness of identity, stretching over two subjects, creates a narrative bond between them. H.D.'s depiction of metamorphosis forms a redemptive epiphany; characters learn from one another about their own inter-relationality.53

This style of relational identity differs from depictions of masculine modernist subjectivity, whose structural emphasis and experiments in authorial narration, and even the stream-of-consciousness technique, suggest that psychic dissolution and fragmentation can be secured through a concept of individuality as a unifying force. But this is an illusory force, H.D. suggests, sustained only at the expense of psychic damage and waste. In contrast, H.D.'s “I” moves beyond the conception of itself as an ego-bound identity constructed on and out of fear—the fear of connecting with the other. She shows that relational identity expresses itself through a radically different desire. It speaks “singularity” only in its capacity for multiplicity and difference. Thus, the subject's psychic integration of difference is won only through recognition of its capacity to root individuality in fusions of plurality, spewing forth “many incongruent monsters / and fixed indigestible matter” (H.D., Trilogy 32).

As we will see in the next chapter, by valuing communality and experiencing difference in community, Woolf “globalizes” H.D.'s narrative intersubjectivity and its psychic parameters to represent transsubjective connections which similarly arrest the
self's melancholic drifting and psychic inauthenticity. Transsubjectivity values the subject's power to assimilate the *logos* of the intermediate—the "between"—a dialectic bestowing the potential for a relational identity, straddling and preserving sameness *and* difference. By depicting woman as a virtual subject, H.D. advocates relationality as a desire mediating between individual autonomy and social connection, as does Woolf, as we shall soon see.
Walking today (Nessa’s birthday) by Kingfisher pool saw my first hospital train—laden, not funereal, but weighty, as if not to shake bones. Something what is the word I want: grieving & tender & heavy laden & private—bringing our wounded back carefully through the green fields at which I suppose some looked. Not that I could see them. And the faculty for seeing in imagination always leaves me so suffused with something partly visual partly emotional, I can’t though its very persuasive, catch it when I come home—the slowness, cadaverousness, grief of the long heavy train, taking its burden through the fields. Very quietly it slid into the cutting at Lewes. Instantly wild duck flights of aeroplanes came over head...

Virginia Woolf

Here the newspaper ended—but I could not get the words out of my head. ‘No father, no mother, no work,’ & so she killed herself. Had this been the act & writing of a girl it would have been sad enough—but that a woman of 45 should have written this for testament struck me as infinitely sadder. She had had her trial in life, time enough in 45 years to make test of all human relationships—daughterhood, wifehood, motherhood. Whether she knew these two last we cannot say—happiest for her if she had never known them—for last night she counted them as nothing. It was for her father and mother that this middle aged woman yearned—a father & mother, maybe, who died when she was a child. Perhaps this was so & she grew to womanhood without them & without need of them. She became a wife without thought of her parents, & a mother with hardly any memory of her own mother. But her husband leaves her for some other woman, & her children die, or desert her. Then of a sudden comes that pang—Without husband or children, I yet had parents. If they were alive now I should not be alone. Whatever my sin my father & mother would have given me protection & comfort. For the first time in her life perhaps she weeps for her parents & for the first time knows all that they were, & her loneliness without them. That sorrow I say is bitter enough in youth with the world before one & its promise; but in middle age one knows that the loss is one that nothing can heal & no fresh tie renew. Your husband may die & you can marry another—your children may die & others may be born to you, but if your father & mother die you have lost something that the longest life can never bring again.

Virginia Woolf
"That pang": Woolf's Relational Identity

Like H.D., Virginia Woolf represents metrarnorphosis through intersubjective and transsubjective connection using a wide variety of narrative stylisations. Woolf's concept of relational identity, the social integration of individuality with community, infuses all of her novels with their insistence on civil identity, but it can be seen especially in her early novel *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and her last novel *Between the Acts* (1941). In *Lighthouse*, Woolf represents intersubjective connections between different personalities from diverse upbringings, classes, and moral systems, who are staying at the Ramsay's house in the Hebrides. Similarly, characters in *Between* who assemble for a summer afternoon's pageant represent a group consciousness, Hillis Miller's "community mind," manage to bond across and through difference, recognised in subject-subject, or, as we will see, *I-Thou* pairings. Woolf's stylistion of narrative voice heterogeneity in these novels represents the co-created SELF in terms compatible with Habermas's understanding of personal identity, that is, as the "mirror image of collective identity" (*Communicative Action II* 58). Both novels suggest that, like H.D., Woolf sought a different definition of self-unity when individuals underwent the chaos of war. However, to a greater degree than H.D., Woolf's novels move beyond Benjamin's definition of intersubjectivity to represent narrative transsubjectivity: the human capacity to respect and to differentiate individuality within social collectivities. In this respect, Woolf's portrayal of diversity as the means to social unity creates new narratological markers of identity. This portrayal relies heavily on voice's anti-mimetic function since, in narrative, the voice must be attributable to "everyone" and "no one"—Woolf's *communal consciousness.*
As we discussed in Chapter I, narrative inter/transsubjectivity is anti-mimetic because it escapes attribution to a singular, identifiable mediating source. Instead, it is a textual illusion, a collective voice fusing multiple voices, or, alternatively, a single, anonymous voice speaking for “the masses”—in Woolf criticism, sometimes likened to a Greek chorus. Woolf’s anti-mimetic impersonalisation of voice, however, does not suggest a homogenisation of voice—an effect she regarded with utmost suspicion and criticism. Instead, Woolf’s narrative inter/transsubjectivity evokes a collectivity of voices which, although sufficiently detached from personal identity markers, still signify their individuation. Thus, as in H.D.’s novels, Woolf’s I is a disembodied voice rather than source of identity. In this way, Woolf conceives of relational identity as a profound shift in self-constitution; “I’ is just a “a convenient term for somebody who has no real being” (A Room 6).

In this chapter, I focus first on Woolf’s representation of intersubjectivity, which differs from H.D.’s in terms of narrative strategies. As we will see, in the two selected diary entries and in To the Lighthouse, Woolf strongly insists on the care-ethics within intersubjectivity, “emotional attunement” as a self-transcendent I-Thou pairing. Next I turn to Woolf’s portrayal of intersubjectivity in Between the Acts. Although similar in effect to Lighthouse, here intersubjectivity gains a distinct theme of universality emphasised in the final scenes of the novel. These scenes explicitly represent transsubjective bonds among the pageant’s audience members and its creator, Miss La Trobe. These analyses show how, and why, Woolf portrays relational identity as a partial identity, but at the same time universalises individuated speaking and thinking sources. Before we return to our analyses of Woolf’s works, let us consider the implications of
relational narrative desire in light of the two major streams of Woolf criticism which divide inter/transsubjectivity’s paradoxical effect of separation-as-connection: one arguing for themes of hope; the other arguing for themes of despair. Based on the following analyses, I propose to reconcile these opposing approaches by demonstrating that connection does not entail self-dissolution. Woolf’s stylisation of inter/transsubjectivity supports the paradox of relational identity: unity can emerge through shared experiences of individual differences. This means that one must acknowledge one’s partialness—a theme of potential despair—in order to experience oneself as “whole”—a theme of potential hope.

**Comic and Tragic: Interpretive Modes of Relational Desire**

Although both streams of criticism discussed in this section note Woolf’s innovative narrative strategies, as we have seen with H.D.’s criticism, they lack a comprehensive theoretical framework that could reconcile their different approaches and interpretations. Without a theoretical model accounting for Woolf’s narrative plurality, particularly her use of polyvalence and virtual subjectivity, these criticisms are incommensurable sitting on one side of the fence or the other. But with a narratological model of inter/transsubjectivity to integrate difference through sameness, we can successfully accommodate both interpretative frameworks. In this context, *Lighthouse* and *Between* can be read both as modern psychological novels witnessing the horrors of human displacement, and as positive affirmations of communality among like subjects who integrate individual difference as a means to social unity. Let us see why.

Woolf’s themes of relationality have been ignored by interpretations that argue
for her novels' comic or tragic effect. In Woolf's novels, relationships control the way inner psychic knowledge is gained. However, literary critics have too narrowly focused on exclusionary modes of narrative desire, focussing on either the fragmentary stylisations which threaten Woolf's aesthetic unity and thereby emphasising their tragic elements, or they focus on Woolf's optimism, emphasising elements associated with classical comedy. These critics argue that her portrayal of community shows a positive vision of collectivity (Harper 1982; Blodgett 1983; Joplin 1989; Cuddy-Keane 1990; Ray 1990; Pawloski 1992; Cramer 1993; Beer 1994) and they trawl Woolf's extensive biographical material to document her hope that war could be avoided and that creativity could endure. In this light, these critics focus on narrative techniques signifying inclusion, as well as on figures for social surface connections. This approach includes Woolf's feminist critics who valorise her dismantling of power-over dominator structures through narrative resistance to unity and through her characterisation of marginalised characters. These critics persuasively make the points they wish to stress, but often dismiss or ignore the points that do not fit their approaches.

Melba Cuddy-Keane (1990), one such feminist critic, suggests that in *Between*, comic modes integrating politics and genre effectively "overthrow prevailing assumptions about the role of leaders and the nature of groups" (273). This is true. But Cuddy-Keane's unilateral style of interpreting *Between's* disruptive strategies as resistant to patriarchal hegemony neglects the value that Woolf places on characters like Miss La Trobe and even Bart Oliver, who, in their unavoidable dominator roles, are also relational subjects. Thus, I believe that Cuddy-Keane makes an understandable, but unsubstantiated leap in suggesting that *Between* lies solely within the comic genre; she
ignores its tragic elements. However, Cuddy-Keane persuasively argues that Woolf’s inhibition of satiric impulse in *Between* presents community as a different kind of order, one that can temporarily “overturn” the existing order and capture, to a certain degree, the temporal nature of transsubjective bond that I emphasize here, although her use of “overturn” requires some qualification. Without offering any narratological or textual support, she concludes that Woolf’s collective voice is “more individualistic than the voice of a spokesperson” (“The Politics of Comic Modes” 283). This point weakens her argument by undermining her analogy to a Greek chorus, which typically homogenises stylistic markers of distinct individuality. Although Cuddy-Keane’s study is limited in terms of what it can offer narratologically, it does present a convincing view of *Between*’s depiction of community as an effective political force.

Another study emphasising an optimistic reading of Woolf’s war themes includes Patricia Cramer’s “Virginia Woolf’s Matriarchal Family of Origins” (1993), a comparison of *Between*’s themes to Ruth Benedict’s theories in *Patterns of Culture* (1934) and Jane Harrison’s works on ritual (1913-1924). Cramer argues that Woolf agrees with their assumptions that a culture’s specific ideological beliefs, and its determinate goals, produce psychological principles that can be classified as patriarchal or matriarchal. Patriarchal principles value competition and domination, while matriarchal principles favour co-operation and group-structures. Within this radical essentialism of gender roles, Cramer convincingly argues that the creative powers of Dodge, Swithin, Isa and Miss La Trobe are based on a mythological paradigm of affinity and “intuitive recognitions” (175). However, in her feminist drive to restore power to the female “diminished goddesses” (Isa, Swithin and Miss La Trobe) through reclaiming
matriarchal memory (178), Cramer focuses her analysis strictly upon the pageant’s scenes, rather than these characters’ interrelationships, thus having to concede finally that such characters fail to “bring common meaning to birth” (Ibid.)—a conclusion entirely antithetical to the one I propose. In my reading, inter/transsubjectivity is predicated upon the ability to share common meaning, albeit in imperfect communicative forms.

The stream of criticism opposing these restorative readings (Sears 1983; Moore 1984; Marder 1988; Barrett 1989; Ames 1991; Lanser 1992; Daughtery 1993; Phillips 1994; Reese 1996; Haliburton 2001) emphasises Woolf’s “tragic” effects, narrative strategies of self-fragmentation and representations of the social incongruences that divide human beings. This approach emphasises themes associated with non-relationality and techniques connoting separation—the interruptions and silences, for instance, of the authorial narratorial voice(s). Eileen Barrett (1989) is one such critic. She analyses *Between’s* feminist plot through Woolf’s coding of matriarchal myths between the pageant’s acts. Barrett locates Woolf’s female characters’ feminist resistance opposing the narrator’s figural objectifications of women. However, by focussing on the characters’s disagreement regarding mythological remaking, Cramer loses sight of the unifying power of individual differences, thus arguing that disempowered characters like Dodge, Isa, and Swithin are lethargic and stagnant; they ultimately fail to move subjecthood out of patriarchal constraints. Cramer treats Isa’s cameo performance as a suicidal heroine as a rare and temporary release from her habitual passivity, thus depriving Isa, and characters like her, of the civil identities I attribute to them here.

Whether arguing for comic or tragic treatment of individualism, feminist readings of Woolf tend to reduce her portrayal of female subjectivity through categorising
characters as subjects or objects. They fail to notice in their various politicisations Woolf's emphasis upon the ego's integral part in constructing self-identity. Thus, they both lose sight of and narrow the scope of Between's complex portrayal of gender relations in patriarchal society. Therefore, the way these critics segregate comic/tragic modes in Lighthouse and Between deprives these texts of an analysis which looks at narrative voices' structural aspects. Many of these studies use metaphorical terms too vague or imprecise to describe voice stylisations; by confusing distinct styles of voice representation, they miss Woolf's emphasis on the value of individuality for communal consciousness. These streams of criticism suggest that no comprehensive critical approach has yet been developed that can accommodate both comic and tragic effects in Woolf's novels. Unfortunately, recent historiographic and psychoanalytic criticisms of Woolf are also inadequate in their emphases on materiality, rather than disembodiment, and on Lacanian lack, rather than relational desire.

Current Woolf Criticism

Inspired by postmodernism's interest in feminism and new historicism (and historiography), much recent Woolf criticism focuses on her definition of community, both in terms of a lived materialism and as a philosophical concept. Although these works diverge widely in their interdisciplinary interests, they agree, as do I, that Woolf's sense of community resists abstract individualism to advocate what Marilyn Friedman (1995) calls a "communitarian perspective" which values social attachments and relationships, thus discovering and constituting for oneself a social identity ("Feminism and Modern Friendship" 189-90, 197).
Literary criticism of Woolf's novels frequently evokes this value. For example, Barbara Babcock (1990) evokes Victor Turner's term *communitas* to signify the cognitive aspect of Woolf's *plural* reflexivity, wherein individual group members "mirror" the metastructural aspect of social relations, a transient, undifferentiated state of communion between identities (106). In depicting *communitas*, I argue further that Woolf creates a grammatically shared transsubjective space to interlink diverse minds, thus conceiving of relational identity as comprised of distinct, separate subjectivities.

Linden Peach (2000) and Stuart Christie (2002) take a much more rigorous historiographic approach to Woolf's idea of community, particularly in relation to *Between*. Although I contextualise Woolf's narrative inter/transsubjectivity more prominently within psychoanalytic theories, Peach and Christie apply Habermas's concept of transsubjectivity, to Woolf, especially in their analyses of *Between*’s performative aspects. Given this, I will briefly summarize their approaches—Peach’s "cryptoanalysis" (the cultural psychology of chronotope) and Christie’s *epigone*—although their actual contribution to a narratological study of Woolf's novels is limited and their discussion also often lapses into mere textual explication.

Peach compares Woolf's depiction of nationhood to Angela Carter and Hayden White’s, arguing that these authors sit at the "very juncture" of deconstruction and New Historicism. However, as Peach argues, Woolf views history as "accessible only through partial and partisan narratives in which it is realised," contextualised in the British imperial notions of "colonialism, Englishness and masculinity" (*Virginia Woolf* 4, 12). This cryptoanalytic method of reading *Between*, a reading of what the text conceals as occluded narrative (205-6), focuses almost exclusively on the pageant’s darkly
carnivalesque critique of British nationalism and the way in which different chronotopes enter into characters' consciousness (13). Peach's contribution lies in the observation that Woolf's critique of the empire took two forms: one confronted an active, individuated and conscious agency ("devastatingly parodic"); the other, an unconscious, social, passive agency ("insufficiently conscious of its complicity" with Western authority) (29). Note, however, that despite his emphasis on the positive and negative aspects of the carnivalesque, Peach is still forced to polarise these modes in positive and negative terms, thus interpreting the Pointz Hall community as a symbol of pervading hopelessness, unable to live or to die (200), thus bypassing Woolf's paradoxical themes of inclusionary desire.

Concentrating more closely on Woolf's historical treatment of British nationality using Nietzsche's concept of the "emasculated epigone" (late-comer), Christie argues that Miss La Trobe's pageant resists an oversaturated national history (and identity). Christie uses Butler's theory of performative gender to analyse the figures for female power. Christie claims that Woolf's epigone (Miss La Trobe) privileges the representation of everyday, multiple "happenings" over the historicisation of momentous events (158). This provocative discussion of Miss La Trobe as community's "constitutive lacuna" ("Willing Epigone" 161), however, only considers one narrative effect related to characterisation, narrative arrhythmia—the asynchronous gaps and ruptures within national time—captured by Woolf's representation of war newspaper media in the novel as well as Miss La Trobe's deconstruction of the "prisonhouse of historical consciousness" (163-66, 170). Although interesting and informative, Christie's historiographical view of print culture fails to employ the psychoanalytic framework
needed here.

In contrast to the new historicist approaches, two studies of Woolf’s concept of community evoke the psychoanalytic parameters I use here, Michelle Mimlitsch (1999) and Jessica Berman (2001). Both of these works contribute, in a preliminary fashion, to the narratological definition of communal consciousness I propose. Mimlitsch’s study of abjection in Between’s community, using Kristeva’s theory of the semiotic, aligns with the assumptions I make here concerning the unifying power of inter/transsubjective connection. Mimlitsch argues that the novel’s ambiguous personal boundaries symbolise a peaceful community, rather than “isolated horror” (“Powers of Horror and Peace” 36). However, her claim that the novel’s unity can only be posited in the breakdown of these borders neglects the possibility I pose here: namely, that Woolf envisions the relational self as unified, coherent, and pluralised, capable of negotiating and re-negotiating interpersonal boundaries for self-hood. Therefore, rather than the apocalyptic destruction envisioned in Mimlitsch’s interpretation of Between’s need “for a distinctly bordered self” (37), I suggest that the characters’ drives to separate themselves from abjection are balanced by their ability to integrate the culturally disclaimed and disprized, the undeniable markers of Otherness.

Drawing on Homi Bhabha’s concept of an interstitial community, Berman’s (2001) study of cosmopolitanism in modernist fiction usefully offers narrative constructions and alternative models for community. For instance, her chapter on Woolf’s enmeshment in the anti-fascist, feminist British Women’s Co-operative Guild argues that The Waves’ inscription of relational self promotes social organisation through a politics of personal connection, while opposing absolute divisions of public power,
particularly class. In this case, narrative action becomes praxis, while “the expansion of subject substitutes for the consolidation of personal political power” (Modernist Fiction 117). Berman’s observation of the materiality of such expansion, given that the body is “the determinative term” of the matrix of “fleshly experience” (119), parallels my analysis of the intersubjective mirror scenes in Between, wherein the body figures the kind of empathy and community that subjects can experience. My discussion of Woolf’s narrative communal consciousness, while similar in part to these conceptions of Woolf’s community, takes a more strictly narratological approach to analyze textual representations of communicative acts involved in experiencing oneself as part of community.

The Woolfian Mirror

The most useful, but unfortunately, the most limited Woolf criticism for my purposes here uses current literary and psychoanalytic trends. While such criticism attempts the daunting task of theorising Woolf’s specific psychoanalytic representations of human subjectivity, narratological blindspots caused these critics to insist upon narrative voice’s mimeticism, rather than its anti-mimeticism. Without exception, these studies assume the dominator model of desire, and within it, desire as originating in Lacanian lack (manque). In other words, by assuming a non-relational subject, they presume that desire is singular, thus missing some of Woolf’s most important themes of plurality.

By insisting upon voice’s mimetism, critics like Michelle Mimlitsch (1999), Kristina Busse (2001) and Hsiu-Chang Deppmann (2001), for instance, fail to perceive Woolf’s relational subject. Their analyses of the intriguing mirror scenes in Woolf’s
Relational Narrative Desire

novels are predicated upon the subject-object pairings in patriarchal notions of subjectivity, and not upon the subject-subject pairings assumed by Benjamin and Irigaray. Unlike myself, they do not interpret characters like Lily, Mrs. Swithin and Isa as *subjects in the process of struggling for civil identity*. Therefore, while these works and others\(^{15}\) promote a sophisticated understanding of Woolf’s mimeticism, they agree that her narrative portrayal of subjectivity is (tragically) predicated on Lacanian lack. Using this framework, they entirely miss Woolf’s emphasis on the partialness of relational identity. For example, by arguing that identification functions as a “cover-up” for the conscious awareness of self-construction, Busse misses the *recognition* aspect of *inter/transubjectivity* which conceives of identification as psychic *integration*—not transference. By missing the subject-subject pairings Woolf carefully constructs in her fictional conversations, Busse regards subjectivity as predicated on a central and constitutive lack, particularly in the novels’ mirror scenes, arguing the mirror reflections can only represent Others’ image of self, thus revealing “the tenuousness of any [self] construction as well as the arbitrariness of a subject’s identity” ("Reflecting the Subject” 77). Obviously such tenuousness and arbitrariness can only be posited in terms of a non-relational identity, since the model of relational identity responds to such partialness in terms of inclusivity. As we have discerned, a co-created SELF does not complete itself through the Other, but rather co-joins *with* the Other to explore its own capacity for plurality.

In their interpretations of Woolf’s mirror scenes (in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *Between*), these critics focus on narrative voices’ mimeticism. The Lacanian model of desire as lack is used since they cannot theoretically conceive subjects as partial identities. For
instance, Busse argues that La Trobe’s actor’s broken mirrors “collapse the identities of the [audience’s] subjects,” thus forcing them to face “their central lack” (“Reflecting the Subject” 82). This view directly opposes mine, since I believe that the broken mirrors, as signifiers of partial identity, reveal to the audience their inter-relationships, not their “lack” thereof. In Busse’s reading, characters like Lily and Isa are interpreted as objects—not subjects—with singular roles; these are characters “for whom identification has ceased to function” (81). In wanting to be both mother/artist-lover, Busses argues, Lily and Isa are “neither” (83). Here again, my view directly opposes Busse’s—I assume desire’s plurality. Lily and Isa not only want to be both mother-lover/artist, in my view, they are mother-lover/artist in terms of relational desire. I argue that Woolf’s narrative use of polyvalence and virtual subjectivity supports her characters’ integration of such complementary (not contradictory) roles. Moreover, Woolf’s relational narrative desire predicates subjectivity on and locates it in partialness—not upon the lack of what Busse calls a “core authentic self,” whose identifications cover up, or disguise, subjects’ conscious awareness of their own self-constructedness: “her [Isa’s] parts do not draw together but rather fall apart, drop off, to reveal—nothing” (81). I think that Woolf would be entirely dismayed at this statement (to which I return later), considering her painstaking construction of Isa as a virtual identity.

Similarly, Deppmann perceives the Woolfian mirror as a figure for the tyrannic, ambivalent, and often “hostile cultural devices” that reveal women’s conflicting identities. This reading is also problematic since it, too, is solely predicated upon singular modes of individualism. Deppman makes the mistake of interpreting multiplicity as ambiguity. He assumes that since alternate identity constructions compete in dominator
fashion among one another, subjects can only experience identity mimetically, in singular modes. But notice how dramatically these interpretations change in the context of Litchenberg’s concept of metramorphosis. In this context, non-relational subjects in the matrix, like the ones described by Deppmann and Busse, realise that they are co-created by Others, even if they do not experience what it feels like to integrate Otheredness as/in self.

Lichtenberg describes this state as one suspended between identification and metramorphosis. For instance, as Christine Buci-Glucksmann (1992) explains, when we inscribe psychic events without witness (that is, without identification or recognition), “we find ourselves with an annulled gaze” (286). But according to Lichtenberg, “this gaze is not nothing” (“Bracha Ettinger Lichtenberg”). In other words, whether or not an individual realises his/herself as a relational subject, the individual is partially constituted by his or her webbing of social networks. Metramorphosis is just the process of realising, and the appreciation of, this condition. A non-relational subject describes the subject’s “constitutive heteronymy of intimate-anonymous” relation (Buci-Glucksmann 286), in other words, as a between a space of non-relational contact.

Therefore, even though I do not believe this qualification is necessary to read subjects like Mrs. Swithin and Isa as relational identities, I nonetheless offer it in response to Busse’s interpretation of Isa as a “nothing.” For instance, even as a non-relational subject, Isa’s annulled gaze (the awareness not made conscious) holds the potential for inter/transsubjective contact and connection. As such, the self-splitting and self-alientation processes, of paramount importance in the Lacanian symbolic order, receive positive valuations in the context of Lichtenberg’s matrix and metramorphosis.
Here, I argue that instead of "nothingness," such forms of anonymity signify antimimetic, alternative modes of virtual subjectivity. Thus, in my view, Woolf's valuing of non-individuation, the state of receptive unknowningness, is overlooked by current psychoanalytic Woolfian criticism.

For this reason, I offer a very different reading of *Between* in attributing civil identities to socially marginalised characters like Mrs. Swithin, Isa and William Dodge. Like H.D.'s Julia, these characters integrate potentially traumatic differences into a co-created SELF. In this way, they identify with Others (and Otherness) as *partial* subjects not requiring "core" identities. Instead, they intersubjectively locate aspects of themselves *within* Others. Thus, Woolf's representation of communality represents inter/transsubjective union as an emotional force resisting the *power-over* structures of dominator enterprises. By emphasising the human capacity to integrate difference, Woolf's characters transcend the inconsistencies in symbolic constructions of identity that demand a subject-object pairing, assuming instead subject-subject bonds.

**Habermas and Herd Mentality: Woolf's War**

In an historical context, Woolf's themes of inter/transsubjectivity take on explicitly political undertones, by advocating individuality to counter the "herd" mentality pervading Hitler's dictatorship and the fascist military machine prior to and during World War II. In *Between*, Woolf's representation of narrative inter/transsubjectivity was obviously influenced by her personal response to the threat of war. While composing *Between* (1938-1940), Woolf suffered the destruction of her London residence in Tavistock Square, the threat of German bomber planes buzzing over Monk's House in
Relational Narrative Desire

Rodmell, and she heard Hitler's "mad voice vociferating" on the radio (Diary V 166). With its potential for annihilating human heterogeneity as she knew it, and its grumbling "in an articulate way behind reality," the war terrified her. Already grieving the loss of relatives and familiar places prior to Hitler's planned invasion of England, Woolf viewed war from an ideological distance, a distance which always, paradoxically, anticipated the possibility of her own death.

Already in vogue at the beginning of the twentieth century, theories of herd mentality, group psychology and crowd theory, purported a view directly opposing Virginia Woolf's modernist concept of individuality. Woolf rejected Le Bon's dominator model as the only possible model for human interrelationships, as is evident in her critique of Freud's essay "Le Bon's Description of the Group Mind." In that essay, Freud attacks Le Bon's concept that a group possessing a collective mind can make the group "feel, think, and act in a manner quite different from that in which each individual would feel, think and act were he in a state of isolation" (cited in Freud, Group Psychology 5). The possibility of merging indiscriminately to a group and losing one's sense of identity within it, produced what Woolf believed to be a cult-mentality that opposes human rights. In Three Guineas (1938), for instance, Woolf uses the British, educated, male elite of patriarchal institutions (universities, governments, and courts of law), who systematically worked to eradicate social difference, an historical symbol of the overly-homogenised group-mind. Woolf also saw herd mentality as directly responsible for compromising the women's liberation movement in Britain—a movement that Woolf cared about deeply and addressed directly in A Room of One's Own (1929), as the liberation of female subjectivity through recognition of its relationality; the "shape"
of an individual's emotion, the foundation for homogeneity and heterogeneity, once blended with others, is made "by the relation of human being to human being" (Room 71).

Woolf's stylisation of narrative voice in *Between* explicitly critiques herd mentality through the novel's depiction of human inter-relations as a social network that opposes dominator culture. As a narratological construct, Habermas's *transsubjectivity* also opposes herd-mentality with the accompanying homogenous portrayal in communal structures of human consciousness. Habermas's transsubjectivity does not hierarchize or privilege access to any particular character's consciousness. Instead, it values all of the characters' subjectivities—a desirable style of thought and communication that Woolf calls a "wobbling" mass of subjectivities (*Diary II* 248). According to Habermas, intersubjectivity gains a transsubjective dimension when a network of social interactions transcends any local context. In this case, subjects argue to participate, interact and cooperate in communication, but the transsubjective bond, however, does not transcend the presence of, or need for, localised contexts. As Habermas (1987a) argues, the condition of mutual understanding in transsubjective communication definitely "blots out" space and time, but the claim for agreement is "always raised here and now, in specific contexts, and is either accepted or rejected with factual consequences for action" ("An Alternative Way" 323).

Habermas' theory illuminates the way that Woolf stylises specific, localised geographical and cultural contexts for her characters (like London, Turkey, the Hebrides, and Pointz Hall), as well as her depiction of narrative voices as specific contextualisations of human understanding. Thus, through the retention of local idioms
and colloquialisms, Woolf suggests that *transhistorical*, *transcultural* and even *transsexual* dimensions of identity standing as universal signifiers for connection and disconnection in human relationships. Obviously this vision of universality directly opposes the annihilation of difference—in herd mentality—as a means to unity. Accordingly, in my analyses, I will focus on Woolf's portrayal of a communal consciousness in terms of homogeneity. I argue that, in these novels, individuality is pluralised, and felt in relation, so that individual differences can be interpreted within more than one context. The resolution and compatibility of interpretive frames in these novels support the model of human subjectivity as plural.

Woolf's substitution of the *I* with the plural *we*\(^2\) signals her belief in the ability of communal structures to take responsibility in protecting individuality—a significant contrast to Hitler's fascism of World War II. Within her transposition of the subjective *I* into a transsubjective *we*, Woolf acknowledges the potential dangers of self-dissolution and self-alienation in a communal structure, whether it be political or domestic. As Gillian Beer (1987) notes, *we* is an "elastic, colonizing" pronoun that Woolf clearly understands as potentially coercive and treacherous, everywhere evident in forms of extreme nationalism, such as Hitler's fascism ("The Body of People" 87). In the following analyses, we will see how she fails to glorify inter/transsubjectivity's fusion aspects, highlighting instead the difficulties in communication. I argue that in advocating the tolerance of interpersonal difference, Woolf's novels privilege the group over the individual. But this group does not erase individuality; on the contrary, it evokes, for the individual, his or her specific differences, which are then integrated into communal structures.
“Partly visual, partly emotional:” Woolf’s Virtual Subjectivity

To introduce Woolf’s narrative stylisation of relational identity, I will analyse the two diary entries opening this chapter. Although these stylisations are developed in more complex ways in *Lighthouse* and *Between*, even these brief, and presumably spontaneous writings, with their thematic emphasis on empathy, emulate the subject-subject relationships of inter/transsubjective connection. In these entries, Woolf’s personas, similarly constructed as melancholy subjects mourning the unnecessary loss of life, interpellate a virtual subject—a SELF-created Other—as a mode of empathy predicated upon relationality. Here, Woolf implies that her most important insights in these reflections depend upon a “partly visual, partly emotional” connection incorporating both modalities. Emotionality cannot be interpreted without reference to the real, while the real cannot be experienced without a constitutive subjectivity. In this dual mode of subjectivity, the diary-persona inserts a virtual position *between* subject and object as a secure place in narrative discourse to voice the multiple possibilities for positioning the SELF in its integration of trauma—in this case, the traumatic, unnecessary, and unexplainable deaths of Others.

Woolf’s first diary entry, written on her sister Vanessa’s birthday, posits a borderspace between her persona and the returning British soldiers who are obscured from her vision. Here, the diary persona empathetically negotiates a borderlinking (“seeing in imagination”) with the soldiers, phantom or virtual Other(s), housed in the train. Although the persona cannot see these soldiers, she experiences an epiphany by psychically connecting with the devastating circumstances that have wounded them, or even worse, that have caused their companions’ deaths. Woolf’s persona here explicitly
Relational Narrative Desire

acknowledges her empathetic connection with the soldiers as a communicative structure, a deliberate act of articulation that reveals its non-narratibility: “I can’t [sic] though its very persuasive, catch it when I come home.” Resisting her temptation to pinpoint this “it” in a singular dimension—for example, in the emotion she feels, the emotion the soldiers may feel, or the train’s journey itself—Woolf uses polyvalence to expand the train trope in terms of its capacity to connote both hope and despair. The hospital train, an unmistakable harbinger of death, is also seen as a nurse, recovering the men from annihilation by war.

What Woolf desires in her representation of the train’s plurality is a figure connoting empathy without imposing an I upon it. Thus, the persona relies on fantasy to partially merge with the train’s “burden.” In this mode, the persona constitutes her subjectivity as a virtual projection: “Not that I could see them.” This transference of self—“I” and the internalisation of trauma fantasised between SELF-Other cannot be easily (or grammatically) separated into objective/subjective spheres. Instead, the virtual subject identifies with the partly visual, partly emotional image of the “slow, cadaverous grief” stretched across, and equally attributable to, subjects both inside and outside the train, that is, to a co-created self: the I and the some who “looked.” The subject includes Woolf’s persona, but is certainly not limited to it. Thus, the persona’s quiet phrases of contemplation, ironically symbolising the train as an object of abject grief, paradoxically evoke its restorative, healing function. By resisting singularity, Woolf’s persona allows the Other to be felt and experienced within SELF as relational identity. Once integrated, the difference between SELF and Other can be experienced as knowable, and thus as narratable.
Woolf’s keen ability to read and fantasise Otherness as a co-emerging subject is also evident in the second diary excerpt—her reflections upon the Serpentine suicide victim. Woolf’s absent-centre motif is projected here in the persona’s speculation on the victim’s supposed circumstances, as well as the details surrounding the victim’s actual death. Woolf’s narrative, functioning here almost solely in an imaginative, fantasy mode, symbolises an intersubjective integration of identity’s traumatic borderspaces. Woolf’s construction of the virtual subject in this entry is represented as a reading response, a communicative act intersubjectively filling in the gaps and indeterminacies of the article’s account and the suicide note itself. This method of reading allows the persona to identify with and fully humanise this tragedy, a recognition of self-Other similarity. In this, Woolf implies that although the SELF cannot be Other, the self, in fully “imagining” the trauma of Other, can be so in her/his psychic dimensions.

As in Isa’s reconstruction of the rape scene in Between, here Woolf ceases to be a distanced or objective reader of the incident. Instead, she stylises herself as an interactive participant—an intervening subject—in the story. Despite her textual gaps, Woolf’s diary persona conjures an entire life-story for the suicide victim, inserting, where necessary, her own fictional representations to posit reasons for the woman’s death and her desire to waste her life. Woolf’s narrative representation of relational desire in this diary entry posits a virtual subject as actual reader and virtual-subject by alternately referring to internal and external views of the material and psychic aspects of the situation. In this way, the diary-persona occupies, without contradiction, the distant, reflective, observer-witnessing position and the urgent, passionate, pleading subject-position, forming together Lichtenberg’s wit(h)nessing position. Let us see how this
double positioning is realised stylistically.

**Emotional Attunement**

Rather than objectifying the Serpentine suicide victim by voicing her story, or, even worse, speaking her story for her, the diary-persona ponders and tackles the newspaper article’s textual gaps and omissions as space in which to re-embody the suicide victim. She imagines what this woman’s life would have, or could have been like before her death. By positioning herself and the expressive markers of her contemplation in a *subject-subject* relationship to the victim, the persona creates a dialogic “speaking part” for the victim without appropriating her voice (as reproduced in the actual suicide note), or by attributing one to her. By allowing her sympathetic reflections to speak *about* the victim, and using free direct speech to represent her empathy, the diary-persona’s *I* conjoins with the *non-I* in a grammatical transposition from impersonality (“*she*”) to personality (“*I*”), thus temporarily embodying subjectivity as a partial identity: “without husband or children, I [too] yet had parents.” Note, once more, that this enlarged narrative subjectivity is *virtual*. By personalising and actively embodying the victim-as-subject, the persona metamorphises the “*it*”—the article’s content—to affect change in the SELF: “it struck me.” Here, as with the previous diary excerpt, Woolf’s persona grants civil identity to this disembodied subject by reclaiming for her represented subject an experiential, affective dimension that can constitute identification.

Just as Mrs. Swithin in *Between* recreates Dodge from his schoolboy constructions, here the diary persona’s intersubjective connection with the (virtual) victim-Other is an immersive experience, a psychic revitalisation of a non-relational
identity. This virtual subjectivity is attuned. It reflects the tragedy of lost relationships, as well as the lost opportunities for making new relationships, when it emerges through sudden tense and pronominal shifts occurring midway in the entry: "But her husband leaves her for some other woman [active present tense]; "Without husband or children, I had yet parents" [from third to first person]. These shifts form semantic bridges that simulate a transposition from SELF to Other in a paradoxical articulation of I. When sufficiently detached from SELF, "I" connotes a universally shared subject position to express the grief of anyone and everyone who has lost, or will lose, her or his parents.

The startling pronominal shift to "I" and the insertion of a virtual interior monologue—the attribution of the persona’s compositional structure to the victim’s consciousness—simulates the Other’s hypothetical reasoning processes. This effect is important because it signals the persona adopting what she perceives to be the victim’s final emotional reality. As a conditional statement, the persona’s return to third-person reference, "perhaps she weeps," is sensitively attuned to possible emotional reactions of the victim. This statement is immediately followed by a final pronominal shift—this time to a second-person address: "If your parents die ... you have lost something." Suddenly, the reader, both Woolf and actual readers, are included, and transported, into the victim’s emotional reality. By using the second-person to include, and identify, all readers as part of a collective, a generalised narratee, Woolf’s persona argues for inclusivity in a narratively constructed communal consciousness. Everyone, given access, can form an identification with this victim—and any part[s] of her story—based on the particulars of their own experiences. Naturally, Woolf’s own biographical allusions cannot be neglected here. Having lost both of her parents at a young age, Woolf’s personal
projection mourning their loss transforms the anonymous victim into a signifier of relationality and shared subjectivity. The victim comes to stand for Woolf's persona, and Woolf herself, as a like subject in a form of intense identification, rather than appropriation.

Thus, instead of appropriating the Other to explore Woolf's own personal loss, her virtual subject emphasises the social value of "attuned" interpersonal connections. This consideration and inclusion of a greater segment of humanity shows how Woolf, with a few stylistic changes, evokes a transsubjective bonding across all possible subjects, within and outside the text. With these subtle but dramatic shifts, the persona invites readers to co-create aspects of Other which emancipate SELF from a singular mode of being—a strategy entirely antithetical to the herd mentality's conception of sameness as homogeneity, rather than heterogenity—Woolf's primary theme.

"I-Thou" Relations: Intersubjectivity and Transsubjectivity in To The Lighthouse

Woolf's narrative strategies in her diary entries show the value that she places on compassion. "Otherness" must be understood from the subject position of the Other—a virtual subject position. In her narrative voice stylisations, Woolf implies that virtual subjectivity is valued as the human faculty "for seeing in imagination" (289) what may not be directly accessed through individual experience. This value infuses the ambivalent, but strangely intimate, relationships in a number of scenes in Lighthouse. By achieving Lichtenberg's metamorphosis, a psychic healing through sociability, certain characters in Lighthouse change from being non-relational subjects to relational subjects. To analyse the narrative techniques and strategies responsible for this change, I will draw primarily on two scenes: the dinner scene, in which Lily is socially obliged
by Mrs. Ramsay to converse with Others at the table; and Lily’s earlier conversation with Mr. Bankes, when the two discuss the relevance of her painting. I will also touch on the scene between Lily and Mr. Ramsay in the novel’s final section, during which Lily undergoes metramorphosis. All of these scenes have been analysed in terms of Lily’s aesthetic vision, but not in terms of Woolf’s structures of interpersonality.

"Their Own Voice Speaking"

A redemptive reconfiguration of dominator characters occurs in the *Lighthouse*’s pivotal dinner scene. In this scene, even the maternal Mrs. Ramsay, with her care-taking role, can be seen as a dominator character. Here, dominator desire takes an interesting turn, as it is entirely ignored by the individuals grouped around the dinner table. Also, this scene forms an interesting parallel to the experimental scenes in *Between*’s pageant since both Mrs. Ramsay and La Trobe experience conflict in “willing” their audience into social unity—a conflict won only when these characters acknowledge themselves as relational subjects. Like La Trobe, Mrs. Ramsay is the primary mediator willing the company of dinner-eaters into intimacy. But ironically, other characters, like Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Carmichael and Lily, end up creating the intimate connection that Mrs. Ramsay so ardently wills. Because these characters initially resist her will, this scene also represents their metramorphosis. They, too, must acknowledge themselves as relational identities, despite their habitual poses as non-relational subjects. Let us turn now to look at how Woolf stylises both the resistance and inner change in these dominator-characters, as well as in Mrs. Ramsay.

Although not the first character to resist Mrs. Ramsay’s charms, Lily resists the
social obligations that Mrs. Ramsay imposes on her at dinner. This resistance signifies the fact that Lily is different from Mrs. Ramsay, in every way. Thus, when Mrs. Ramsay silently demands that Lily include Mr. Tansley in her social circle, Lily responds by simply reflecting another desire—her desire: “But how would it be, she thought, if neither of us did either of these things? So she sat there smiling” (91). Her refusal to make small talk forces Mrs. Ramsay into seeing that her desire is not the only one around. By refusing to come to Tansley’s assistance and deliberately ignoring Mrs. Ramsay’s pressure, Lily mirrors Mrs. Ramsay’s dominator position. In this light, Lily is a non-relational subject, who resists conforming to Mrs. Ramsay’s (and Mr. Ramsay’s) conception of womanhood in a number of ways.

For example, early on in the novel, Lily’s silent criticisms of Mrs. Ramsay frequently take the form of open-ended questions, as if she herself cannot form a rational framework to comprehend Mrs. Ramsay’s social motivations: “Why did her whole being bow, like corn under a wind, and erect itself again from this abasement only with a great and rather painful effort” (86)? Despite the grammatical framework of third-person narration, these open-ended questions undermine any authority-granting devices to one voice that could effectively answer, or even satirize, such a question. Thus, Lily’s wondering speculation becomes the interpretive lens governing the scene. As a strategic resistance to closure, this style of interpolation represents the freedom of thought—and difference—that plurality entails.

So paradoxically, Woolf suggests here that inter/transsubjective connection, rooted in relational desire, cannot be willed into being, but rather must emerge out of a shared desire for intimacy. Therefore, Lily’s final recognition of Mrs. Ramsay’s discomfort, and
her identification with it, becomes the inciting force for her to co-join with Tansley—a man she despises. In so doing, she both grants him subjecthood and enlarges her own subjectivity: “Will you take me [to the Lighthouse], Mr. Tansley?” said Lily, quickly, kindly, for, of course, Mrs. Ramsay said to her, as in effect she did, ‘I am drowning, my dear, in seas of fire’” (92). By coming to Mrs. Ramsay’s rescue, Lily realises that she perpetuates the gender economy that she despises (“he was relieved of his egoism”). At the same time, however, she realises that Mrs. Ramsay’s role is a communal effort which must be shared among distinct subjects.

In contrast to intersubjectivity as a social obligation is intersubjectivity as a spontaneous invitation. Mr. Ramsay’s spontaneous, passionate poetry recitation, continued by Carmichael, is an example of such spontaneity. Ironically, these two “dominator” characters, the ones most resistant to Mrs. Ramsay’s desire in this scene, are the ones who initiate the transsubjective bond that unifies the group. Paradoxically, their unexpected connection, manifested outside the sphere of Mrs. Ramsay’s control, but inclusive of her, is the one that unites the dinner-eaters:

She [Mrs. Ramsay] did not know what they [the words] meant, but like music, the words seemed to be spoken by her own voice, outside her self, saying quite easily and naturally what had been in her mind the whole evening while she said different things. She knew, without looking round, that every one at the table was listening to the voice saying:

\[ I \text{ wonder if it seems to you,} \\
\text{Luriana, Lurilee} \]

with the same sort of relief and pleasure that she had, as if this were, at last, the natural thing to say, this were their own voice speaking. (111)
Since Mrs. Ramsay hears her husband’s words without knowing what “they meant,” Woolf depicts her act of listening and Mr. Ramsay’s voice in terms of disembodiment. As a disembodied voice (“outside of her self”), Mrs. Ramsay’s voice is constituted by Mr. Ramsay’s recitation, without being appropriated by it—an effect supported by the use of the simile “like,” connoting attunement to her desire(s). Similarly, Mr. Ramsay’s voice is already “detached” in the sense that he is speaking someone else’s words. His recitation forms a borderspace: first, with Mrs. Ramsay’s “own” voice, and then with her desire in use of the singular noun: “voice,” then the voice.

However, since everyone is receptive to Mr. Ramsay’s voice, Woolf immediately expands its reference in terms of a communal structure—as a noun (“the natural thing to say”) that everyone shares in, and as plurality (the pronoun “their” in “their own voice speaking”) that is inclusive of everyone. Woolf’s use of the plural verb (“were”), attached to the singular demonstrative pronoun (“this”) and the collective noun (their ... voice), allows her to produce, through narrative grammar, the immersion of singularity into communality. This grammatical irregularity signals the fusion aspect of voice. In this way, Mr. Ramsay “voices” what is presumably a shared thought (and shared emotion) among the diners. Each subject, while situating his/her own subjectivity within the poem, is attuned to it. Thus, Woolf’s narrative grammar shows how voice gains a transsubjective dimension as it speaks through, but not for, a multiplicity of sources.

Transsubjectivity is also portrayed here in terms of specific stylistic shifts. Woolf stylises this segment, “the same sort of relief and pleasure that she had, as if this were, at last, the natural thing to say, this were their own voice speaking” as a shift from third person narration to spoken soliloquy (internalised by each listener as shared interior
monologue) to what could be interpreted as Mrs. Ramsay's free indirect thought: "this were their own voice speaking." This last phrase is equally attributable to an anonymous source of mediation which includes Mrs. Ramsay, but is not limited to her. In each choice, the shift between different styles represents a transgressive movement across interpersonal boundaries, including difference (different forms and styles of voice/perspectives) within third-person narration. Therefore, on all levels, this short passage stylistically represents a merging of individual members of a group into a singular voice through a shared act of listening.

When Carmichael contributes his own verse to the poem—"To see the Kings go riding by" (111)—he also embodies the power of recognition, reflected in his Poseidon figure at the novel’s end. When Carmichael honours Mrs. Ramsay by joining in the recitation, and bowing to her as he leaves the room, he pays "homage" to their distinct subjectivities. His reciprocity of Mrs. Ramsay's good will constitutes metamorphosis extending to all of the characters: everyone feels united by the emotional warmth of the room, its lighting, and the loss of antagonism between them. Thus, Woolf represents the poem’s effect as a transsubjective effect—a shared community of feeling wherein the walls of emotional partition are so thin that everything is experienced as "one stream." If one cannot carry on, Mrs. Ramsay realises, someone else—even Lily and Carmichael—can (113-4). This realisation of communality ironically diminishes Mrs. Ramsay’s dominator status—in sharing social responsibility, she must be open to other ways of reciprocating.

Likewise, Carmichael reveals his capacity to bond outside of Mrs. Ramsay’s dominator desire. In this way, Carmichael identifies with and embodies Mrs. Ramsay's
unifying powers, his respectful gesture indicating they share the same desire for community, despite their different relations to it. Here, Woolf reveals the interrelationship of subjects as a means of constituting individuality, and the scene also provides an early stylistic version of Woolf's communal consciousness. The communal consciousness, signified by the plural pronouns "we" and "our," signifies the inclusion of individuality in social bonding. Woolf's transposition of "I" into "we" signals plurality as well as inclusion: everyone hears the poem's recitation, bound transsubjectively. In this way, Woolf's figures the SELF as "part" of the whole, even if it is, as La Trobe surmises in *Between*, an unacted part (112).³¹

The final scene in *Lighthouse* that we will consider in terms of Woolf's relational themes occurs early on in the novel, when Bankes asks Lily about her painting. This scene is illuminating for three reasons. First, it illustrates the narrative techniques that Woolf uses to depict the communicative strategies of intersubjectivity. Second, it suggests that intersubjectivity is a spontaneous, temporary bond, rather than one predicated on the enduring customs or historical traditions. Lastly, it portrays intersubjective connection as a learning experience. For instance, since Lily believes that Bankes is kind and does her a favour in trying to understand her painting, Lily learns about the positive effect of social relations, and specifically, about experiencing herself as a relational subject. She uses this lesson, as we will see, when she connects with Mr. Ramsay toward the end of the novel. This lesson, crafted by Woolf as a communicative act, is one that we will now analyse in more depth.
"In complete good faith"

When Bankes asks Lily about her painting, he initiates an intersubjective connection that reconciles Lily to the necessity of engaging in social relations, an obligation haunting her throughout the novel. A shy, reclusive artist, Lily is typically overlooked in terms of her unifying function when compared to Mrs. Ramsay. However, more than any other character besides Mrs. Ramsay, Lily symbolises relational identity in her capacity to identify with different personalities and to integrate their subjective differences. This ability is symbolised by the line that she paints on her canvas—the one that connects its separate spaces. Thus her metamorphosis, the softening of her initial resistance to Bankes’ critical appraisal of her painting, births for Lily an unprecedented awareness of the pleasurable power of empathetic connection—a connection in total contrast to the self-serving power she initially attributes to the dominator characters like Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay.

Stylistically, Woolf represents Lily and Bankes’s inner reflections of Bankes and Lily in intermediary styles of narrative voice that bridge two modes of consciousness—the contemplative and the expressive. Woolf uses unmarked indirect thought in conjunction with free indirect speech and narrated dialogue to represent Lily and Bankes’s shared reflection on the painting, thus mimetically creating a sense of intersubjection fusion:

It was a question, she remembered, of how to connect this mass on the right hand with that on the left. She might do it by bringing the line of the branch across so; or break the vacancy in the foreground by an object (James perhaps) so. But the danger was that by doing that the unity of the whole might be broken. (53)
Here, Woolf uses a virtual dialogue between Lily and Bankes to reduce the grammatical barriers between the represented thought and speech of both characters, thus constituting them as distinct and separate subjects, while granting them the flexibility of participating in a narratively shared communal subjectivity. This flexibility creates the impression of a “telepathetic” connection between Lily and Bankes; whether Lily’s explanation is spoken or just “thought,” the impression that Lily is heard, and understood, by Bankes, remains.

This shared understanding is reflected in the nature of their conversation, which begins as a collaborative effort. Bankes requests to fully explore in “good faith” the meaning of Lily’s painting. Bankes asks for Lily’s permission to explore the significance of her painting with her. In this way, their interpretation of the painting is co-created since, ultimately, Lily does not know what she means in relation to her painting—only what she desires. In this passage, punctuated with incessant shiftings of focalisations and temporal juxtapositions, Woolf uses the conversation’s content (about the act of painting) as an analogy for the act of communication during which separate subjectivities must find common psychic grounds of communion. In Woolf’s stylistic representation of this conversation, various concepts of “unity” emerge through Lily and Bankes’s shared perceptions, regarding the diverse nature of interpretation. Let us see how these individual, but complementary, interpretations are layered into the text.

Lily’s painting symbolises her desire to establish connection between the “unrelated masses,” while at the same time, it acknowledges her need to draw distinct divisions between them in to order to fully define, and appreciate, these spaces. Ironically, the unity that Lily desires can only be manifested by creating divisions, or borderlinks. Thus, Lily’s method of painting becomes, in her discussion with Bankes
about it, an act of binding that preserves difference.

Let us see how this theme is reflected in Woolf’s narrative stylisations. Remember that prior to this scene, Woolf has represented Lily largely in terms of non-relationality, as an absent-minded, non-reflective consciousness who experiences sociability in quite primitive, sensory impressions, apparently without a cognitive framework with which to integrate them. For instance, in her bedroom, Lily’s one-on-one conversation with Mrs. Ramsay, which should be, theoretically, full of intimacy, falls flat: “Nothing happened. Nothing! Nothing! as she leant her head against Mrs. Ramsay’s knee” (51). This void of feeling is not expected by Lily, since it is the first moment she has had Mrs. Ramsay to herself. Here, Lily thinks that by merely being in Mrs. Ramsay’s presence, she shares a bond with her, not realising the effort it takes, as a civil subject, to develop one.

Furthermore, Lily’s persistent questioning of Mrs. Ramsay’s authenticity suggests that as Lily objectifies Mrs. Ramsay, she feels a growing distance between them, devoid of mutual understanding. Thus, Lily’s painful challenge in the painting scene is to remain integral to SELF in the presence of someone who challenges the very expression of her subjecthood: her painting. Talking about her painting is difficult, because, as we have already seen with her relationship with Mrs. Ramsay, Lily resists acknowledging her co-creation through others.³²

In the painting scene, Lily’s resistance to co-creation and Bankes dissipates as she her conversation with Bankes makes her feel cared for. Lily’s connection with Bankes emerges from her desire to articulate, and share, her own interpretation of her painting with a receptive other. Rather than a self-centered desire, she actively responds to Other’s desire. In other words, Lily’s desire in this conversation is to assist Bankes in
expanding his aesthetic knowledge; Bankes’s desire is to recognize Lily as a distinct subject, without imposing his interpretation of the painting on hers:

Mr. Bankes was interested. Mother and child then—objects of universal veneration, and in this case the mother was famous for her beauty—might be reduced, he pondered, to a purple shadow without irreverence.... A light here required a shadow there. He considered. He was interested. He took it scientifically in complete good faith. (52)

Here, we can see Woolf using unmarked quoted speech, rather than direct dialogue, to blur the line between what Bankes says and thinks about Lily’s explanation—a blurring which indicates his sensitivity to Lily’s way of seeing things: “Mother and child then ... might be reduced.... to a purple shadow without irreverence.” Statements of Banke’s subjective interpretation ( “objects of universal veneration”) are layered indiscriminately into Lily’s explanation (“A light here required a shadow there”). In this stylisation, Woolf shows how two distinct subjects, with two different sets of knowledge, meet. Their two different interpretations, derived from a plurality of experience, are thus integrated without appropriation or objectification.

To retain this impression, Woolf relies largely on indirect representations of thought and speech to portray Bankes’s questions about Lily’s painting. For instance, by shifting his gaze and the “rapture” Lily assigns it from Mrs. Ramsay to Lily’s painting, Bankes begins a process that is, for Lily, “an awful trial ... an agony” which, at the same time, is “immensely exciting” (52): “She would have snatched her picture off the easel, but she said to herself, One must. She braced herself to stand the awful trial of someone looking at her picture. One must, she said, one must” (52). Woolf’s use of
unmarked quoted (soliloquised) speech here removes the boundaries between represented thought and speech. Lily’s silent thoughts “speak,” but are free of the marks assigning them to a specific mode of consciousness, thus creating an ambiguous interplay between Lily’s private and public modes of subjectivity. The second “said” could refer to actual speech, or to interior thought. Either way, its polyvalent attribution tag in the phrase “she said to herself” (52) and the repetition of the words “she said” signals a virtual dialogue, since no quotation marks or words clearly identify these as speech or thought.

This style of shared speech/thought complements the effect of Woolf’s use of virtual dialogue. For the reader, this stylisation creates an impression of Lily and Bankes’ conversation as an intimate experience. By closing the stylistic gap between the characters’ voices, which narratologically implies different subjectivities, Woolf represents the growing bond between them. For example, although Lily may not necessarily be heard (in phrases like “one must”), the impression exists, for the reader, that she is understood, without the necessary indicators of evaluation that would normally confer individual interpretations upon these thoughts (such as “she intimated,” “he delved,” “he indicated”). As a verbal threshold, Woolf’s free indirect thought here gives the impression that, although grammatically attributable to a third-person narrator, Lily’s thoughts are actually, or intuitively, “understood” by Bankes. In this case, Lily’s silent self-goading, “one must,” signals a movement to a more generalised state of being (not “she” but to “something much more general”), or an unhooking of identity from SELF. Later on, this disembodiment is represented as a neutral, communal subjectivity, as “something much more general” conveyed in her aesthetic vision (53). Thus, depersonalising herself as subject, Lily transcends her fear of Bankes’s potential criticism
and constitutes herself as a relational subject. She realizes that “there were other senses, too” of aesthetic representation and “reverence” (52).

Alternating with Lily’s stylised thought and speech, statements in third-person narration reflect Bankes’ sympathetic understanding of Lily’s painting, while simultaneously, revealing the effort he makes, psychically, to reach this understanding. Bankes’s struggle to respond to Lily’s work requires a psychic flexibility to contain overlapping, multiple possibilities—something that the cherry-tree painting, and its realistic representation, does not possess. Woolf represents Bankes’s struggle in intervening third-person narration where external perspective, repetition, and summarizing statements represent his systematic determination to comprehend Lily’s painting from Lily’s point of view: “Mr. Bankes was interested... he was interested. He took it scientifically in complete good faith” (52). We do not know whether or not this stylisation represents reported dialogue, in which case Bankes voices his interest as interest; or whether it represents free indirect thought—he keeps reminding himself that he is interested, and so pursues their conversation. In terms of third-person narration, this phrase would be interpreted as objective, as fact: “He was interested.” Here, Woolf’s stylistic variations emphasise Bankes’s “wobbling” identity as it confronts and attempts to integrate difference by reflecting, or absorbing in its grammatical structures, his distinctive style of thought and personal reflection.

Because the narrative does not represent Bankes’s understanding of Lily’s explanation as complete, or even as satisfactory, the reader may draw two conclusions: one, that Lily’s response has been listened to without interruption, and two, that she has been listened to as a subject, with genuine interest and “complete good faith” in her topic
(53). Woolf’s use of indirect discourse tapers Bankes’s and Lily’s deictic centers to create the illusion of the shared discourse between characters, an anti-mimetic illusion in that it does not represent voices per se, but rather the bonding of differences in these styles of voice.

Such an illusion reveals narrative voice’s anti-mimeticism since Woolf’s narrative discourse ceases, in its speech and thought representation, to represent individuality. Instead, it produces a stylistic union of two semi-depersonalised subjectivities, which nonetheless remain distinct. Thus, Woolf highlights the expressive features marking Lily’s and Bankes’s narrative voices (“What then did she wish to make of it?”; 53), and keeps them recognisable and distinct. Woolf’s narrative illusion, in this case, acknowledges the impossibility of, or the desire for, reconciling the contrasting deictic signals at play in plurality. Therefore, following Bankes’s question, Woolf uses Lily’s consciousness to focalise the conversation until Lily removes the painting from the easel. This strategy marks the psychic space situated between two distinct subjectivities, as required in Benjamin’s model of intersubjectivity. With Lily’s focalisations, the reader gets the impression that her response satisfies Bankes’s question, and furthermore, that her response satisfies herself: “it had been seen; it had been taken from her.” Most importantly, Woolf implies that Bankes’ attitude towards Lily’s explanation is intersubjective. His interpretation of Lily’s painting as a paradoxical space—“understandable” in terms of separate shapes and complex, in terms of their inter-relationships—clearly articulates her aesthetic goal to her.

Woolf’s insistence on the impossibility of signifying on a singular level of meaning, and, within this, the inevitable necessity of bonding across, and through,
Relational Narrative Desire

differences, offers Lily the emotional connection she longs for—friendship. One way of interpreting friendship in terms of narrative grammar can be found in Ann Belford Ulanov’s (1981) theory of desire as it relates to Tomm’s (1992) ethics of care. Ulanov’s reconfiguration of Benveniste’s “I-You” dyad (in patriarchy, the “I-It” dyad) to an I-Thou pair, restructures narrative desire in a way that simulates an interlocking community of human consciousnesses sensitive to difference. In contrast to the “I-You” pair, which anticipates, but does not fully characterise, relational desire, Ulanov posits in the I-Thou encounter a manner of communication which characterises a relational stance between self and other without opposition or objectification (cited in Tomm, “Ethics and Self-Knowing” 102-3). The “I-Thou” relation includes the reflective dimension of emotive knowing in terms of its receptivity, thus Bankes’s sympathetic questions to Lily symbolise Ulanov’s I-Thou relationship. Through the grammatical loss of individual boundaries, Lily catches a glimpse into her ontological connectedness to Other(s), an ideal of ultimate inclusiveness, if only in a “momentary sense” (Tomm, “Ethics and Self-Knowing” 103).

Woolf’s use of indirect discourse evokes the “I-Thou” pair, and so it represents Lily’s integration of Bankes’s perceptions. This integration of his perspective informs the way that she conceives and reconceives her identity, moving from reclusive artist to relational subject. For example, Lily realises that her work’s meaning lies in its reception by others, not solely in her intentions; thus, her painting, like her SELF, is co-created:

The question being one of the relations of the masses, of lights and shadows, which, to be honest, he had never considered before, he would like to have it explained—what then did she wish to make of it? And he indicated the scene
before them. She looked [... ] she took the canvas lightly off the easel.

(Lighthouse 53)

Like Dodge and Mrs. Swithin before the bedroom mirror in *Between*, here Bankes and Lily seek one another’s self-representations in the painting’s surface. The question mark following Bankes’s unmarked statement suggests that this question, and others like it, are either Bankes’s spoken questions, or even Lily’s own thoughts, thus giving the narrative illusion of a shared subjectivity as together they question the painting’s intentions. Although with the use of indirect discourse, readers cannot determine the actual contents of the conversation, this non-individuation of thought and speech evokes the mutual, reflective states of *both subjects* (“she remembered,” “he had never considered”). With this stylisation, Woolf implies that Bankes and Lily have a shared understanding of the *consideration* that Bankes gives Lily’s painting, although the contents of their individual considerations are quite different. Since Woolf does not stylistically interrupt Lily’s explanation, maintaining free indirect speech until Lily takes her painting off the easel, the reader also gets the impression that Lily has been given the chance to “birth” her reason for the painting. The shift back to third-person narration indicates this: “It had been seen. It had been taken from her. This man had shared with her something profoundly intimate” (53). Notice here that in the final statement here, third-person narration refers to Lily’s deitics (“this”), thus indicating that the narration still “follows” her train of thought. Thus, as we see from the ordering of its semantics, Lily perceives *Bankes* as giving and sharing something *with her*, thereby revealing her recognition of his role, *his part*, in her explanation; she reveals this conversation as co-creation and herself as a relational, co-created subject.
Relational Narrative Desire

In terms of Tomm’s care-ethics, Lily’s metamorphosis represents a profound emotional experience since Bankes’s desire to understand Lily is integrated with her own self-identity. This encounter “opens space for different ways of knowing and, accordingly, different ways of being” (Tomm “Ethics”102) for both subjects. Therefore, I suggest that the profoundly intimate “something” that Bankes shares with Lily is his suspension of SELF and dominator desire. By suspending his own desire, Bankes vicariously experiences a first-person subjectivity that is not his own; he gains insight into a different way of seeing the world in terms of reality and imagination. Since Woolf’s choice of third-person here negates the first-person markers in direct dialogue, the text implies that Bankes is successful in subduing his I-ego in order to explore her picture—her thoughts behind the picture, and her aestheticism which makes the picture. Thus, this scene is a fine example of successful intersubjective connection.37

A Wave of Sympathetic Expansion

The novel’s final scene most clearly reveals Lily’s evolution and development as a relational identity. When Mr. Ramsay and the children travel to the lighthouse, Lily attempts to complete her painting, but only manages to experience a “vision.” Without a narratological framework to describe relational identity, Lily is interpreted as a static character for whom nothing changes. She does not get married; she does not complete her painting. The intersubjective connection between Lily and Mr. Ramsay, a brief segment of the novel, is entirely overlooked. But in this section, as in her diary entries, Woolf emphasises these characters’ desires for an inclusivity that is predicated on the recognition and integration of difference. Therefore, Woolf retains at least some of the
stylistic and grammatical aspects of the third-person narrator, albeit shorn of narrative authority, so that individuated voices can be "absorbed" into communal structures. In modulating third-person narration to reflect multiple mediating sources outside the grammatical markers of a singular consciousness, here Woolf's narrative style shows a communal bonding between Lily's and Mr. Ramsay's consciousnesses. For this effect, Woolf uses voice interpolations, which can be thought of as bridges or tunnels linking multiple consciousnesses.

In this passage, Lily Briscoe emulates the wit(h)nessing dynamic described in this study by positioning herself in multiple relations to the expected roles of womanhood. While mourning Mrs. Ramsay, Lily positions herself on a number of sides: she is beside her canvas; her intrapsychic reincarnation of Mrs. Ramsay is sidelined by Mr. Ramsay's unspoken request for sympathy; she sides with the children on their reluctant boat-ride to the lighthouse. Despite her initial fear and reluctance to take responsibility for, or act on, these feelings, Lily joins-in-difference with Mr. Ramsay, webbing passage lanes not only through conversation and her wit(h)nessing of his pain, but also in painting a line that connects, as much as it divides, the spatial unity of her canvas. By retaining her distinct subjectivity while conjoining with Mr. Ramsay, Lily oscillates between matrixial spaces of subjectivity and intersubjectivity, alternately engaging and withdrawing herself as subject. In the same way, the narrative represents the interrelation of the two scenes (the shore and the boat) as distinct, matrixial spaces that can "only bear fading-out and fragmentations but no total cuts" (Lichtenberg, "Transgressing With-In-To the Feminine" 204). To connect intersubjectively, Lily must hold onto her own psychic space, while integrating the divisions that others (like Mr. Ramsay) pose to it.
Like H.D., Woolf represents intersubjectivity in communicative acts. Lily and Mr. Ramsay cannot connect until they *talk*. To represent their conversation, Woolf resists situating them in singular modes of identity. For example, previous to this scene, Lily's intense dislike of Mr. Ramsay, and Mr. Ramsay's indifference to her, has resulted in a total lack of communication between them. Nonetheless, Lily feels pity for the "ridiculous" Mr. Ramsay, while Mr. Ramsay feels sympathy for the "little" artist. So while Mr. Ramsay dislikes and fears Lily as a barren spinster, Lily scorns his academicism: "Never was anybody at once so ridiculous and so alarming" (17). Despite their antagonism, they are bound in relationship through Mrs. Ramsay's love for both of them. In this concluding scene following Mrs. Ramsay's death, when the dominator-character Mr. Ramsay is obviously subdued with grief, and moreover, is unable to effectively communicate with his children, Lily cannot make a social response to him. His obvious emotional neediness, his incurable self-pity, and his insatiable demand for sympathy have the potential, Lily realises, of annihilating her: "Mr. Ramsay sighed to the full. Did she [Lily] not see what he wanted from her?" (151) Thus, Lily, however, refuses to respond to Mr. Ramsay's "great need" for a number of reasons and principles.

Seeing his urgency, Lily realises that in his present state Mr. Ramsay craves attention from "*any woman*" (151), thus forcing on her her own objectification. Any woman would suffice to console him—Lily just happens to be the one in his line of vision. Because this kind of use reduces Lily to an object that fulfills the needs of Others without taking her own into account, she flat out refuses to participate in Mr. Ramsay's desire to appropriate her, thereby insisting on her own individuality.

Furthermore, Lily fears that in giving him the sympathy he needs, she runs the
potential risk of becoming prey for further needs, knowing them to be a direct threat to her own subjecthood, “sorrows enough to keep her supplied for ever” (151). Finally, although well aware that she, wrapped safely in non-relationality, appears indifferent to Mr. Ramsay (“She is a stock, she is a stone;” 152), Lily still wonders how she could connect with Mr. Ramsay if she wanted to. In other words, even as a non-relational, “annulled” subject, Lily seeks out a potential borderlink. Lily’s virtual dialogue (“—what did one say?—Oh, Mr. Ramsay! Dear Mr. Ramsay!”) reveals her rejection of inauthenticity, at the same time that it reveals her ability, and presumably, her desire, to integrate Otherness. Thus, Woolf’s focalisation, attributed to Lily, reveals her as a relational subject before she focuses on Mr. Ramsay’s boots, the object constituting the borderlink she seeks. Lily’s “partly visual partly emotional” experience of watching Mr. Ramsay lace his boots furthers her development as a plural subject:

“What beautiful boots!” she exclaimed. She was ashamed of herself. To praise his boots when he asked her to solace his soul; when he had shown her his bleeding hands, his lacerated heart, and asked her to pity them, then to say, cheerfully, “Ah, but what beautiful boots you wear!” deserved, she knew, and she looked up expecting to get it, in one of his sudden roars of ill-temper, complete annihilation.

Instead, Mr. Ramsay smiled. (153)

Here, Woolf’s stylisations of Lily’s focalisations reveal her as a pluralised identity. For example, while critical of Mr. Ramsay’s outward characteristics (his “pathos, surliness, ill-temper, charm”), Lily simultaneously appreciates, by personifying the boots, his inward qualities of strength, which constitute him as a distinct and separate subject. His
boots are "sculptured, colossal," walking "with their own accord" (153). By sharing with Mr. Ramsay her genuine, aesthetic appreciation of his boots, Lily creates, as Litchenberg suggests, a borderspace in which they can co-join without appropriation or fear of self-dissolution, that is, outside the sphere of dominator power-over dynamics.

As a direct echo of Bankes's comment which initiates their own intersubjective connection earlier ("Her shoes were excellent, he observed;" 18), Lily's remark, and Mr. Ramsay's cordial reception of it, mutually constitute them as relational subjects. Because Lily refuses to compromise her subjecthood through inauthentic comments, Mr. Ramsay gains the opportunity to constitute himself as a plural subject outside of his role as bereaved husband: "Ah, yes, he said, holding his foot up for her to look at, they were first-rate boots" (153), reliving his memory as a young hiker. This transversal of the subject-object positioning in communication creates for Lily an intersubjective connection, "a sunny island where peace dwelt, sanity reigned and the sun for ever shone"; "Her heart warmed to him" (154). In other words, metamorphosis allows Lily to feel genuine sympathy for him. Now that we have considered the emotional dynamics of this scene, let us analyse its narrative stylisation.

In the Lily-Mr. Ramsay pairing, Woolf emphasises the value of individual difference by Lily's refusal to bend to appropriation, as well as her ability to connect through differences. Lily must find a way to connect with Mr. Ramsay that indicates her empathy for him from her subject position. For this effect, Woolf stylises Lily's reflections as an indirect thought including Mr. Ramsay's expected response, and then stylises her surprise at Mr. Ramsay's comment: his smile. Mr. Ramsay's smile indicates, to Lily, that he was not exactly what she perceived him to be and that, in fact, he has
other dimensions that she has never perceived. With this realisation, Lily understands she has been (unfairly) treating Mr. Ramsay's partialness as if it was his wholeness. Thus, she proves to herself that she could "do it"—that she could feel a "wave of sympathetic expansion" (151) for Mr. Ramsay, despite the fact that she relies on indirect modes of communication to do so. She can channel the sympathy that she so admired in Mrs. Ramsay, and thus have a positive effect on others. For instance, although Lily's empathy for Mr. Ramsay comes "too late" (154), after he has left to sail for the lighthouse, Lily still feels that an "other final phase which was new to her," and which made her "ashamed at her own irritability" after their exchange is now open to her (156). The unexpected, temporary bond between Lily and Mr. Ramsay confirms to Lily that she is a pluralised, relational subject, capable of maternal, nurturing feelings that her singular identity-role of artist-spinster does not connote.41

Here, Woolf represents intersubjectivity as a radical decision on Lily’s part to stop denying Mr. Ramsay his Otherness—a shift in attitude which shows her desire for social cohesion, and which shows how affinities between subjects emerge as “momentary alliances” to affirm new possibilities for human community (Cramer 181; Kaivola 30). As in H.D.'s *Bid Me to Live* and *Palimpsest*, these alliances are based on recognition of, and identification with, similar aspects of shared differences between opposing subjects in natural communicative acts. Lily negotiates her own terms when responding to Mr. Ramsay’s needs, thus both characters are mutually satisfied with their interaction and validated as separate, distinct subjects. Furthermore, by characterising Mr. Ramsay, the egotistical dominator-figure, as a co-creator of this connection, Woolf suggests that intersubjectivity distributes power through a process of mutual recognition during which
subjects consider, and feel, themselves equal.\textsuperscript{42}

\textbf{“Moments of High Pressure:” Intersubjective Connections in Between the Acts}

While sculpting scenes for Between, Woolf stated her intention to “brew some moments of high pressure” (Diary V 341).\textsuperscript{43} I interpret this description as moments with great social tension as the community members of Pointz Hall gather on summer afternoon to watch a pageant staged just as German bombers begin flying over England during World War II. Thus, the moments of “high pressure” emerge from the incongruent personalities merging together as audience and as a target of war aggression. In this section, I argue that these moments signal intersubjective connections between her most socially vulnerable characters: Isa Oliver, Mrs. Swithin, and William Dodge, and focus on the conversations I believe constitute metramorphosis. One is Mrs. Swithin’s conversation with Dodge on their tour of Pointz Hall; another is the conversation between Dodge and Isa in the greenhouse. These conversations display the innovative stylizations of intersubjectivity which culminate in Woolf’s stylization of transsubjectivity during the final scenes of La Trobe’s pageant. Notably, the narrative segments depicting the pageant’s prelude, interludes, and aftermath, the areas with the greatest opportunities for socialisation among community members are those that hold the most potent examples of inter/transsubjective connections among the characters.

Before I analyse these intersubjective connections, though, I want to explain how I read Woolf’s disempowered female characters (like Mrs. Swithin and Isa) as civil identities, since such a view is in contrast to that of Between’s many feminist critics, who argue that such characters symbolise victims of patriarchal dominator culture.\textsuperscript{44} While I acknowledge these characters’ social estrangement, I offer an alternative reading,
showing how Woolf's characterisation of them bypasses the subject-object dichotomy, and resists the dominator culture's demeaning treatment of them. Part of their "escape" lies in their capacity for fantasy in structuring themselves as partial identities. Woolf's modes of fantasy and narrative virtuality signify these characters' tolerance of domination, and their desire to experience identity and desire in alternative ways.

"The Divided Glance": Woolf's Female Subject

Woolf introducesMrs. Swithin to us as a civil identity, emphasising three qualities. Mrs. Swithin is sensitive and emotionally attuned to Others. As a possible survivor of incest, she conceives of her identity as partial, and co-created. Mrs. Swithin's recognition of her partialness—her "unacted part"—nurtures her imaginative capacity for virtual reality. This "immersive" capacity supports an interpretation of her character as a subject in, not an object for, patriarchal domination. Within the novel's representational world, these qualities figure Mrs. Swithin as a savior. She is capable of saving herself from the non-identity attributed to her by others; as "old Oliver's married sister; a widow" who always meant to "set up a house of her own" (10), but never has, she refuses to internalise the social stigmas of being an older, dependent woman. Mrs. Swithin's occasional reference to herself as "old Flimsy" (24) shows she is perfectly aware, even tolerant, of the way her relatives and the surrounding community view her; she acknowledges the partial "truth" of this description.

By reflecting and even embodying these partial truths, Mrs. Swithin is characterised as a warrior as well as saviour. For instance, although she is materially dependent on her brother, her dialogue and paralinguistic gestures suggest that she
Relational Narrative Desire

successfully resists his attitudes and judgments.\(^47\) Her refusal to internalise his negative judgments, and her critical ability to perceive the ironies and contradictions in his character combine to resist his subjugation: “Lucy flushed. He had struck her faith...She shrank; she cowered; but the next moment she exclaimed: ‘Oh there they are - the darlings!’” (21). Mrs. Swithin’s gesture of saluting the children with “her skinny hands” (21) while Bart insults her religious beliefs, acknowledges there are alternative valuing of women and children, more humane social interactions—more than one way of “being.” For this reason, Isa Oliver admires Swithin’s ability to “beat up against those immensities and ... irreverences,” symbolised by her brother’s domination.\(^48\)

We are introduced to Mrs. Swithin as such a plural character as she is totally immersed in her reading. Mrs. Swithin’s choice of reading material, historical tracts of a prelapsarian world devoid of human consciousness—which forshadows the novel’s final “prehistory” scene—reflects her acknowledgment of human similarities: “the mammoth, and the mastodon; from whom presumably, she thought, jerking the window open, we descend” (11). In addition, her style of reading and her imaginative fusions with the content reveals Mrs. Swithin’s psychic capacity for plurality—she can exist in multiple realities with multiple emotions. Her immersion causes distinct boundaries between reality and imagination to dissolve into a state of non-individuation which Bart, in his ignorance, describes as her annoying lack of focus: “She would have been, he thought, a very clever woman, had she fixed her gaze” (22). Swithin’s capacity for non-individuation allows her to penetrate social surfaces, and she gains insight into the social constructedness of Others, by being attuned to more than one reality at a time.

Thus, introducing readers to Mrs. Swithin’s character, Woolf superimposes three
distinct physical and psychic spaces within one focalisation—Mrs. Swithin’s:

It took [Swithin] five seconds in actual time, in mind time ever so much longer, to separate Grace herself, with blue china on a tray, from the leather-covered grunting monster who was about, as the door opened, to demolish a whole tree in the green steaming undergrowth of the primeval forest. Naturally she jumped, as Grace put the tray down and said: “Good morning, Ma’am.” “Batty,” Grace called her, as she felt on her face the divided glance that was half meant for a beast in a swamp, half for a maid in a print frock and white apron. (11)

Mrs. Swithin’s capacity for inclusion, figured by her “divided glance,” straddles two different, but in her own mind, congruent, realities. Swithin’s psyche here fuses three narratively distinct “realities” marked by: (i) Mrs. Swithin’s physical perception of the real maid (“Grace herself”); (ii) the virtual reality of the primeval forest (the “grunting monster…”); and perhaps most interesting for our purposes, (iii) herself, as a virtual subject—her characterisation of how she believes she appears to Others (“Batty,” Grace called her;”) 11). The last perception, emerging out of self-reflexivity, reveals Swithin as a character who knows how others construct her, but at the same time, she is not limited by them. By soldering multiple, spatial perceptions together through a homogenous focalisation, and by removing the grammatical and punctuation markers of these perceptions, Woolf reveals Mrs. Swithin’s difficulty in psychically separating “imagination” from “reality,” thus emphasising inclusion and integration. The incongruencies of Mrs. Swithin’s perceptions are blended together by a stylisation that does not stop to distinguish them.

Once again, the “partly-visual, partly-emotional” figural transposition, and
integration, of more than one subject position suggests that Mrs. Swithin also possesses
the capacity for intersubjective connection. In this way, incongruities can be successfully
sequenced within a narrative discourse which successfully integrates individuated
perspectives. This form of narration creates a subjectivity that values inclusivity in a way
that dominator characters, like Giles and Bart, do not. By characterising Mrs. Swithin’s
capacity for partially experiencing multiple dimensions of her subjectivity in parallel
sequences, Woolf shows how narrative can depict fragmented perceptions without itself
becoming stylistically fragmented—a desirable effect for intersubjective bonding. Thus,
we first see Mrs. Swithin’s character in the way she herself accepts, without
contradiction, overlapping, multiple levels of reality. Despite Mrs. Swithin’s prison at
Pointz Hall lacking in terms of mental stimulation, her imaginative capacity aptly
compensates. Therefore, although appearing “like any other old lady with a high nose”
about to have her tea (11), her power of splitting perception, and more importantly, her
power of integrating differences characterises her capacity for intersubjectivity, and thus
confirms her as a distinct and separate subject.

The Little Donkey

In a slightly different way, Woolf represents Isa as a plural subject by using interior
narrative voice to portray her private reflections, meditations, and poetic musings. Isa’s
capacity for creative expression, usually a compositional monologue, forms an array of
virtual identities (or subject positions) for her. By using grammatically delineated, but
syntactically confusing, narrative bridges between the representation of Isa’s inner and
outer speech, a confusion between her private and public voices results in the narrative
grammar. Thus, Isa is characterized as a marginalised figure in terms of her socialisation at Pointz Hall; her attempts to socially interact only serve to emphasize her peripheral position. Furthermore, third-person descriptions of her voice as unintelligible “murmurs” and “murmurings” indicate that Isa communicates in an ambiguous verbal state; consequently, the reader is unable to clearly distinguish between what Isa thinks and says. For this reason, Isa can be interpreted as a confused and weak character, unhappy in her marriage and living in a house of in-laws who do not understand her. However, this interpretation fails to consider Isa as a plural subject, one as capable as Mrs. Swithin of forming inter/transsubjective connections.

Like Mrs. Swithin, Isa is represented as a relational identity able to immerse herself in multiple realities; this capacity is clearly shown in Woolf’s stylisations of Isa’s meditations. For instance, during the pageant’s second interval, Isa, fantasising about a married man and distressed about her flirtatious husband, murmurs:

‘How am I burdened with what they drew from the earth; memories; possessions. This is the burden that the past laid on me, last little donkey in the long caravanserai crossing the desert. “Kneel down,” said the past. “Fill your pannier from our tree. Rise up, donkey. Go your way till your heels blister and your heels crack.”’ (114)

Here, as is the practice in English punctuation, Woolf contains the murmur typographically within single quotation marks. She reserves the double quotation marks for “speech” of the personified past which addresses Isa’s own depersonalisation as a “donkey.” Whether or not Woolf means to formally “mark” the past’s speech as an invocation with the double quotation marks, these two interior modes of Isa’s represented
speech are distinguished from one another. The effect of integrating, and disintegrating, her own subjectivity with her fictional creation, as the “last little donkey,” creates a polyvalence that functions in intertextual, allusive and self-reflexive references. Here, the polyvalent image of “the last little donkey” gains additional dimensions through alternative readings that thematically juxtapose a range of different attitudes towards the present circumstances.

For instance, the donkey segment can be read as Isa’s own self-address containing two distinct styles of interior narrative voice, or alternatively, as an interpellation of third-person narration bridging two other distinct styles of narrative voice (spoken soliloquy to direct virtual dialogue between Isa and an anonymous, universalising voice source). Whichever stylisation is chosen, Woolf stylises Isa’s self-reflection with two different levels of psychic self-recognition: subjectively (Isa from Isa’s own perspective), or objectively (Isa from an outside perspective). This dual mode reflects her integration of both “selves.” For example, by personifying the past, Isa responds to her current depression. Realising that she cannot escape her past choices and the responsibilities that come with them, Isa reaffirms her subjecthood by reminding herself that she possesses agency; thus, she embodies that agency as a “voice,” the voice of the past. The past, the long line of tradition that she has inherited as a woman, urges her to endure her present unhappiness and to carry on, assuring her that she possesses the ability to do so.

Alternatively, if this segment is read as third-person narration—a possibility based on the ambiguous narrative status of Isa’s “murmuring”—then the narrator, in quoted monologue and/or a non-ironic use of free indirect speech—reflects the “melodrama” of her predicament, without objectifying or satirising her. By acknowledging her self-pity
while urging her to endure, Woolf’s stylisation, in its double referencing, evades judging her. Isa is neither to be pitied nor to be admired; instead, she is to be understood. In this case, the reader feels compassion for Isa, thus recognising her as a subject—the theme of this passage.

Finally, Woolf’s use of the third-person plural pronoun “they” positioned in the frame of quasi-direct speech also multiplies the possibilities for interpreting Isa’s character. For example, it refers literally to the pear trees themselves, symbolising the historical endurance of Pointz Hall, a material accumulation of wealth and social status to which Isa is expected to contribute. In this case, the past’s message validates her role as a contributor, asserting her subjecthood as materialism; she has birthed a child. However, if read as one of Isa’s self-characterisations, as the stylisation of the unclear antecedent allows, the pronoun “they” equally refers to the Oliver family and lineage into which she has married; thus, Isa experiences her own partialness as collective. In this reading, they symbolises for Isa her own resistance to living with those who deny her subjecthood; she is dependent on her in-laws and her adulterous husband. In this case, the “speech” of the past represents to Isa her own distinctiveness, and her own ability to cope (“Kneel down ... fill ... rise up”). And finally, the ambiguous they could be interpreted as an evocation of her own (presumably female) relatives preceding her own comparatively privileged positioning. To these women, Isa reasons, she owes a great debt, and so must persist, even if her “heels blister” and her “hooves crack.”

In this case, the difficulty of reconciling to past history becomes for Isa the process of integrating differences within SELF—the creation of ever newer desires inseparable from the enduring sense of identity. Whether readers pick one reading, or a
Relational Narrative Desire

combination of them, Woolf renders Isa’s character so that alternative modes of reality (past, present, and future) are presented as interrelated. Thus, Woolf’s characterisation of Isa and Mrs. Swithin as plural subjects indicates that even while alone, they experience subjectivity in relation—a necessary condition for successful intersubjective connections, connections we will analyse in the next two sections.

**Intersubjective Connections between Mrs. Swithin and William Dodge**

As soon as William Dodge arrives at Pointz Hall, Mrs. Swithin notices his marginalisation, and given his homosexuality, he seems the most unlikely candidate for forming intersubjective connections. However, his peripheral, feminised position leads to an intimacy with equally marginalised characters, like Mrs. Swithin, and later Isa.

First let us consider the intersubjective connection between Dodge and Mrs. Swithin to see how Woolf posits a care-ethics through their conversation—a dynamic that reappears in the intersubjective connections between Dodge and Isa. Because the conversations analysed in the upcoming sections are made parallel through narrative voice, they are structurally interrelated through similarities and differences.

From the start, Woolf characterises Mrs. Swithin and Dodge as two dramatically different characters in age, gender, sexuality, and social standing. But narratively, Woolf represent their shared affinity as like subjects. Despite their distinctive communication styles, their mutual acts of silent observation simulate a sense of telepathic fusion. They read each other in the same way that Mrs. Swithin reads her *Outline of History*—complete immersion in the Other. Thus, Mrs. Swithin accurately interprets Dodge’s silences as signals of his social estrangement ("She had guessed his trouble;"
while Dodge appreciates her attempts to form a meaningful connection with him, despite his negative judgments of her: "She had spoken her thoughts, ignoring, not caring if he had thought her, as he had, inconsequent, sentimental, foolish" (Ibid). So, at lunch, although Mrs. Swithin forgets Dodge's name, the narrator states that she silently singles him out (54), soliciting a reciprocal response. In this way, the two bestow subjecthood upon each other. This mutual desire to be helpful and to be helped, characterises the nature of their relation initiated by Mrs. Swithin's tour of Pointz Hall.

The passages narrating Swithin's tour are stylised largely through Woolf's use of free indirect thought, focalised questions, and conversational fragments. Mrs. Swithin's invitation to show Dodge the house provides him with a psychic refuge from social tension, aggravated by the comments and attitudes of the homophobics Bart and Giles. Mrs. Swithin's ability to physically re-"move" Dodge from this emotionally painful environment, ironically without remembering or speaking his name, validates his subjecthood. Without assigning him an identity-role, Swithin initiates the identification aspect of intersubjective connection, trusting that Dodge will respond to her invitation: "She addressed no one in particular. But William Dodge knew she meant him" (53). In this way, Mrs. Swithin's invitation creates a borderlink. Even the rest of the group, for instance, interprets her invitation as the extension of a social obligation, that is, as the act of "fulfilling a promise" (53). Isa realises that such an act requires courage; Mrs. Swithin disregards the "leaden" duty owed to others since she voluntarily attends to the emotional needy (53). All these preliminary characterisations, though, foreshadow a successful intersubjective connection between Mrs. Swithin and Dodge. To identify specific stages of this intersubjective connection, let us look in detail at Woolf's strategic spatial shifts.
and sequencing that structure the intersubjective connection between these two characters.

Mrs. Swithin's tour of Pointz Hall is punctuated by several important pauses, resting places that symbolise positive themes of inter-relationality, including the landing, Mrs. Swithin's bedroom, the nursery, and its window. These “upstairs” spaces connote the binding power of the family as an essential form of community relations. Mrs. Swithin’s narration during her tour thus doubles as an exposition of her family history, which parodically, reveals her as a partial identity, relying on her own fictional constructions of inter-relationality. For instance, Mrs. Swithin cannot describe the historical contexts nor name the ancestors featured in portraits donning the hallway. Her open admission of this fact lessens the class difference between Dodge and herself. Mrs. Swithin’s comments on one woman’s portrait—“we claim her,” Mrs. Swithin says, “because we’ve known her – O, ever so many years” (54)—suggests that in her mind, virtual connections are as important as real connections when it comes to choosing identifications in which to root identity. Furthermore, this comment suggests that Swithin makes no distinction between strangers and family members when conceiving of the community she situates herself in. For this reason, Mrs. Swithin reveals her own relationship to the portrait as one that escapes historical references, but not psychic relevancies: “Who was she?...Who painted her” (54)? Note that Woolf’s polyvalent effect with the pronouns “she” and “her” makes these questions equally relevant to the painting, and to Mrs. Swithin herself. Beyond the painted subject, these questions reflect Mrs. Swithin doubts about her position at Pointz Hall. In addition, this statement, presumably attributable to Mrs. Swithin, evokes questions that may be Dodge’s about the
portrait or Mrs. Swithin, and/or Mrs. Swithin's imagining Dodge's perception of her. These multiple readings leave the question of identity unresolved.

Narratively, Woolf also depicts the tour as a spatial analogy for Mrs. Swithin's self-splitting processes; these constitute her as a partial subject. Woolf's repeated third-person references to Mrs. Swithin's trouble with communication, as well as the use of fragmented phrasals, ellipsis, obfuscation, and free indirect discourse, syntactically attest to Mrs. Swithin's partialness. Even third-person narration in this passage, like passages of the pageant's script later on, remains partially inaccessible, due to the tendency to reflect rather than represent the character's unformulated thoughts. An example of Mrs. Swithin's trouble talking to others is seen in her struggle to express relationality she feels.

This struggle involves great psychic effort because Woolf characterises Mrs. Swithin as an adult woman born and raised at Pointz Hall, a place symbolic of sameness and rigid hierarchy. Living under oppressed conditions, Mrs. Swithin is drawn as a relational character in a non-relational environment. The narrative's repeated references to her fatigue attest to the great psychic effort required in order to remain open to, and receptive of, difference. Thus, Mrs. Swithin speaks in panted murmurs, "with an effort" and with a voice dying away (55). However, because these difficulties are focalised through Dodge's perspective—"She was tired, no doubt, by the stairs, by the heat" (55)—the reader gets the impression that Dodge, attuned to her physical state, is just as sensitive to her, and reciprocates the concern that she shows him. Let us see how their mutual concern is reflected in the mirror imagery of the novel's next scene.
"Their bodiless eyes"

One scene frequently overlooked in *Between* is the one in which Mrs. Swithin and Dodge gaze at themselves in the bedroom mirror, a scene rich with implications for our model of relational narrative desire. In terms of identification and disidentification, this scene provides a detailed rendering of the borders of, and interplay between, materiality and immateriality, crucial for promoting a reading of relational desire.

After climbing the stairs and showing Dodge the bed in which she was born, Mrs. Swithin speaks with an effort, as if, Dodge realises, she must overcome her fatigue to respond to, and include "a stranger" within the intimacy and history at Pointz Hall. At this point, Dodge wants to reciprocate her desire for inclusion and realises that she has forgotten his name, but is too polite to tell him so:

Could he say 'I'm William'? He wished to. Old and frail she had climbed the stairs. She had spoken her thoughts, ignoring, not caring if he thought her, as he had, inconsequent, sentimental, foolish. She had lent him a hand to help him up a steep place. She had guessed his trouble. [...] Standing by the cupboard in the corner he saw her reflected in the glass. Cut off from their bodies, their eyes smiled, their bodiless eyes, at their eyes in the glass. (55-6)

Although this image of disembodied and fused gazes parallels the concluding scenes of La Trobe's pageant, there is a distinctive difference in Mrs. Swithin's and Dodge's attitude towards their reflections. Unlike the audience members who resist their objectifications, Mrs. Swithin and Dodge experience *pleasure* as they gaze at their own partiality: "Cut off from their bodies their eyes smiled, their bodiless eyes, at their eyes in the glass" (56). The synecdoche "eyes" posits two "I"s, two distinct subjects. Here,
Woolf again creates a partly-visual, partly-emotional figure that connotes the pleasure of shared intimacy emerging through relational identity. Such pleasure involves sacrificing the need for self-unity; here Mrs. Swithin and Dodge do not "complete" each other's mirror reflections; rather, they function as co-contributors to the meaning of the moment, shaped by their shared smile.

The relationality between Mrs. Swithin and Dodge is also reflected in Woolf's stylisation of narrative voices. By syllogistically reflecting its own image-making ("Cut off from their bodies...their bodiless eyes"), Woolf's third-person narrative, with its indefinite voice attribution, reflects its own participation in their shared subject-making, due to its indefinite voice attribution. For example, this image could be interpreted as either one of the character's focalisations, or as a focalisation equally attributable to both characters—"spread across" both subjects. One reading could emphasize Dodge's physical perception of Mrs. Swithin's mirror-reflection (assuming free indirect thought), with a stylistic shift to third-person narration, predicated on the third-person plural pronoun "their." Such a reading interprets "their" as a symbol of communal perspective, an outwardly shared or a suprapersonal expansion experienced in an intersubjective connection. This attribution creates a paradoxically harmonious sense of difference and multiplicity, even beyond the meeting of their individual subjectivities. The fact that this perceptual-psychic fusion in borderlinking could be read from both sides or either side of a narrative deictics (rooted individually in Dodge's, and/or Mrs. Swithin's spatio-temporal perspectives, and/or within Dodge-Mrs. Swithin's shared spatio-temporal perspectives) posits a communal virtual subjectivity tangential to the represented communicative act here. In this case, the shared pleasure of a communally-created
feeling transcends, while it emerges from, individual experience. In this way, Woolf’s inserts “moments of being,” acts of subjective recognition, with their own structural aspects.

The mutual gazes of Mrs. Swithin and Dodge in the mirror symbolise connection through separation. Here, Woolf inverts, and thereby parodies, the Lacanian mirror stage which initiates self-alienation—a point lost on Busse, who focuses exclusively on characters in isolation and interprets their detachment as the shared failure of symbolic and imaginary constructions which cannot compensate for inconsistencies in identity (78). To me, the mirror imagery suggests that, rather than lack, a virtual borderspace.

The two subjects experience themselves as self-extensions, going beyond their interpersonal boundaries to seek Otherness in its virtual borderspace. Thus, as partial subjects, they can integrate Otherness in ways that are non-threatening to their identities. In Busse’s reading, however, even Mrs. Swithin’s and Dodge’s inner lives would be “no less imagined than the outer one” (83), denying them the possibility of a borderspace in which to reflect one another in terms of relationality. But here the subjects do not panic, as Busse (84) implies that they would, suggesting even that they should. Instead, Mrs. Swithin and Dodge’s “bodiless eyes” constitute a subject-subject relationship, a syncopated union of pleasure in finding the other’s reflection—a pleasure devoid of bodily objectification.

Mrs. Swithin and Dodge’s shared disembodiment allows their mirror connection and is further developed by Woolf’s narrative voice stylisation when they enter the nursery—a space symbolising new birth, nurturing, and unconditional love. In this scene, Woolf explicitly thematises intersubjective connection as a means to a new psychic life.
The rebirth of self as a relational identity entails a mutual recognition of like-subjectivity, despite social incongruities which marginalise and differentiate them. In the nursery scene, Woolf figures this recognition in dichotomies of presence-absence and body-bodilessness.

Recognition

Like the “Time Passes” segment in Lighthouse, which connotes a psychic state devoid of human subjectivity, here, the nursery is depicted as a vacant space, inhabited only by the past presence of others, “like a ship deserted by its crew” (56). Mrs. Swithin and Dodge presumably enter this space as signifiers of relationality. Therefore, the third-person narration’s figure of vacancy (in the simile “like a ship deserted by its crew”), is already symbolically loaded with indefinite, unindividuated deictics. Seeing that third-person narration reflects Mrs. Swithin’s visual focus as she enters the room, it connotes Isa’s and Giles’ children, and Mrs. Swithin when she was a child—as signifiers of presence:

The door stood open. Everyone was out in the garden. The room was like a ship deserted by its crew. The children had been playing - there was a spotted horse in the middle of the carpet. The nurse had been sewing - there was a piece of linen on the table. The baby had been in the cot. The cot was empty.

‘The nursery,’ said Mrs Swithin.

Words raised themselves and became symbolical. (56)

This passage clearly depicts, in alternating images of presence and absence, what is important to her: the similar overlapping spatial/temporal space shared by different
generations. She herself had once been a baby in the cot; the empty cot, a symbol of her adulthood, doubles as a signifier for her death. But important for our purposes here is Woolf's portrayal of the present in signifiers of inter-relationality between Dodge and Mrs. Swithin. For example, the transitional bridge signalling Dodge's entrance into the room (“The room smelt warm and sweet; of clothes drying; of milk; of biscuits and warm water;” 56) uses literal, sensory images that continue Mrs. Swithin's visual perspective, and to a certain extent, her thought.

The narrative includes Dodge's focalisation of the room as he enters it (“The room smelt warm and sweet;” 56), and then returns to third-person narration (“He [Dodge] left the door open for the crew to come back to and joined her;” 56). But because this sentence, ironically representing the absence of human presence by evoking the human senses, has no definite source of attribution, even this short bridge multiples the possibilities for attribution, thematising inclusion. For instance, it could be attributed to Mrs. Swithin and Dodge singly, or to both of them, as a combination of their consciousnesses, or to an anonymous source of mediation grammatically and figuratively bridged into third-person narration—or, to all three options, thus contextualising signifiers of individuality within a communally shared space and sensory experience. Because these spatial perspectives are intertwined and reflected in the figural images, all three subjects, including the anonymous, virtual, “historicising” mediating source, this passage unifies all three perspectives by superimposing their shared sensory and thematic similarities.

To analyse this bridge, let us recall Banfield's (1982) rules for interpreting represented speech and thought. When we have a close approximation to contrasting (or,
here, *complementary*, but different) points of view, as Banfield reminds us, “they cannot be read in both ways simultaneously” (*Unspeakable* 218). However, I propose that they can be so read *sequentially*, thus constituting, in my reading, the narrative impression of plurality. As Woolf’s stylisation of this bridge shows, any voice attribution can be made *alternatively*, without the necessity of having to unify them in a single voice of a character or narrator. Voice functions anti-mimetically. This choice of alternative readings, both empathetic *and* ironic, personal *and* collective support Woolf’s themes of plural ways of being; different interpretive options can be chosen. Dodge and Mrs. Swithin “recognise” one another, even in the narrative discourse, an effect which simulates Benjamin’s recognition stage. This narrative bonding and bridging of individuated perceptions through voice stylisation, *partly visual, partly emotional*, reveals how narrative intersubjective connection can be represented structurally, outside modes of represented thought and speech, but at the same time, within specific spatio-temporal deitics.

*Metamorphosis*

After mutual recognition, the nursery scene progresses to Dodge’s metamorphosis. In it, Lucy Swithin is, very much, as her name implies, a “light within” Dodge, bringing his repressions to the surface. Because Dodge’s metamorphosis occurs largely in non-verbal forms, Woolf relies to a greater extent on effects of virtuality and disembodiment. In the nursery, Woolf’s detailing in third-person narration is increasingly focalised by Dodge’s growing sympathy for Mrs. Swithin. He realises the extent of her generosity, and wishes to reciprocate: “Could he say ‘I’m William’? He wished to...She had lent
him a hand to help him up a steep place. She had guessed his trouble” (Between 55). Woolf’s integration of Dodge’s focalisation in this passage represents two important qualities of his character. One is that Dodge can see himself as relational subject. He perceives himself from the perspective he attributes to Mrs. Swithin, reflecting her subjectivity with his figurations and interpretation: “She had lent him a hand to help him up a steep place” (my italics). In this description, the style of third-person narration represents Dodge objectively, but without objectifying him. The second quality is that he feels a personal responsibility for reciprocating the like-kindness that Mrs. Swithin extends to him: “Could he say ‘I’m William’? He wished to.” Furthermore, the past tense of the verb had in the phrase “as he had” implies that Dodge can alter his preliminary and subsequent opinions of the Other, and that he has, in fact, already changed his opinion, thus constituting his own metamorphosis from non-relational to relational subject.

This interpretation of Dodge’s metamorphosis is supported by Woolf’s retention of his focalisation in order to show how he himself observes the effect of kindness on Mrs. Swithin. Mrs. Swithin’s eyes “in their caves of bone,” for instance, is “warmed” by Dodge’s observation that they are “still lambent,” as she smiles “a ravishing girl’s smile” (57). This image of imbued youth opposes Mrs. Swithin’s earlier caricature in the novel as an old, asexual “Flimsy,” and bestows subjecthood on her. Dodge’s view of Mrs. Swithin here as a “girl”—not as an old woman—shows that he uses fantasy to signify her Otherness in an alternative mode of beauty, commenting on her character as it shines through her appearance.

In this image, Woolf represents Dodge as respectfully recognising Mrs. Swithin
as a separate and equal subject. This recognition stage precedes the most intense moment of their intersubjective connection: Dodge’s virtual “confession” to Mrs. Swithin of homosexuality, and the shame he has been made to associate with it, to Mrs. Swithin. Here Dodge recognises that the very attribute he denies in himself (his sexual “abnormality”) paradoxically forms the basis of his identification with the heterosexual, aging Mrs. Swithin. This identification, in turn, negates the very attributes he wishes to disidentify with. Instead of being perceived as old and tired, for instance, Mrs. Swithin revives with Dodge’s empathetic consideration of her present physical state. This reversal begins a healing process for Dodge in that he acknowledges, and confirms, his own partial identity-construction in this process, realising that just a “part” of Swithin is old and tired, in the same way that just a “part” of him has suffered social persecution. Perceiving themselves in partialness preserves their subjecthoods and values their inter-relationality. Let us see how.

To reciprocate Mrs. Swithin’s compassion, Dodge supplies her with his name, fulfilling a social obligation that Mrs. Swithin, with her failing memory, appreciates. Dodge’s act of giving her his name—“I’m William”—confirms his subjecthood. Despite his social stigma, Dodge asserts himself as an I, a distinct and separate subject, while his name—as gift—also acknowledges Mrs. Swithin as a distinct subject. This subject-subject pairing, supported by Woolf’s use of transfiguration (figurative images shared by more than one subject) also connotes connection. For instance, when Mrs. Swithin receives Dodge’s help, “the wintry blue in her eyes” turns “to amber,” repeating the “lambent” image earlier, and anticipating the color of curtains that flutter around Mrs. Swithin, a “raiment” from some “majestic goddess” (57). As Mimlitsch observes,
Dodge’s act of supplying his name joins them: “Each has found relief, albeit briefly, in the other’s company, connected by the sharing of a name” (“Powers of Horror and Peace” 39). Dodge’s act of giving Mrs. Swithin his name transforms social obligation into a profound act of shared transference. Dodge’s act of giving, and giving back, secures the intersubjective connection between them.

In the next passage, rendered by Woolf as virtual dialogue, Dodge communicates his painful childhood experiences to Mrs. Swithin. This passage is important because Dodge acknowledges Mrs. Swithin as a distinct and separate subject who co-creates him, thus tying like subjects together in a love-bond. Here, Woolf stylises their maternal-child bond as a virtual conversation that occurs between disembodied subjects; this speech is represented without being represented as being spoken. Through a hybrid construction of voices (Dodge’s quoted thought, interior monologue, ellipsis, and silence), Woolf’s stylisations withhold Dodge’s speech on the threshold of verbal representation. This desire for inclusion (of different narrative styles) emerges out of the narrative discourse, rather than being represented by it. In this way, the conversation is narratively “voiced” outside of the parameters of direct dialogue so that on one level, it ultimately leaves things unsaid, and by implication, not needing to be said. Thus the possibilities for interpreting Dodge’s virtual dialogue remain open and plural, not singular.

This effect, drawing attention to voice’s structuring function in the ultramateriality of fictional subjectivity, occurs in the passage framing this scene when Mrs. Swithin and Dodge enter the nursery. In the statement, “Words raised themselves and became symbolical” (56), Woolf uses personification to emphasise the transcendental power of voice, suggesting that words have their own “life”—a recurring theme in her
writings. In this way, she figures the transcendental powers of human speech, above and
beyond individual expression. Personification emphasises the symbolic function of
communication without relaying any of its content. In this way, although Mrs. Swithin’s
spoken words in this passage are few, the narrative impression that she means more, and
knows more, than her words imply, persists. In this mode, narrative voice functions anti-
mimetically, representing an intuitive, spontaneous sharing of emotion which supersedes
the need for speech.

In the segment of the scene, we will look at the same effect and emphasis on
language’s symbolic role is repeated. Since Dodge’s confession is virtual, Mrs. Swithin
cannot question the grounds or reasons constituting it; unlike Bankes, she cannot probe.
However, this means that, as an ideal listener, she cannot impose her interpretation on it
either. Thus, Woolf contextualises Dodge’s fear of social persecution within the inter-
relational framework of Mrs. Swithin’s tolerance. Because Mrs. Swithin (and Woolf’s
stylisations) evade authorial positionings in language, she aligns herself with power-with
as modelled by Starhawk (1988). As Mark Hussey (1990) argues in a different context,
this alignment comprises a “distancing from the world as it is - and a spiritual
commitment to the world as it might be, through a forgiving identification and
participation in all of its members” (“I rejected” 173). Mrs. Swithin does not morally
condemn Dodge as abnormal, nor does she condemn his persecutors. Her silence
connotes pure sympathy, from one who shares his pain across interpersonal boundaries
without reflecting or absorbing it, and thereby soliciting identification and integration.57
Instead, she allows the process of identification to aid integration of Otherness, as
described in Lichtenberg’s process of wit(h)nessing.
Note that Swithin’s style of wit(h)nessing is also sustained by Dodge’s ability to reciprocate, by this joint communicative action. Dodge’s confession, rendered by Woolf in a passage of condensed quoted thought, symbolises his desire, his “wish” to confide:

...he wished to kneel before her, to kiss her hand, and to say: “At school they held me under a bucket of dirty water, Mrs Swithin; when I looked up, the world was dirty, Mrs Swithin; so I married; but my child’s not my child Mrs Swithin. I’m a half-man, Mrs Swithin; a flickering, mind-divided little snake in the grass, Mrs Swithin; as Giles saw; but you’ve healed me...” (Between 57)

Here, Woolf stylises Dodge’s memory of his persecution as an interpellation between his invocation of Mrs. Swithin’s name and his inauthentic SELF-construction. Dodge acknowledges that his internalisation of others’ cruelty was fatalistic, a choice that constructs his sexuality as “aberrant” (“I’m a half-man”), his marriage as a patriarchal institution, and his child as a surrogate, fathered by another man (“my child’s not my child”). Dodge’s appeal for Mrs. Swithin’s mercy infuses his virtual “coming out” and his metramorphosis; Dodge acknowledges how much pain he has caused himself and others by concealing his authentic self and denying his desire(s).58

To a certain extent, Dodge’s submissive plea for mercy reveals Benjamin’s paradox of domination as Woolf develops Dodge’s capacity be a relational subject. His negative self-representations and self-loathing (as a “half-man” and “mind-divided little snake”) paradoxically imply admiration for his persecutors, like Giles, who can see through him. But this, too, is part of metramorphosis. Dodge realises his inauthentic self-division ensures his social survival, but is the very quality that others despise in him. At the same time, however, his self-objectifications reveal him as a relational subject:
Dodge integrates his persecutors' "knowledge." Thus, Dodge himself realizes that there is no singular interpretation of his sexuality that can contain, or that accurately describes the "truths" of his identity. This awareness allows him to engage in "other kinds of love" outside the sexual arena (57). In other words, Dodge limits social censure by accepting it as a partial indicator of his identity. He is a man; he does have a child; he does love. Thus, Dodge's social negotiation of his partialness constitutes his desire in a power-within mode instead of "dodging" the power-over model's rejection of sexual difference.

Because Woolf simulates the types of ellision that Dodge uses in his own thought-patterns ("when I looked up, the world was dirty;" 57) we see that in this "dodging," his autonomy is illusory. He recognizes in the old woman the thwarting of his sexuality, and the fragile construction of his self-identity. By virtue of his insistence on his subjecthood in a world that attempts to deny him one, Dodge is a distinct, separate and co-created subject, a relational identity. He acquires knowledge of another dimension in himself through his virtual conversation with Mrs. Swithin. By stylising this passage as a virtual dialogue, Woolf implies that Dodge's confession may not receive social approval, or even a public hearing, and because his represented thought cannot be attributed to a third-person narrator (even an effaced one), it circumvents any mediation from a judgmental, authoritative perspective. In this way, Woolf stylistically removes any chances for purely moral identifications, thus obliging the reader to interpret characters who exist in difference—not in hierarchy. The liberation of narrative voice from authorial mediation also emphasizes the value of tolerance, the social reception of difference through listening. By shifting values from power of speech to the knowledge of listening, Woolf advocates fostering individuality within a philosophy of care.
Wooll's virtual dialogue integrates aspects of both subjectivities in its style, thus symbolising a communicative bond between the two subjects. This style secures for Dodge a narrative SELF which is not grounded in autonomy, but in recognition of his own Otherness. This kind of recognition, existing between narrative voices exiled from their identity-loci, constitutes a shared narrative subjectivity, a subjectivity predicated upon integration and inclusion in intersubjective connection.

Critical Discussion

With this reading, I depart from a number of critics who focus on this scene's indeterminacies and incompletions as signifiers of interpersonal disconnection and social dissolution. For example, Judy Reese (1996) argues that this scene represents an illusion of Dodge's "fabricated sense of contact with Lucy," a blanket-interpretation that she applies to all communicative acts in Between, no matter their context. According to Reese, conversations like these represent "aborted attempts at contact, disruptive moments in which the attempt to bridge the gap accomplishes nothing," and a "wider gap" between characters is formed in the process (Recasting Social Values 139, 142).

In this view, I believe that Reese ignores substantial narrative evidence pointing to the stylistic indicators of connection, including intertextual allusions as well as narrative voice stylisations that imperfectly, but successfully, bind these consciousnesses together. Reese's sense that a thread of "failure" is woven throughout all communication attempts in Between is accurate only in a non-relational mode of identity. Instead, I give a positive reading of narrative indeterminacy in communication, believing that it signals attunement and sensitivity to Otherness. For example, Mrs. Swithin's incompletions
signify an invitation rather than obligation to participate in communication, in contrast to
the kinds of rhetorical questions posed by Bart Oliver, "And which camp...d'you belong
to? The grown, or the ungrown?" (Between 37). Mrs. Swithin's incompletions avoid
declaring "truths," thus opening up possibilities for the SELF to engage with the Other.
Even Mrs. Swithin's comment concluding this scene is incomplete, inviting Dodge's
response and muting her authoritative position of hostess: "Is it time...to go and join—"
(58). By leaving the question open, "as if she were of two minds," Woolf represents Mrs.
Swithin's desire as plural—she cares for Dodge, but she feels as though they should join
the others. Thus, rather than failed communication, I read this passage as a clear
acknowledgement of plurality through the potential presence of two separate
subjectivities, and possibilities, within a response.

Here, I also suggest that a shared acknowledgement of communication failure
between characters still results in inter/transsubjective connections that can be considered
as successful. Despite Mrs. Swithin's incompletions, Dodge feels healed, free of
ritualised, self-defeating modes of thought. In this light, I disagree with Sallie Sears's
(1983) description of the conversation between Mrs. Swithin and William as one of the
few authentic, inaudible communications that take place in the novel: "When a painful
subject breaks past such [social] inhibitions," Sears asserts, "speakers and listeners alike
automatically turn off" (219). Undoubtedly, these scenes can be seen as aesthetic
failures; nothing really happens; nothing even really appears to be said. But evoking my
model of relational narrative desire, it can be argued that in this scene SELF as a
relational subject clearly emerges in the structural aspect of voice. Sears does not
recognize the indirect modes of communication in this scene symbolised by Woolf's use
of disembodiment and virtuality to represent other modes of speaking and listening which do not necessarily manifest verbally. Since Mrs. Swithin reveals her capacity to *attune to* (not turn off from) Dodge, thus recognising and valuing their interdependency, Woolf’s depiction of the *receptivity* shared between these subject positions creates intimacy, not distance. Thus, I believe that in the framework of relational identity, not all, but more, is possible, as we will see in Woolf’s masterful use of narrative polyvalence in the intersubjective connection between Dodge and Isa.

"Her conspirator": Intersubjective Connections in the Dodge-Isa Pairing

A second intersubjective connection between William Dodge and Isa Oliver occurs during one of the pageant’s intervals. This example is worth analysing given Woolf’s radical experimentation with free indirect discourse and unclear pronominal antecedents that simulates the “fusion” or overlapping of these two distinct identities. This example also differs thematically from the others previously explored as it emphasises mutual recognition. In a more stylistically explicit way, Dodge and Isa *help each other out*, and their connection presents the novel’s reworking of gender, suggesting that intersubjectivity is a mode of identification across, but not oblivious to, sexual difference. With this focus, I will consider three scenes: (i) the first meeting between Isa and Dodge during lunch at Pointz Hall; (ii) their brief exchange in the Barn during the pageant’s first interval, which contains verbal echoes of their first meeting; and (iii) their extended conversation in the greenhouse. In terms of Woolf’s stylisation of pronominal polyvalence, these scenes foreshadow the narrative depiction of communal consciousness in the pageant’s final scenes.
“They were conspirators”

Upon her first glimpse of Dodge at lunch, Isa is “antagonized, yet curious” (Between 32) about him. Although resenting his intrusion as a guest, she also welcomes him as a source of curiosity and diversion: “But what did he do with his hands, the white, the fine, the shapely?” (41). Isa’s first impression of him as a “brainy” gentleman is only partially objectified (“putty coloured, unwholesome”). Her more critical view of him describes him relationally: “He was...fundamentally conceited, for he deprecated Mrs Manresa’s effusion, yet was her guest” (32). Thus, Isa’s initial attempts to distance herself from Dodge are undermined by her social compulsion to identify with him, a compulsion based on their apparent similarities; like Isa, Dodge denies his artistic talent, insisting he is a “clerk in an office” (32, 48). Fearing social prohibition, they are bonded through a shared admission that their fathers “loved pictures” (41). Although these are superficial differences based on Dodge’s homosexuality, Isa also realises that the quality she criticises in Dodge—his fear of defending his beliefs and openly acknowledging his sexuality (“A poor specimen he was; afraid to stick up for his own beliefs;” 40)—is her own weakness (“just as she was afraid, of her husband;” 40). Despite many opportunities provided in the novel, Isa repeatedly fails to confront her adulterous husband in public. Thus her greatest similarity with Dodge, Isa implies, is their shared fear of social prohibition and their own independence both; they conceal their eroticism and sexual desire. Dodge believes he is a “half-man,” while Isa secretly lusts after a married farmer. With these similarities, Woolf represents Dodge and Isa as mirroring identities who lend each other “a hand.” Thus both are equally revived by the intersubjective connection they
experience. Let us see how Woolf represents their connection in terms of narrative discourse.

When Dodge joins Isa in the Barn, they share a sense of mutual attraction as "conspirators," a description which echoes the "truant" relation between Dodge and Swithin: "Then she started. William Dodge was by her side. He smiled. She smiled. They were conspirators: each murmuring some song my uncle taught me" (79). In this context, the word "conspirators" could have its source in an objective, intradiegetic third-person narrator who witnesses them together, or in free indirect thought attributed to either one of them, or to both simultaneously. No matter which source is chosen, Isa and Dodge undeniably form a sympathetic union from the start. Woolf simulates their union by removing grammatical boundaries between their individuated thoughts, thereby creating a narrative illusion of fusion. They seem telepathic. The narrative impression of "telepathy" is stylised as an interplay between personal and impersonal pronouns, wherein the unclear antecedents function in polyvalent modes to represent the I as a relational construct for both subjectivities. To achieve this effect, Woolf transposes first-person singular pronouns, and their possessive forms, in an independent clause which integrates, and to a certain extent, superimposes, Isa's speech act on Dodge's listening act.

Let us have another look at the passage and its sequencing:

He smiled. She smiled. They were conspirators: each murmuring some song my uncle taught me.

'It's the play,' she said. 'The play keeps running in my head.'

'Hail, sweet Carinthia. My love. My life,' he quoted.
‘My lord, my liege,’ she bowed ironically. (79)

Here, the grammatical irregularities and use of direct quotation indicate that Isa and Dodge agree in their interpretation of the pageant’s last scene before the interval.⁶² A note of sarcasm binds the two—Dodge’s allusion to the idealised heterosexual romance in the Elizabethan section of the play, placed against his own homosexuality and Isa’s acknowledgement of her own unhappy marriage—sets up, for the reader, a realisation that despite their differences, Dodge and Isa are outsiders. The narrative phrases outside the parameters of direct speech reflect this similarity.

Now let us take a careful look at the stylisation of the intertextual phrase, “Songs my uncle taught me?” originating with Dodge’s polite inquiry:

‘Songs my uncle taught me?’ said William Dodge, hearing her mutter. He unfolded her chair and fixed the bar into the right notch (41);

Isa filled in the phrase. Then she started. William Dodge was by her side.

He smiled. She smiled. They were conspirators: each murmuring some song my uncle taught me. (79)

In the first context, Dodge’s question invites Isa to converse with him. He inquires whether or not her “muttering” some song her uncle taught her, referring back to the first words they exchanged at the lunch table, when Isa informed Dodge that as well as having a father who loved pictures (as did Dodge, her like subject), she also had an uncle who made up poems “walking in his garden, saying them aloud” (41). Thus, in the second context, the phrase “some song my uncle taught me,” echoes Dodge’s comment on Isa’s comment made earlier. In this subtle way, Woolf reveals that Dodge is a good listener. Despite Isa’s flurried and disconnected explanation, he understood what she said.
Through intertextual allusion, Woolf emphasises Dodge’s ability, and desire, to actually hear Isa’s voice, and, like Bankes, to actually know what she means—that is, to treat her as a distinct and separate subject.

Here, Woolf’s stylistic detailing of the second context characterises Dodge’s particular mode of attentiveness, one that constrasts greatly with the way Giles and Bart treat Isa. He respects and responds to Isa precisely when, and because, the others at Pointz Hall do not. For instance, he unfolds her chair and fixes the bar into the “right notch” (41). The auditory image of his fixing the chair’s bar into the “right notch”—compared to Giles’ act of “nicking” his chair into position “with a jerk” (43)—suggests that in perceiving each other as two distinct and separate subjects, Dodge and Isa “fit.” Dodge performs in the “right” way towards Isa in this scene by showing that he cares, and cares enough to listen to her mutterings. Thus, like Swithin, Dodge puts effort into initiating a conversation with Isa—“‘Songs my uncle taught me?’” (41).

By recontextualising Isa’s former comment here in the barn, the narrator implies that the respectful dynamics already present in their first conversation are developing to a recognition stage. More importantly, the multiple ways the echo-phrase “some song my uncle taught me” can be attributed creates an interesting interplay of singularity and plurality by which these characters seek and find themselves in each other. For instance, if neither is murmuring anything—a distinct possibility, given the social context—then the entire phrasal-unit “murmuring some song my uncle taught me” is an auditory image lifted from their previous conversation to be presented here by Woolf as their shared memory. In this case, since the narrative functions intertextually; voice attribution is not necessary since nothing is spoken, but simply remembered by one, or both subjects, or by
the narrator’s recognition of their shared memory.

Another option is to interpret the phrase as a third-person narrative *echo* of their previous speech exchange. In this case, with its lack of pronoun agreement—singular pronouns used with the plural subject “they”—the phrase confirms their mutual attentiveness. They recall the words which drew them together in the first instance as they take pleasure in evoking their similarities. Woolf’s use of third-person narration, in this case, represents this style of communication as a “love-bond.”

Within each of these readings, voice plurality emerges because it is necessary to consider alternative possibilities for attribution as well as for partial attributions. For instance, the sentence: “They were conspirators: each murmuring some song my uncle taught me” (79) increases in polyvalence when the semantics are analysed. For instance, one reading would be to suggest that both subjects are, indeed, *murmuring* “some song(s),” or even the same one, learned from their uncles. In this case, the narrative functions literally (in its incorrect grammar) to show that Isa and Dodge are similar characters, responding in a social context in a similar fashion—humming or singing to relieve their boredom and/or nervousness. This reading again reinforces their characterisation as outsiders. While the rest of the community chats and mingles, Isa and Dodge sing to themselves in a bonding of like subjectivities.

An additional, and more complex, reading of the sentence interprets it as Dodge’s unmarked, indirect speech. In this case, the narration reports Dodge’s polite inquiry, possibly spoken, as an indication of his continued interest in Isa—that is, as his inquiry into what she is murmuring. This interpretation makes sense in light of Isa’s response; she murmurs the lines of the pageant that are running through her head (“songs...”). In
Relational Narrative Desire

this case, the phrase forms a grammatical fusion of singularity and plurality by
modulating second-person pronouns into first-person pronouns in an imaginative
transference of subject position. Songs Isa’s uncle taught her become songs that
someone taught Dodge/him. This interpretation supports the intersubjective connection
that can be posited here. The word “songs” functions as a bridge of transference
connecting the subjects.

Along these lines, another variant exists in dividing the sentence so that it is
attributed partially to third-person narration: “He smiled. She smiled. They were
conspirators.” Third person narration then splits off into an array of attributions with the
phrase: “each murmuring some song my uncle taught me.” In this case, the reader
activates the grammatical possibilities in a number of ways, depending on how s/he ties
the pronouns back to the antecedents. For example, possible readings of the phrase “my
uncle taught me” are:

1. As interior monologue attributed to one of the two characters, that is, some
   song that Dodge’s uncle taught him, or some song Isa’s uncle taught her (they
   shared a similar kind of father, why not a similar uncle?); or,

2. as shared interior monologue(s) of both characters, in which my and me,
   although singular, function as plural so that they can grammatically refer back
to both subjects, as in collective pronouns like “someone” and “everyone”; or,

3. as a third-person narration shift to free indirect thought, in which Dodge’s
   thought takes the form of Isa’s speech.

The latter option, an intermediary voice stylisation where two separate uses of free
indirect discourse merge, creates an impression of unified subjectivities. Dodge thinks as
Isa speaks, thus experiencing, in himself, her first-person subjectivity.

With all these possibilities—six, and there are more—the word each, although stressed differently in all cases, suggests that the two subjects, Isa and Dodge, act on their own desires and social impulses in communication in a similar fashion. The convergence of more than one subjectivity upon the singular pronouns ("my," "me") suggests that despite their obvious differences, these characters connect through social (and physical) proximity. This intersubjective connection, achieved through Woolf's grammatical fracturing of individuality, continues to be developed when Isa begins showing Dodge the greenhouse.

In the Arbor: Narrative SELF-ing of Isa and William

The last intersubjective connection we will consider in Between, once again between Isa and Dodge, forms a thematic parallel to the one analysed earlier in Mrs. Swithin and Dodge's tour of Pointz Hall. In this connection, the conversation between Isa and Dodge, a borderlinking of hetero-homosexuality, represents an interpersonal inclusion of gender boundaries. Narratologically, this scene anticipates Woolf's depiction of transsubjectivity through her careful crafting of collectivity with clear markers of individuality, suggesting again that inter/transsubjective fusions do not threaten subjecthood.

Ironically, and even comically, Isa's invitation to show Dodge the greenhouse comes too late; he has already shifted his attention from her to bask in the erotic pleasure of seeing Giles's virile, muscular body. Dodge realises that Isa's interest in him, contrasting with her interest in Rupert Haines, lies outside the sexual arena. However, in
their mutual attraction to Giles, Woolf’s subtext suggests the value of emotional connection which disregards dominator culture’s sexual limitations. Therefore, Isa’s invitation to take Dodge to the greenhouse—the same place in which Giles and Mrs. Manresa presumably “consummate” their flirtation—is (unlike Mrs. Swithin’s invitation) largely self-serving. Isa wants to avoid being near Giles as Mrs. Manresa arrives, thereby signaling her disapproval with a sudden exit. Because Dodge perceives the motivation behind her invitation, he agrees to follow her, thus foregoing his erotic arousal in Giles’ presence. Dodge’s sensitivity and emotional attunement to Isa’s feelings forms the first phase of the intersubjective connection: he subdues his own sexual desire to follow her.

On the way to the greenhouse, Isa opens their conversation with a mock performance of the pageant’s Elizabethan segment. In her parody of the play, Isa dramatises what she believes to be her own suicidal martyrdom, based on her complicity with her husband’s infidelity: “‘She spake,’ Isa murmured. ‘And from her bosom’s snowy antre drew the gleaming blade. ‘Plunge blade!’ she said. And struck. ‘Faithless!’ she cried. Knife too! It was broke. So too my heart,’ she said” (85). Although parodying the female heroine of Restoration tragedy, Isa’s mockery actually expresses her real emotions—a fact not lost on Dodge. For instance, as a tragic reversal of Act I’s ending, which foregrounds the happy union of the lovers against the old crone’s corpse, Isa’s play-acted corpse, and her ironic smile, suggest to Dodge that the heterosexual union in Miss La Trobe’s pageant is an illusory ideal. As Alison Booth (1992) argues, here Isa plays a heroine who “self-destructively repeats old romantic plots” (Greatness Engendered 269)–her gesture is ultimately futile. She cannot change her situation or the faithless man who “masters” her. Thus, even though no direct speech
or representation of this content (Giles’ infidelity) explicitly enters the scene, Isa and Dodge meet in a borderspace acknowledging patriarchy’s failure to recognize woman as subject—with its obvious implications for Dodge, a “womanly man.”

Equally, however, Isa’s mock suicide is muddled by her realisation that her identity depends not on the illusion of romantic love, not even in her husband’s unsatisfactory treatment of her. In her mockery of their union, Isa’s performance shows Dodge that she sustains (partial) identities outside the female-as-victim position. In this way, Woolf stylistically infuses Isa’s parody with farcical elements that reconfigure the power aspects of dominator relationships. For example, Isa’s declarative order to the blade to “plunge” elides her as a subject—the blade does the killing—she does not. Her heroic gesture of removing the knife from her bosom is followed by its anti-climatic breaking apart; the very weapon that could ensure her liberation is in itself deficient and requires better craftsmanship. Her exclamation, “Faithless,” gains a comic double reference as a comment on the knife which cannot sustain its injury, as well as on her husband who cannot sustain his marital loyalty.

Woolf therefore depicts Dodge’s response to Isa’s spontaneous re-enactment as a deliberate reversal of its implied heterosexual dominator dynamics. Through the strategic silence followed by their conversation, Dodge challenges the ideals of romantic love through an act of recognition which is more highly valued by Isa than her flawed marriage. Therefore, although Isa smiles ironically to Dodge as he comes up, he interprets her enactment with compassion, not with the irony she projects. Her performance alone suggests to him she is offering it for his sympathetic response; he has seen Mrs. Manresa publicly pursuing her husband. Because Isa’s ironic smile undercuts,
and disapproves of, the melodrama of female self-sacrifice, she looks to Dodge to confirm for her that she as Other has a right to her own subjecthood, and indeed, to her own alterity. Furthermore, she looks to Dodge to confirm that she can tolerate her conflicted feelings (her love and hate) in relation to her husband, just as she can feel conflicting feelings—vulnerability (heartache) and power—in her mocking desire to end her romantic misery.68

"As if they had known each other all their lives"

Having described the gender dynamics of the scene which anticipate their intersubjective connection, I will turn now to the narrative stylisations Woolf uses to depict their mutual recognition, primarily composed of free indirect discourse and direct dialogue. Although the majority of Isa’s and Dodge’s spoken statements are elided in the next phase of their intersubjective connection, evident in Woolf’s use of indirect discourse, Woolf relies on the framework of their conversation to establish subjective fusion. Instead of representing the conversation’s content, Woolf depicts its effect, relying on stylisations most appropriate for capturing this aspect. My interpretation of this segment of their conversation suggests that Woolf emphasises Isa’s pleasurable experience of heterogeneity as she speaks with someone entirely different from, and yet akin to, herself.

Based on the narrator’s description of Dodge as Isa’s “lip reader, her semblable, her conspirator, a seeker like her after hidden faces” (Between 150), the reader is led to believe that Dodge tolerates Isa’s self-contradictions and self-paradoxes, and that these enhance, rather than detract from, their connection. Woolf’s almost seamless integration of free indirect discourse into direct dialogue in this passage again gives the impression
that Dodge and Isa share a telepathic connection. From strategically placed phrases of indirect discourse, the reader gets the impression that Isa and Dodge are comfortably engaged in an intimate conversation, quoted here in full:

‘Still in the play?’ he asked. She nodded. ‘That was your son,’ he said, ‘in the Barn?’

She had a daughter too, she told him, in the cradle.

‘And you - married?’ she asked. From her tone he knew she guessed, as women always guessed, everything. They knew at once they had nothing to fear, nothing to hope. At first they resented - serving as statues in a greenhouse. Then they liked it. For then they could say - as she did - whatever came into their heads. And hand him, as she handed him, a flower.

‘There’s something for your buttonhole, Mr...’ she said, handing him a sprig of scented geranium.

‘I’m William,’ he said, taking the furry leaf and pressing it between thumb and finger. (85)

Dodge opens this conversation with an exact quotation of the phrase concluding their last conversation (‘Still in the play?’), thus creating a structural link between the two conversations and evoking the earlier intimacy between them. Dodge’s next comment, “That was your son...in the Barn?” has a twofold effect in restoring this intimacy. He includes her son as an integral part of her subjecthood, indirectly acknowledging the psychological difficulties that Isa would have in breaking from a marriage with a son, and “a daughter too ... in the cradle.” With these few words, Dodge constitutes Isa as a relational identity, tolerating and it seems, respecting, her plurality—a civil identity,
partially constituted as a wife and mother.

Following Isa’s question, ‘And you—married?,’ Woolf’s narrative stylisation takes an interesting turn, reflecting, through Dodge’s focalisation, the knowledge that the reader would have to gauge his response. Without directly representing his answer to Isa (if there is one), Woolf instead interpellates between their speech a mixed mode passage of third-person narration, free indirect thought, and Dodge’s interior monologue, which shrewdly summarises, for the reader, the relational dynamics that typically occur between gay men, like Dodge, and heterosexual women, like Isa. Women (like Isa), Dodge reasons, who cannot invest in him sexually, first resent being denied such an opportunity, and then enjoy the social liberties available once outside the heterosexual sphere in which they function as objects. Like other women, Isa can relate to Dodge as an equal subject—a friend—outside the dominator subject-object polarity of patriarchal culture. Stylistically, however, with its short elliptical statements and recurring dashes, Woolf enables two complementary readings of Dodge’s social “dodging” of this question by omitting his answer as well as incorporating his focalisation. One reading emphasises Dodge’s ironic awareness of the social privileges that his homosexuality grants him—he is privy to knowledge denied other men. The other reading emphasises identification with women’s devalued patriarchal positioning in general, thereby stressing the similarities he shares with Isa. In other words, he realises that his knowledge also estranges him from the dominator figures holding power in social circles. In this case, I endorse the latter reading which argues for Dodge’s instinctual compassion for, and recognition of SELF, in Isa, while attesting to his own marginalisation.

These passages require some micro-level analysis in order to fully appreciate the
subtle complexities of Woolf’s stylisations of intersubjectivity. To emphasise Dodge’s ironic knowledge in the first reading, Woolf transposes third person narration into Dodge’s free indirect thought. This choice makes sense, as Dodge would not necessarily convey the content of these thoughts to Isa, but instead realises that they determine, and greatly influence, the nature of the conversation they can have. By believing that women respond to him in a relational sphere outside of the heterosexual economy—they have nothing to “hope” for, but also nothing to “fear”—Dodge invites his own alterity as a relational and non-relational subject. Women are forced to converse with him as subjects—not objects—thus freeing themselves from their patriarchal servitude as “statues;” they can speak freely to him without censure. Their freedom, Dodge realises, grants him privileged access to Otherness. Although victimised in heterosexual male company, he experiences a power-with dynamic with the female sex. This reading is supported by Woolf’s depiction of Dodge’s internalisation of the anticipated role-taking of women towards himself (“Then they like it”). Dodge experiences himself as subject-as-Other, “power-with” via “power-within.”

The second reading, emphasising Dodge’s capacity for compassion over his ironic knowledge, points to another important quality in his character. Dodge clearly understands, and identifies with, disempowered women in patriarchy—a possibility established in the first they of this conversation. Fortunately, from a feminist standpoint, this identification prevents him from creating an objectified view of women by acknowledging “power-within” as power from the other side of the patriarchal divide. To a certain extent, then, Dodge acknowledges his interdependency upon Isa, who “guesses” the “secret” of his sexuality “as women always guessed, everything” (85). By retaining
Dodge’s focalisation, Woolf’s stylisation indicates rather than feeling self-consciously estranged and objectified by this realisation, as he did with Mrs. Swithin, here in Isa’s company Dodge feels relieved of social tension. He is comforted by the fact that Others, like Isa, can “see through” him, and in so doing, support him emotionally, as Isa does later in the novel: “Well, was it wrong if [Dodge] was that word? Why judge each other? Do we know each other? Not here, not now” (49).70

By acknowledging patriarchy’s undervaluation of women’s communication strategies, as well as its obliviousness to the benefits that such strategies offer, Dodge identifies with Isa in realising that he has nothing to fear from her. He knows that women, with their lack of public power, have the freedom to make of private moments what they can, and more importantly, what they will. By identifying with Isa on these positive aspects of subjugation, Dodge extends to Isa the same confirmation of her subjecthood by perceiving her as a woman of great inner beauty (85).

Woolf’s deliberate parallel between these scenes here evokes the same healing aspects, except that this time, Dodge actively engages in promoting their intersubjective connection. When Isa forgets his name, he does not hesitate in coming to her assistance, substituting his first name for her title (“Mr.”). Isa reciprocates his warmth with a similarly structured response, “I’m Isa,’ she answered” (85), thus syntactically situating herself to relation to him as a like-subject. Woolf then confirms their intimacy using a transfigural image. William’s act of “taking the furry leaf [of the geranium] and pressing it between thumb and finger” (85), actualizes the same image from Isa’s poetic meditation while she waits for Dodge by the greenhouse door. She longs to “press its [the geranium’s] sour, its sweet, its sour, its long grey leaf, so twixt thumb and finger”
(85), thus creating an image that the narrative, but not Dodge, has access to. With these two stylistic devices, the reader gets the sense that, like Bankes for Lily, Dodge understands and feels compassion for Isa’s loneliness. Woolf’s liberation of their interpersonal boundaries, symbolised by Dodge’s physical manifestation of Isa’s thought, adds rhetorical force to the reader’s sense that a deep emotional bond unifies the two subjects, thereby temporarily lessening the loneliness they feel as individual subjects.

As with the Swithin-Dodge pair, Woolf stylises the next phase of their intersubjective connection as a virtual dialogue. Narratively withheld from direct representation, their conversation is provided in a mixed mode of direct dialogue and free indirect speech with open-ended plural pronominal references. These signify, and anticipate, the potential for transsubjective connections in that Isa and Dodge generalise collectivity out of their singularity. Furthermore, having her characters discuss the meaning of their conversation, then co-creating a rhetorical image to figure this intersubjective mode of communication, Woolf evokes the power of transsubjectivity to counter the disparity, chaos, and fragmentation inherent in war. This rhetorical effect requires very sophisticated and innovative technical stylizations of narrative voice.

Woolf relies on a wide variety of devices to simulate the SELF’s integration of otherness in this passage. The shift from direct dialogue to third-person narrative statement, which the reader assumes will summarize their conversation—“Then they talked as if they had known each other all their lives” (85)—is followed by a wide variety of voice stylizations, portraying both mimetic and anti-mimetic effects. Because the reader can follow the intention of their conversation without entirely knowing its content, Woolf emphasises the specific nature of their dialogue and its import. This creates an
anti-mimetic function for narrative voice in that voice ceases to represent identity, representing impersonality instead. Let us take a moment to scrutinize this passage, a good representation of the anti-mimetic effects of Woolf's narrative style of transsubjectivity.

Representing their conversation indirectly, Woolf uses plural pronouns to detach and disembodied Isa and Dodge's voices from their specific, localised context, her narrative techniques reflecting her theme that collectivity is formed from the integration of, not appropriation of, difference:

Then they talked as if they had known each other all their lives; which was odd, she said, as they always did, considering she had known him perhaps one hour. Weren't they, though, conspirators, seekers after hidden faces? That confessed, she paused and wondered, as they always did, why they could speak so plainly to each other. And added: 'Perhaps we've never met before, and never shall again.'

'The doom of sudden death hangs over us,' he said. 'There's no retreating and advancing' - he was thinking of the old lady showing him the house - 'for us as for them.' (85-6)

Based on the grammatical irregularities in this passage, the localised context of this conversation recedes as Woolf begins to mark the transsubjective dimensions of their conversation by representing their individual specificity as markers for their collectivity. Woolf creates a stylistic shift from third-person narration to an indirect representation of Isa's reported dialogue, Dodge's quoted thought, and free, indirect speech: "they talked as if they had known each other all their lives; which was odd, she said, as they always did, considering she had known him perhaps one hour" (85). As one can see, in these
stylistisations, Woolf does not entirely surrender the grammatical presence of the *speaking voice* of first-person subjectivity. These shifts, which can collectively be interpreted as a movement from third- to first-person narration, and maintain the summary style of reporting speech; however, they open up the sequence to posit plural subjects within interpretive readings through Woolf’s strategic placement of pronouns. Although the initial use of the plural pronoun *they* in the phrase, “they talked as if they had known each other all their lives,” clearly refers to the Isa-Dodge pair, on its next occurrence (“as *they* always did”) its reference is multiple. This second *they* evokes Dodge’s reference to “all women” who converse with him; it is also a transsubjective reference to *all people* who converse as Isa and Dodge are conversing. In the latter reading, “they” deliberately promotes inclusivity.

Another option emerges if one retains, as I did not in the quotation above, a framework of third-person narration. In this case, if one attributes the phrase (“as they always did”) solely to third-person narration, it construes a voice-shift, and the reporting voice includes *Isa* among all the people who always say it is “odd” to connect intimately with strangers (like the gay Dodge). This reading generalises from *Isa* to *all people* who connect socially despite such differences, and/or *who make an effort to do so*. In each reading, Woolf indicates that thematically, Isa is valued by Dodge as one able to participate successfully in intersubjective connection.

*If,* however, this statement is read as a continuation of Isa’s comment, that is, as a reflection on her next indirectly reported statement, “considering she’d known him perhaps one hour;” then *she*/Isa would be included in the *they* in the phrase “as they always did.” This emphasis gives a slightly different reading of the scene. In this case,
Woolf suggests that Isa belongs to the group of people who always think that it is "odd" for strangers to converse in an intimate manner. Although this reading is more negative, given the connotations of "odd" with a judgment of what is socially appropriate (particularly in relation to marginalised persons), still I believe it can be argued that Woolf's stylisation situates Isa as one of "them," capable of transcending social prejudices to make such valuable, personal connections.

Note, though, the interpretation with the most destructive implications in terms of relational identity lies in reading the phrase "as they always did" to denote exclusivity. In this case, they refers to a group of people who, antagonistic towards subjects like Isa and Dodge, condemn differences, even shared ones. In this case, others would say ("as they always did") that it is strange (and even sinful) for Isa and Dodge—a heterosexual woman and a homosexual man—to converse in this way, as if "they had known each other all their lives."

Thus, Woolf's stylistic detailing of even this one phrase within the virtual dialogue insists on plurality. While she sustains the same generalising (and ambiguous) effect of the plural pronoun they in the next statement, her rendering of Isa's free indirect speech—"Weren't they, though, conspirators, seekers, after hidden faces?" (86)—confirms the intersubjective connection between Isa and Dodge, since the plural pronoun also doubles as a critique of dominator culture. The they who disapprove of such unions between such socially distinct subjects hunt down, and seek, the "hidden faces" of disprized femininity and homosexuality (see Silverman, Threshold 2-4).

Moreover, within the parameters of narrative intersubjectivity, the question of whether or not they are "conspirators" may be interpreted as a continuation of Isa's
conversational turn. As a potential response from Dodge, for instance, the phrase could be interpreted as affirming their relationship as shared “conspirators,” thereby echoing and rendering audible, once again, the thought foremost in Isa’s mind. Whether interpreted either as the free indirect thought or speech of Dodge, Isa, both characters, or the narrative, this question may be read in seven ways. The question itself then ("Weren’t they though, conspirators, seekers after hidden faces?") (Between 86) symbolises a transcendental connection between the mediating sources experienced on a psychic level, but not put into, or not sufficiently represented by, their dialogue. In this open-ended interpretation, the question reads as if parenthetically suspended between Isa’s spoken comment (“which was odd”) and her act of continuing after her pause (“That confessed, she paused”), wondering “why they could speak so plainly to each other.” Because the next statement, a tag phrase (“And added...”), again signals Isa’s direct speech marked with quotation marks, readers can construe this “wondering” as an act of speech, rather than thought—a valid interpretation that supports the first reading that promotes themes of inclusivity.

Either way, the polyvalent stylisation of this conversational exchange supports, in its use of direct and indirect representation, the undeniable act of mutual recognition by Isa and Dodge, who perceive SELF in Other (“conspirators, seekers after hidden faces”). The narrative’s last repetition of the phrase “as they always did,” in connection with Isa’s question here (“why they could speak so plainly to each other”), reinvokes the plurality of the pronoun “they” to reveal the transsubjective dimension of this exchange, both interpersonal and transhistorical. Therefore, Woolf appropriately concludes the scene with an image of a transsubjective union co-created by these two subjects. Isa answers
her question why they “can speak so plainly” with the suggestion that “Perhaps because we’ve never met before, and never shall again”’(86).\textsuperscript{72} In my readings, the narrative draws a transfigural bridge, through represented speech that combines two levels of discourse (mimesis of conversation and diegesis of narrative), to reflect the personal bond established between these two. Alternately, if “they” refers to those who “conspire” against people like Isa and Dodge in order to unmask the partialness of their identities, as we have discussed, then Woolf implies that Isa and Dodge must conspire together—they must seek each other out, as hidden faces and constitute themselves as relational subjects.

Due to the multiple choices for attribution, these statements evoke both the intimate feeling of connection and the terrifying feeling of division for the reader. These contrasting feelings ultimately point to the prominent themes in Between. Either we recognise in Others partial identity and thus our similarities with them, or we deny these bonds, and abandon our sense of community. In this case, as Isa and Dodge prophesy, we are never able to “meet again,” the “sudden doom of death hanging over us” (86). Dodge’s comment ends the conversational part of this intersubjective connection: “‘The doom of sudden death hanging over us,’ he said. ‘There’s no retreating and advancing’—he was thinking of the old lady showing him the house—’for us as for them’”\textsuperscript{73}(86), and supports both interpretive possibilities. As one of the novel’s few attributable expressions directly representing humanity’s fear of doomsday, Dodge’s comment, with its inclusive plural-pronoun “us,” can be read transsubjectively as extending the union between Isa and himSELF, predicated upon fear—\textit{and} hope—to the same one binding all human beings. No matter what Dodge’s pronominal reference is here (for example, to
himSELF and Isa, to the Pointz Hall community, to all of England, or even to the German Nazis and their supporters in the third-person pronoun “they”), his comment forms a counterpoint to war’s potential doomsday by evoking the comfort and hope that Swithin’s compassion has extended to him. Therefore, even when the novel most explicitly addresses the destruction of war, Woolf counters with the positive benefit of valuing identity-in-relationship, and, as we will see in the next section, identity-in-community.

“‘We’...composed of many different things”: Woolf’s Communal Consciousness

Woolf’s depiction of transsubjective bonding of the audience members in *Between* functions metaphorically to show how community creates a sense of social unity among individuals. Woolf represents transsubjectivity as a communal experience, founded in various gradations, and manifestations, of personality and impersonality. In transsubjective connections, the SELF, she implies, must be sufficiently aware of its Otherness; Otherness, in turn, must be bound to the SELF’s specificity. Woolf’s narrative representation of this transsubjective communal consciousness is rooted in complementary figures of anonymity, disembodiment, and plurality. Various combinations of narrative voice styles represent the communal consciousness and its transsubjective capacity, primarily through intersplicing and juxtaposing unattributable, but recognisable, voices.

In the final sections of *Between*, third-person narration, although never entirely abandoned, is augmented with the frequent use of free indirect discourse that portrays the inner thoughts silently shared by the audience, including inconsequential commentary on
the weather (59), and the more serious enquiry concerning the intentions and motivations of La Trobe’s pageant (145). Woolf’s stylisation of transsubjectivity in this section of the novel, reveals the paradox of relational identity: unity can emerge through shared experiences of individual differences. For narrative voice, this theme means it is unhooked from singular forms of identity and immersed in pluralised forms of subjectivity. The analysis in this section, focussed on the “waiting periods” between the pageant acts and La Trobe’s final two scenes in the pageant (“Present Time: Reality” and “Ourselves”), shows how Woolf adapts narrative discourse to signify identity by representing voices that belong, simultaneously, to “no one and everyone.” Stylised either as voice montage which evades single-source attribution, or what Woolf refers to as “one-making,” the blending of distinct source-styles, narrative transsubjectivity represents a communal consciousness.

Lanser’s analysis of the diffused authority in Between helps us situate our analysis of Woolf’s stylisation of a communal consciousness as a socially (and ethically) responsible consciousness in its SELF-attunement to Others.75 Lanser analyses the audience members’ commentary as an extension of narrative voice forming a “textual philosophy” (Fictions of Authority 115), akin to the commentary of the biographer in Orlando. As a “generalising consciousness” among the characters, this commentary dispenses narrative authority. According to Lanser, this dispersal implies that voice is part of a single, if shared, subjectivity in narration: “This language is everyone’s, in other words, because it is actually the language of the narrative voice” (114). Lanser also argues that this style of voice, extending beyond any entity to which it can be singularly attributed, evokes a contradictory sense of impotence without specific agency and moral
urgency by allowing more latitude for the aphoristic, the epigrammatic, the exhortational: 
“Woolf sends these messages repetitively, through voice upon voice—the voices of ‘no
one’ and ‘everyone’” (118)—two strategies used to stylize the war protest scenes to great
effect in Three Guineas, a novel which argues for individual responsibility against herd
mentality. Thus, as we will see, Woolf’s depiction of “ourselves” as a communal
consciousness also invokes an ethical choice in the narrative discourse which is distinct
from Iser’s moral judgment.76

Woolf’s portrayal of the audience as a communal consciousness narratively fuses
multiple, fragmented, random perceptions and interpretations, collated by juxtaposition,
ellipsis, and superimposition. As outlined in the table in Chapter II, Woolf represents the
audience’s communal consciousness through a number of specific narrative stylisations:
an anonymous, unattributable voice (sometimes referred to as “the voice;” Between 102,
131); a plurality of diverse thoughts that are pronominally or syntactically connected
(“They sat...without being;” 129), or, as with individual perceptions and unanswered
questions in unmarked free indirect discourse, suggests that these responses could,
theoretically, be “sourced” in number of different audience members.77 The communal
consciousness is also represented as a series of fragments of direct discourse during and
after the play, including elliptical fragments of overheard dialogue, excerpted
conversational fragments, and commentaries which interrupt the play’s dialogue.
Paradoxically, these fragments, incoherent on an individual basis, successfully represent
the interdependence of SELF and context, promoting the inclusivity of Otherness.
Woolf’s characterisation of the audience itself in Between as a communal
consciousness originates in Bart Oliver’s identification of the audience as a “very
important part" of the play (47). As a recurring motif, the audience’s voice gains thematic significance, first through recurring, shifting focalisations by specific characters, and second in the interstices of the play, existing as a voice-collective, to be “cut free” towards the end of the pageant with its own individuated voice. Thus, throughout this manifestation, the audience becomes a group-consciousness with its own identity, transcending any one individual voice.

With these effects, as James Naremore (1973) observes, Woolf moves away from the direct representation of thought, including an interior monologue style, in order to gain “latitude” to express what lies beyond or outside of the character’s ego so that “whole groups of people share thoughts and become like a single organism” (71, 73). Alternately, this communal consciousness in *Between* is textually referred to as the *third*, *other*, or *inner* voice: “The inner voice, the other voice was saying” (*Between* 89), or even as a series of diverse thoughts, connected pronominally and/or syntactically: “They sat exposed... They were suspended without being” (129).

The communal consciousness is also represented by Woolf, in third-person narration, as an oscillation between the third-person plural pronoun *they* and the first-person plural pronoun *we*. In order to characterise the audience’s conflicting feelings of separation and connection, third-person narration transposes the pronoun “they” to show that a shared feeling of separation can paradoxically be experienced as unification: “Their minds and bodies were too close, yet not close enough. We aren’t free, each one of them felt separately [,] to feel or think separately, nor yet to fall asleep. We’re too close, but not close enough. So they fidgeted” (52). Here, the shift from third-person narration, signalled by the qualifying phrase which also posits personalised deictics (“yet
not close enough”) to free quoted or direct thought using the personal plural “we” (“We are free, each one of them felt separately”), is represented by Woolf as an interplay of distinction and non-distinction. The shift to the pronoun “we” functions superficially as a mode of representation for plurality, but thematically, it functions as a mode of being. Although “we” can feel separately, we cannot be separated (“we’re too close”). By returning to the more distanced objectification of group, signalled by the third-person pronoun they, Woolf uses third-person narration to attempt to insert division.

But stylistically, this attempt is thwarted by grammatical and syntactic modifications which insist on the communality of the represented thought. For example, the sentiment, “We aren’t free,” is shared transsubjectively. Although each character shares the same thought or feeling in a separate way (“each one of them felt separately [,] to feel or think separately”), Woolf’s repeated transposition, “We’re too close,” emphasises the undeniable similarities in their “minds and bodies” which preclude difference. In this stylistic rendering, Woolf emphasises the necessity of acknowledging individual differences, even while recouping these differences on an experiential plane of narrative discourse which argues for a transsubjective connection between the characters.

Later in the text, Woolf more explicitly characterises this transsubjective connection of the communal consciousness as a pluralised form of narrative voice (and identification), represented as a montage of thought and speech from diverse sources, both personal and impersonal. This voice-montage is narratively represented as a communal verbal and auditory experience, emulating the orchestration of music wafting from the gramophone, or the sound of the wind in the trees. These sounds from nature and human creativity draw the audience together, while the mechanised sounds of the
industrialised world threaten to sever the community apart. As we will see, the most potent passage for this kind of stylisation can be found in the waiting periods between the pageant’s acts, the formal intermissions and intervals, which, to La Trobe, comprise “necessary evils” threatening both the performance’s aesthetic illusion and its hold on the audience.

*Community in the Waiting Periods: Voice-Montage and One-Making*

In *Between*, these unavoidable “necessary evils” interrupting the play symbolise, for Woolf, the human necessity to engage in social interrelationships in both their pleasurable and painful aspects. *Between*’s interruptions of social connections represent human unity as a transitory state, achieved with much effort, and even with that, imperfection. Therefore, Woolf stylises these sequences as rapidly shifting, densely collated, cross-sectional “samplings” of multifarious narrative voices, including words or fragmented phrases denoting the audience’s random eavesdropping, casual commentary, impassioned dialogue, and/or private meditations. As such, they signify the plurality of heterogeneous subjectivities gathered in a *communal* consciousness. For Woolf, such a consciousness is predicated upon plurality and requires a narrative mode of inclusivity, capable of assuming multiple positions arising from Other-oriented perspectives, as well as the ability to authenticate SELF within potentially conflicting, contradictory positions. For this reason, negotiation, and even negation, are represented by Woolf as inherent parts of transsubjectivity, *but the denial of plurality is not*.

Before analysing specific stylisations of the audience’s narrative voices in these textual segments, let us recall Habermas’s concept of transsubjectivity as it parallels the
theme of relational identity Woolf depicts here. Her insistence on the presence of individual differences within a collectivity—beings, ideologies, voices—clearly informs her modernist concept of relational identity, that is, the understanding that identity is not SELF. Instead, SELF-felt identity emerges by living through the "shadows" of others, by identifying and dis-identifying with positions alternately adopted and negated (Benjamin, "Shadow of the Other" 250). Along these lines, Woolf’s depiction of narrative voice to represent co-creation aligns with Habermas’s understanding of personal identity as the "mirror image of collective identity" (Communicative Action II 58).

For instance, as Mrs. Springett realises, the village idiot, Albert, for whom the Reverend Streatfield “makes room,” is a “part of ourselves” (Between 140). He is part of the community, its intrapsychic reality, but he is, as Mrs. Springett also notes, “not a part we like to recognise” (Ibid.). Collective bonding does not erase resistance, nor ensure harmony; rather, it actively fosters within the SELF individual struggles with partialness. Which part of Albert is “ourselves”? How is Albert “me”? What part of Albert do I deny? With Mrs. Springett’s comment, Woolf once again evokes tolerance and compassion as the means to reconciling ourselves to aspects that we would like to deny in ourselves, as demonstrated by her use of the second-person pronoun “you”: “You couldn’t very well deny him, poor fellow” (141). By integrating Albert through the second-person pronoun, community members, as well as readers, explore their personal similarities to Albert, and thereby fulfill their social responsibilities to him and to one another, symbolised by their contribution to the “collection” the “idiot” takes up. Whether or not individuals identify or disidentify with Albert, the recognition of his difference constitutes him as a subject. In this way, Woolf’s ethical depiction of SELF in
relational identity alternatively represents the incorporation and projection of *partial* identities, creating and co-creating subjectivities within the continual SELF -Other interaction. In Woolf's characterisation of the audience members in these waiting periods, the relational SELF, posited individually, forms a collective narrative identity. In terms of voice stylisation, Woolf depicts the relational SELF with fluid internal boundaries (borderlink spaces) that "contain" separate, distinct subjectivities who risk the trangression of partially integrating with the multiple subjectivities of Other(s).

Thus, the waiting periods in *Between* "shape" our understanding of Woolf's relational identity as social unity. To this end, Woolf depicts narrative transsubjectivity as a figural blending of individuality, where individual audience members are forced into making wanted and *unwanted* identifications with one other. In this way, the waiting periods raise the question of whether or not communities, as well as individuals, can integrate difference in the form of Otherness, outside of the social pressures of conformity, of being or becoming *the same*. Narrative voice is stylised here so that relationality emerges through narratively virtual states, singled by juxtaposition and superimposition, so that any indicator of voice-singularity are constantly compromised by the acoustical presence of Other(s). Through the excess *and* multiplicity of identity arising from Woolf's representation of transsubjectivity, *Between* conceives of social communality as an *aesthetic* reflection of individual differences without containing, controlling, or reducing them.

In the critical waiting periods of sociability between the pageant's acts, Woolf uses two main narrative devices to emphasize the fact that the audience is largely constructed in a *receptive* role: a setting which foregrounds the involuntary passivity of
the community as it awaits the inevitable onslaught of war, and direct / indirect modes of communication which reflect subjects' patriotic obligations to one another in their desire to uphold and participate in the social institutions, laws, and customs which govern their country. These obligations also signify, for certain members of the audience, their own fears of Otheredness, symbolised by their vulnerability to “outsiders,” like the homosexual Dodge, the flirtatious Mrs. Manresa, and the lesbian artist La Trobe. This fear is expressed through narrative voice so that Woolf’s stylistic emphasis on receptivity spreads this communal feeling across an interlocking web of distinct and individuated consciousnesses.

To illustrate some of these technical effects, I turn now to a highly allusive, dense passage of narrative voice-montage which anticipates the ending of the first interval where the audience assembles for the act set in the age of Reason. Recall that this interval, with the obligatory tea in the Barn, symbolises the greatest threat to La Trobe, who must redirect the audience’s wandering attention back to the stage. Therefore, in its positioning, this passage, clearly representing the wide-range of the audience’s diversity, stylistically immerses the reader in individual differences, representing communal consciousness as a voice-montage, a device occasionally used by H.D. to represent various cultural milieus as well.

Here, Woolf represents the communal consciousness through a combination of third-person narration and quoted dialogue which relies on poetic, auditory imagery to reflect the similarities between different audience members, or more abstractly, the voices registering these thoughts, predicated on the use of the personal pronoun “we”:

Voices chattered. The inner voice, the other voice was saying: How can we
deny that this brave music, wafted from the bushes, is expressive of some inner
harmony? 'When we wake' (some were thinking) 'the day breaks us with its hard
mallet blows.' 'The office' (some were thinking) 'compels disparity. Scattered,
shattered, hither thither summoned by the bell. "Ping-ping-ping" that's the
phone. "Forward!" "Serving!"—that's the shop.' So we answer to the infernal,
agelong and eternal order issued from on high. And obey. 'Working, serving,
pushing, striving, earning wages—to be spent—here? Oh dear no. Now? No, by
and by. When ears are deaf and the heart is dry.' (89)

Reminiscent of The Waves with its suggestion of a collective of individualised
personalities, some poetic, others more practical, this passage moves from a plurality of
voices to a singularised anonymous voice, and this voice evokes a metaphoric sense of
plurality through the use of the plural pronoun we. Woolf's quotation marks, specifically
attributing certain thoughts to certain members of the audience ('some were thinking'),
breaks the "we" conditionally, and non-emphatically, through parenthetical embedding.
Further, specific divisions of the group—the emotionally sensitive ('When we wake, the
day breaks us with its hard mallet blows') and the more practical ('that's the shop')—are
resisted by grammatical parallels in sentence structure that represent these differences.
This simultaneous collection, cancellation and delineation of disparity is recouped in the
shift from quoted dialogue to a more generalised "we"—a pronoun which includes both
groups. All "answer to the infernal, agelong, and eternal order issued from on high." Note, here, that even Woolf's transition between the two distinct segments of the
voice-montage we have been considering—a purposeful interruption—connotes unity.

In between the two extended poetic-prose paragraphs characterising the communal
consciousness in this passage, Woolf's third-person narration incorporates metaphoric "emblems" of transsubjective connection by narrating Cobbet's simple act of picking up a flower: "Here Cobbet of Cobbs Corner who had stooped - there was a flower - was pressed on by people pushing from behind" (89). Even in this brief segment, the third-person narrator "pauses" the action to include, in free indirect thought, Cobbet's act of stooping to rescue a flower from being crushed—an act which "holds" up the crowd moving to the barn (89). In his adherence to the natural order of time and season, Cobbet is impervious to the mechanised world "of the office"—he tends to plants, not phones. This act, although given a literal representation, gains symbolic dimensions, and a role in narrative structure, through its double transitional function. As it splices the voice-montage, it unifies these segments and the sequence at large. Even the technical detailing of this statement reflects this effect. Woolf splices third-person narration, and its impartialness, to insert a fragment of free indirect thought: "there was a flower." This image presumably reflects Cobbet's focalisation, and thus encompasses while it specifies Cobbet's particular worldview.

The next sequence of communal voice-montage in this passage also supports Woolf's narrative transsubjectivity. The reader is exposed to a cacophony of unattributable voices as the audience continues to settle. With a pronominal shift from we to us suspended within lyrical cadences, this passage collates an array of natural images, to which the audience members have equal access:

For I hear music, they [those pushing past Cobbet] were saying. Music wakes us.64 Music makes us see the hidden, join the broken. Look and listen. See the flowers, how they ray their redness, whiteness, silveryness and blue. And the trees
Relational Narrative Desire

with their many-tongued much syllabling, their green and yellow leaves hustle us and shuffle us, and bid us, like the starlings, and the rooks, come together, crowd together, to chatter and make merry while the red cow moves forward and the black cow stands still. (89-90)

Once again figuring music as a unifying force, Woolf represents the communal consciousness through a pronominal interplay of singularity (the "I" contained and identified within the "they"), and a shift to first-person address—from "they" to "us."

These movements constitute plurality within the I-they-us chain.

Once more the singularity of the group voice as conglomerate-character is implied by the narrator’s metaphoric use of saying for thinking, thus giving the impression that the crowd speaks with "one voice." The content of the represented communal thought, "For I hear music...Music wakes us...," emphasises the unifying force of the gramaphone’s music holding the audience together. Woolf poeticises the prose with repetitions and rhythms in conjunction with weighted punctuation ("redness, whiteness, silverness"), onomatopoeia ("chatter"), alliteration ("stands still") and exact rhyme ("hustle us and shuffle us"), creating a montage of auditory imagery to which the entire audience is subject.

By activating the rhymes and rhythms inherent in the grammar and discourse of the passage, Woolf’s narrative music moves from the visual, an arena in which individuals can choose specific foci, to the auditory, symbolising a communally shared environment. This stylisation evokes a different depiction of community when compared to the literary allusions that this passage evokes. For example, unlike Tennyson’s Lotus-Eaters where music brings “sweet sleep,” here, the phrasal “music” provides an
enlivening effect, joining the audience. Unlike Eliot's *Prufrock* (1917), it is music rather than the human voice holding the force to "wake us," to make us "see the hidden, join the broken"—a restoration which prevents readers from drowning in a Prufrockian ocean of human despair. Additionally, Woolf personifies the elements of nature—the "many-tongued" trees," starlings and rooks—who conspire to bestow unity, hustling and shuffling "us" to "come together, crowd together" (90), and creates a paradoxical enfolding of passivity and agency, where "us" is only a part.

Through this kinesthetic imagery, Woolf emphasises the shared commonality of forces beyond human control, figuring humans shared subjugation in relation to nature, a transfigural image of subjugation projected onto the sociopolitical context of the German's brutal oppression of the Jewish people: "And what about the Jews? The refugees...the Jews...people like ourselves, beginning life again...But it's always been the same..." (90-1). This chilling statement, clearly denoting segregation and persecution (and one of the few direct allusions to World War II in the novel), forms a direct contrast to the vision of communality just evoked. Here, Woolf returns from the open-ended collective of voice-montage to the practice of singularising voice, and does not attribute it through reported dialogue (as the single quotation marks attest). Although the single voice may be speaking here as if for others, Woolf enshrouds its conversational context it in isolation, thematically signalling the failure of relational identity and thus dehumanisation on the part of the Nazi oppressors.

Note that an innovative, variant stylisation of this voice-montage effect occurs during the second interval of the pageant, prior to La Trobe's staging of her controversial concluding scenes: *Present Time: Reality, and Ourselves*. This passage, depicting a
“waiting space” between the acts, is narratologically noteworthy in the way it integrates interior monologue within indirect discourse. This integration simulates subjective fusion and anticipates the style of transsubjectivity that Woolf presents in the concluding sections of *Between*. By analysing how Woolf stylises the transsubjective “one-making” (the thought currently occupying Swithin’s mind) between three subjects in this scene, including Isa, Dodge and Mrs. Swithin, we will see how Woolf stylises narrative voice to emulate the kind of transsubjective connection thematised by the novel.

*One-making*

In the second interval, the pageant’s audience members, confined to their seats, have nothing to look at but the view and themselves—the same scene, in fact, that La Trobe will expose them to during the staging of her *Present Time* scene. But here, instead of the disconnection effected by the pageant, this shared view creates an unspoken harmony among the viewers, shown through Woolf’s stylisation of an intersubjective connection between Isa and Dodge as a “shared thought” they attribute to Mrs. Swithin. By incorporating interior monologue phrases that must be attributed to Swithin in Isa and Dodge’s represented thoughts, Woolf creates the stylistic impression of transsubjectivity, that is, of a *singular consciousness* shared among three very different individuals, articulating the very theme of “oneness” that pervades Swithin’s thoughts as she gazes at the scene:

> She [Mrs. Swithin] was off, they [Isa and Dodge] guessed, on a circular tour of the imagination - one-making. Sheep, cows, grass, trees, ourselves - all are one.

> If discordant, producing harmony[^6] - if not to us, to a gigantic ear[^7] attached to a
gigantic head. And thus - she was smiling benignly - the agony of the particular sheep, cow, or human being is necessary; and so - she was beaming seraphically at the gilt vane in the distance - we reach the conclusion that all is harmony, could we hear it. And we shall. Her eyes now rested on the white summit of cloud. Well, if the thought gave her comfort, William and Isa smiled across her, let her think it. (127)

In this passage, the transition from third-person narration to interior monologue is a shared site of intermediary voices. The pluralised tag-phrase (“they guess”), immediately combines Isa and Dodge as a single, focalising subject sharing the same perception (“She was off, they guessed...”) and interprets Swithin’s gaze (“a circular tour of the imagination – one-making”). Because “one-making” here is a key thematic word with polyvalence and can be attributed either to Dodge-Isa’s gently satiric description of Swithin, or to Swithin herself (as part her interior monologue that begins in the next sentence), it forms the discursive bridge uniting the two styles of discourse, if they need to be, or can be, distinguished. Let us explore both possibilities.

As a discursive bridge between focalised third-person narration and Swithin’s interior monologue (“Sheep, cows, grass, trees, ourselves - all are one. If discordant, producing harmony - if not to us, to a gigantic ear attached to a gigantic head”), the word “one-making” glues together the three consciousnesses present in the scene, but does so in different ways. This effect gives the bridge the polyvalence Woolf needs to support themes of relational identity. For example, if attributed to third-person narration, “one-making,” a fragment and dependent clause, it functions as a technical bridge or borderlink imitating the truncated stylisation of Swithin’s interior monologue, while
clarifying what her circular tour of the imagination is doing—*one-making*—imagining everything in view as *one*. However, if read as a continuation of Isa and Dodge's focalised description of Swithin's gazing, then there is another interpretive option, based on the stylisation of narrative voice. Focalised third-person narration, which can also be interpreted as a shared indirect thought attributed to both Isa and Dodge, begins to fuse with, or simulate, Swithin's consciousness *before* representing her interior monologue. Isa and Dodge interpret Swithin's action from what they collectively imagine to be Swithin's perspective.

The same theme of inclusivity is promoted if, in the narrative's registration shift through transvocalistion, the word "one-making" is attributed to Swithin herSELF. In this case, the narrative voice mediating the phrase "one-making" can be interpreted as free-indirect thought, or as a statement representing Swithin's interior monologue: "Sheep, cows, grass...". The shift, in this case, would again confirm the accuracy of Isa and Dodge's *guess* as they recognize, in following her gaze, their shared interpretation of her thought, thereby creating an effective narrative stylisation binding all their character differences *and similarities* together in a transsubjective connection. Let us have a look at Woolf's special adaptation of the interior monologue form here as it promotes inclusivity.

The fragmentation, present-tense verb ("*are*"), and the first-person plural pronoun ("*ourselves*") in the next statement, "Sheep, cows, grass, trees, ourselves - all are one," signals Swithin's interior monologue. This attribution is supported by its undeniable resonance with the first-person plural pronoun *ourselves* just heard in Swithin's explanation to Isa and Dodge that the Victorians were like *ourselves*: "...Only you and
me and William dressed differently’’ (127). In this direct repetition, Woolf signals a shift to interior monologue, while at the same time, she evokes the word exchanged between them moments before. Thus, no certainty or ambiguity arises in making these attributions. However, Woolf’s repetition of the inclusive pronoun “us” and simultaneous omission of a present tense verb provides a narrative shift from Mrs. Swithin towards the group, including Dodge and Isa: “If discordant, producing harmony - if not to us, to a gigantic ear attached to a gigantic head.”

Here, I suggest that Woolf posits a transsubjective connection between the three subjects, since distinct grammatical markers of individuality do not appear. To explain, although the use of us simulates the structure and style of Swithin’s interior monologue, technically, no present tense verb fixes that attribution. For this reason, in addition to Mrs. Swithin’s interior monologue, this statement could be read as a communal (“shared”) form of interior monologue originating with Dodge and Isa (“us”), who, presumably not as religious as Mrs. Swithin, once more gently satirize her perspective, by attributing to her their represented thought of what “God” signifies for them: “a gigantic ear attached to a gigantic head.” The surrealistic absurdity of this image suggests an attribution to Dodge and Isa, rather than to the traditional Mrs. Swithin, who wears crosses and regularly attends church.

This illusion of a narratively generated communal consciousness is supported by Woolf’s shift back to third person narration in the next phrase, “she [Swithin] was smiling benignly,” which, while returning to the initial style reflecting Isa and Dodge’s focalised reflections, sustains the comic, hyperbolic, and parodic description of Swithin’s religious faith: “she [Swithin] was beaming seraphically at the gilt vane in the distance”
(127). This stylisation suggests that Dodge and Isa humour Swithin’s naïve, blind faith, but simultaneously avoid any direct irony that could ridicule or objectify her. In this case, the burlesque rendering of God, or a Godlike divinity, attests to Isa and Dodge’s shared sacrilegious character. Their shared attitude, confirmed in the next statement, “Well, if the thought gave her comfort, William and Isa smiled across her, let her think it” (127), poses two possible interpretations. Despite their own lack of spirituality, Isa and Dodge condescendingly (and ironically) believe that they have authority to grant Mrs. Swithin the right to hold such presumably ludicrous beliefs. A second interpretation along more positive lines is that Woolf uses their response to signify their tolerance of her ideological differences. Despite their own lack of religious belief, they tolerate such faith in relation to Mrs. Swithin. By tolerating a belief that they do not share with her, they expand their own subjective parameters in a transsubjective mode, reflected in the replacement of a literal tag phrase, “thought,” with the figural tag phrase “smiled across her.” In this way, Isa and Dodge include a consideration of Swithin (from her own perspective) in their shared smile.

The subsequent return to third-person narration in this passage supports interpreting Isa and Dodge’s perspective on Swithin’s “strained hope” as its conversational context a comic image, which gently parodies, but refuses to satirise her religious beliefs: “Her eyes now rested on the white summit of a cloud.” Woolf’s thematic insistence on tolerance here is also represented by the interruption of Swithin’s interior monologue statements: “the agony of the particular sheep, cow, or human being is necessary; and so...we reach the conclusion that all is harmony, could we hear it. And we shall.” These are held within the third-person statements denoting Isa and Dodge’s
shared view of Swithin's smile: "she was smiling benignly" (127). Once again, both the stylistic shift and the inclusion of one voice within another suggest a broader unity of three subjects, that is, a transsubjective union. For instance, although the second-person pronoun "we" presumably refers to religious believers like Swithin, or generally to all of humanity, once the interruption has been made it also extends its reference to potentially include Dodge and Isa, who in following the view of her smile, speculate on the prospect that all could be harmony, could they hear it.

Note that as the pronoun we narratively posits inclusivity, it also evades specific attribution to any singular thinking/speaking source on the scene, therefore integrating Isa and Dodge's lack of spirituality—they could reach a (similar) conclusion to Swithin, if they shared her faith. Thus, in the startling stylisation which ends this sequence, Woolf confirms this potential state for Isa and Dodge by confirming their transsubjective connection to Swithin reflecting, in the multiple attribution of narrative voice (interior monologue and represented thought, or somewhere in-between), Swithin's theological idiom, which emphasises inclusion through sustaining the plural pronoun "we" and the absolute nature of faith in the declarative phrase "And we shall."

With this stylisation, Woolf suggests that Swithin's faith includes and unifies differing perspectives, including Dodge's criticism of it at the end of the nursery scene: "How could she weight herSELF down by that sleek symbol? How stamp herSELF, so volatile, so vagrant, with that image" (57)? With the representation of faith's transsubjective power, this stylisation also connotes hope. In this reading, if we interpret Woolf's we as an anonymous, communal pronoun as in all of humanity (the substance of Swithin's belief, or a close approximation to it), then this sequence undoubtedly
anticipates Woolf's later stylisations of narrative voice. These more explicitly signify transsubjective connections during the conclusion and aftermath of the pageant. In this reading, we, inclusive of reader, simulates Swithin's belief in a communally-shared divine consciousness, collecting but transcending the individual narrative voices and human consciousnesses represented here.

Without exception, the unifying function in the we pronoun in this passage posits a positive and compelling vision of relational identity. Furthermore, Woolf's colloquial usage of "Well" prefacing this sequence's concluding statement ("Well, if thought gave her comfort, William and Isa smiled across her, let her think it"), is an indicator of free indirect thought attributable to a communal subject specified by "naming" Isa and Dodge, it is still not limited to them, if readers share a similarly charitable view of Swithin. This relational mode unifying different subjects also extends to the interpretive practices engaged here. No matter which way the voices are finally interpreted in this passage, the undeniable transsubjective connection between these characters suggests that in this scene, all readings are valid, even if they must be made "one" at a time.

Communal Consciousness in "Present Time: Reality" and "Ourselves"

Woolf's representation of a communal consciousness transcends traditional dominator notions of individuality by questioning subject-object formation accompanying notions of autonomous identity. In contrast, the audience's relational identity, or identity-as-community, is conceived as a form of social interdependence valuing, and validating, responsive reception. Everyone, for instance, plays a part in rounding out La Trobe's pageant through interpretation, and thereby extending its influence. Woolf's narrative
portrait of the communal consciousness’s interactivity and its thematic implications are predominant in La Trobe’s most experimental segments. In these parts, the Modern Age is depicted and the audience’s gaze, thrown back on itself in a self-reflexive gesture, exposes individual difference as a means to unity, and disparity. To understand the thematic importance of transsubjectivity here, let us take a moment to consider who it matters most to—La Trobe.

Throughout the novel, Woolf’s use of shifting focalisation reveals La Trobe’s conflicting desire for control and interaction in relation to the pageant’s performance and its reception. However, in the final scenes of the pageant, La Trobe seems to, ironically, relinquish her dominator position as playwright and director to present an experimental, non-mediated presentation of “present-time reality,” as well as a radical representation of SELF-reflexivity in the mirror scene. These scenes create a communal sense of transsubjectivity in which the audience is forced to recognize its “absolute dependence” on established verbal communication (Ray 45). La Trobe’s risk in making a transsubjective connection without a guarantee of its success, shows her character is valued as a relational identity; the audience members must “see” themselves in scenes beyond La Trobe’s control, but not outside her influence. Thus, the pageant’s final scenes cause La Trobe acute distress when the interdependence between creativity and reception reaches its critical peak. She feels that she risks the play’s effect in its entirety by depending on the audience to understand the themes behind these scenes. By positing human interrelationships as a means to social unity, La Trobe stage-manages what McAfee calls the “leaning forward posture” of socialisation—namely, an interest in what comes next when one releases one’s own view and adopts another, in an “openness to
what is other” attitude (189). Note that Woolf represents this “leaning forward posture” as one that requires much effort. La Trobe struggles with herSELF, and her aesthetic goals, to surrender the artistic control of her pageant, evidenced through her violent body-language: clawing and gnashing when the audience does not respond in the ways she had anticipated.

For this reason, La Trobe’s pageant represents modernity in a style anticipating Samuel Beckett’s “act-without-words,” where reality is shown, rather than mediated.89 Her decision to “douche” the audience with nothing but “present-time reality” forces the audience into shared silence and a visual trance supported by the pastoral surroundings. La Trobe’s staging of “ten mins. of present time” directly after the second interval seamlessly integrates reality and art. The audience is given “nothing” to look at or hear, except what reality, nature, the present moment—and each other—have to offer. The immobility and silence imposed upon the audience by the pageant’s “framing” of time and space as aesthetic representation and sheer boredom, forces the audience members to consider themselves in the context of community.

The present time scene, more or less indistinct from the final interval “between the acts,” filled with nothing (“Nothing happened...There was no music”) (Between 128-9) delivers the audience into La Trobe’s hands. By providing “nothing,” she extends the audience’s general feeling of collective non-individuation, devoid of outside reference in the sense that they “were neither one thing nor the other; neither Victorians nor themselves. They were suspended, without being, in limbo” (129), in a shared sense of bodilessness, outside of, yet rooted, in time, implied by the persistent “ticking” of the gramophone. By “providing nothing,” La Trobe offers audience members the chance to
experience themselves as relational subjects—connected, in time, space and person, either by their attempts at fragmented conversation—to a certain extent, prohibited by the programme’s declaration of the “act”—in shared uneasy silences, or in nervous laughter. This shared sense of communal subjectivity, while stripping audience members of their individual identities, gives Woolf’s characters the opportunity to conceive SELF and SELVES in terms of plurality through inter-accommodation. They can either co-create themselves through one another, or face the nihilism of the moment, so to speak, by regressing into an unsustained self, devoid of sociability, symbolised by the “empty stage” containing nothing, no act(ion) (128).

Here, Woolf signifies the possibilities of co-creation in interesting and unexpected rhetorical narrative stylisations. Rather than moving directly into the representation of narrative transsubjectivity with unattributable voices as evident in the final act of the pageant, Woolf first juxtaposes the two individual voices, La Trobe and Isa, to symbolise themes of plurality and universality emerging through the very act of the audience’s gathering together. These two separate subjectivities are first gathered together in a narrative bond through a sensual, transfigural image of rain, and then are moved into a transsubjective application of this bond through intermediary forms of narrative voice.

La Trobe’s self-conceived “failure” and reproach, “Her little game had gone wrong,” is diverted by a shower, signalling for readers a new conception of aestheticism, which creates unity through interrelationship, rather than egotistical self-expression (130). Woolf’s representation of the shower, “sudden and profuse,” fuses three, or possibly more, levels of narrative discourse together by virtue of voice stylisation and placement. By framing the passage in third person narration, but quickly modulating this
narration with free indirect discourse (either thought or speech) to reflect the crowd’s shared deictics of perceptual, sensory experience, and then by adding a simile and phrase of unattributed interior monologue, relevant for everyone in the audience, Woolf structurally, grammatically, and thematically curtails character individuation: “No one had seen the cloud coming. There it was, black, swollen, on top of them. Down it poured like all the people in the world weeping. Tears, tears, tears” (131).  

Without narrative voice attribution, this passage evokes individuality and collectivity. Figuring the shower as “tears” of “all the people in the world weeping,” the narrative representation here suggests that both La Trobe and Isa could be possible sources of these fragments. In relation to La Trobe, the rain symbolises the release of her will, desire, and need for control: “No one had seen the cloud coming. There it was, black, swollen, on top of them” (131). “Unable to lift her hand” in terms of controlling the shower, La Trobe feels a gratifying relief for its intervention. By acknowledging her dependence on nature and other forces beyond her control, La Trobe, once again, is forced to surrender the role of dominator/director she assumes.

Isa is also a possible source voicing these statements—an interpretation supported by the passage’s context. Isa’s murmured wish directly following this passage, “‘O that our human pain could here have ending!’” (131), also resonates with the interpretation of the raindrops as tears, thereby inserting an individual interpretation, which paradoxically and simultaneously acknowledges her person as a part of the larger whole, reflected in the plural possessive pronoun our. In this case, Isa figures her own private pain as indicative of humanity’s pain, endured as a unified whole, therein moving her private ruminations into a transsubjective context. In addition, Woolf’s return to Isa’s
murmuring voice, while reinvoking its previous contexts of isolation and social
marginalisation, resets the scene into a community setting which forces Isa to experience
herSELF in-relationship. Here, the narrative's indeterminate source concerning the
status and attribution of "tears, tears, tears," as experienced individually or collectively,
as spoken or thought, as sensual or cognitive, is echoed in relation to Isa's experience of
feeling the raindrops "as if they were her own tear" (131). By withholding the technical
perspective of Isa's focalisation so that the collective experience is intimated, Woolf
transmutes the sense of communality from the singularity of Isa's character: the two
"great blots of rain" that trickle down her cheeks "were all people's tears, weeping for all
people" (131). Note that even the irregular use of the singular "tear" for a plural pronoun
"they" stresses the referential quality interchanged between the singular and plural in this
passage.

Woolf thus characterises the rain as universal in its felt experience, but also in its
transsubjective dimensions. Not only is the rain equally felt by the audience and play
participants at Pointz Hall, but by virtue of the stylistic shifts of narrative voice, it is
interpreted in a similar fashion by a diversity of people. All present, including La Trobe,
presumably interpret the rain as if tears—as human pain—at the same time. The
narrative integration of Isa's inner voice with the surrounding community in this example
is accomplished by Woolf's transposition of the unattributable image into Isa's own
interpretation and the third-person narrator's representation of the raindrops as Isa's
"own tears."

This application of a singular sensation among a multiplicity of subjects
constitutes one of the transsubjective effects found in the "Ourselves" segment of the
pageant. By using an anonymous, unattributable voice to repeat, and then to transpose the image, Woolf represents a moment of shared perception and interpretation. The “black, swollen” cloud “on top of them”—symbolising the presence of German bombers above them—is evident to all audience members, including La Trobe: “Hands were raised. Here and there a parasol opened” (131). Besides the fragmentation associated with modernism (again, achieved through synecdoche and personification), these images clearly denote the futility of individuals against the German air strike. However, by representing this futility as a shared feeling, infusing a single crowd, Woolf suggests that even futility itself (the “tragic” interpretation) can create a social bond (the restorative interpretation). Here, La Trobe as director also depends upon forces outside her control to inform her vision: “‘That’s done it’” (131). La Trobe’s “wiping” of the raindrops as if tears—as if she shared Isa’s sensation—emphasises in this passage that La Trobe is included with individual members of her audience.

By finding themselves with others rather than escaping the SELF through others, La Trobe and Isa are characterised as mediums for transcending singular identity. In this dramatic transposition from power-within to power-with in terms of relational identity, this passage confirms that, in Woolf’s view, distinct individuality can be successfully held, contained, and suspended in communal structures, without danger of absorption or assimilation. Stylistically, Woolf’s narrative fuses a partial perspective and an individual voice with a universal conception of Others and otherness. Unless we pay attention to the narrative bonds that unite the disparate characters before we reach the novel’s concluding scenes, I argue that we miss Woolf’s themes of relational identity—the same themes expressed in La Trobe’s play.
A Walkway to Collectivity: "Ourselves"

In the "Ourselves" segment of the pageant, La Trobe directs the entire group of actors, bearing reflective surfaces, to flood the stage. Through a fixed, allegorical tableau of mirror-bearing performers, La Trobe exposes her audience to a literal image of human partiality and its corresponding social roles, potentially sutured, I argue here, through self-conceptions of relational identity. La Trobe's "Ourselves" scene reveals the audience members' discomfort with reading the SELF in a context of Otherness. The underlying tension of audience members, who resist acknowledging themselves as separate subjects and/or relational subjects, emerges through disturbing images of individuation, represented primarily through fragments of narrative voice. Here, Woolf represents a non-individuated, communal subjectivity as fragmented voices and partial-identities forming a voice collective. This rendering of communal subjectivity is positively reinforced by Woolf's almost total lack of narrative attribution from this point in the text until the end of the pageant.

The majority of the audience interpret "Ourselves" correctly as a direct challenge to, and even attack on, their own identities—a "malignant indignity" to which they must "passively" submit (135). Contrasting with the pleasurable feeling of "bodilessness" in the mirror scene in the earlier intersubjective connection between Dodge and Swithin, here, the majority of the audience (excluding Mrs. Manresa) feels offended by La Trobe's arbitrary cropping and random arrangement of identity. But La Trobe's offense is justified insofar as the objectifying capacity of the reflecting surfaces is internalised, therein rejecting the SELF as a co-constructed, ever-changing integration of difference.
Rather than experiencing a communal sense of blissful transsubjective fusion, the audience members feel outraged that La Trobe has subjected them to such embarrassing scrutiny, seeking what Harper calls “familiar forms in which identity may be enclosed once more” (286). However, by contextualising the shared outrage over this scene in a transsubjective connection, supported by Woolf’s narrative rendering and the audience members’ critical commentary following the pageant’s conclusion, it can be argued that despite and because of its insistence on decisive fracturing, “Ourselves” stands as a symbol of unity predicated upon relational identity.

Previous to the staging of “Ourselves,” Woolf loads the pronoun “ourselves” with the capacity to signify interpersonality. For instance, out of the cacophony of audience commentary which La Trobe overhears is the anonymously stated, unanswered question, “‘But ourselves—do we change?’” (90). This question resonates with Swithin’s response to Isa’s question regarding their difference from the Victorians some thirty pages later: “‘I don’t believe...that there were ever such people. Only you and I and William dressed differently’” (127). Thus, superficial differences connote like subjects, even if these subjects are antagonistic to one another. For instance, early on in the novel, the inhabitants and guests at Pointz Hall await the beginning of the pageant. Sitting there, Woolf’s third-person narrator states that Isa, Dodge, Giles, and Mrs. Manresa feel “nothing,” indifferent, exposed, and suspended with their nerves “on edge,” caught and caged like “prisoners” (128-9). Woolf represents their shared feeling by inserting a soundless—a virtual dialogue—as an unspoken marked direct dialogue:

He [Giles] said (without words) ‘I’m dammably unhappy.’

‘So am I,’ Dodge echoed.
‘And I too,’ Isa thought. (128)

Each character here, despite his or her own individual strength or power—Isa, her creativity; Giles, his indifference; Dodge, his sensitivity; and Mrs. Manresa, her vanity—is socially "levelled" by the virtual admission of a shared unhappiness. No one is happier than the other; no one is more privileged than the other. This conversation, like a telepathic "bubble" emphasises the characters’ shared identifications, even if they themselves are not aware of them. At the same time, Woolf’s indirect representation of this exchange emphasises their character differences, thus creating a transsubjective bond between them which cannot be attributed to any one of them, but to all of them in relation. Giles, for instance, would never verbally concede that he shares any character similarities with Dodge, but he is just as unhappy as Dodge, although for different reasons. By representing this bond virtually, Woolf clearly suggests that even this antagonistic, socially dysfunctional group contains like subjects; they are unified, despite their personal likes or dislikes of one another.

But in La Trobe’s staging of “Ourselves,” the narrative emphasis on similarity (“all are one;” 127) is superficially shattered with the entrance of the mirror-bearers onto the stage. Reflecting back the receptive role imposed on the audience, the mirrors’ surfaces signify the negative and positive aspects of transsubjectivity in terms of partialness and multiplicity. The audience’s negative reception of their passivity in the necessary waiting period in “present-time reality,” compounded with the presence of German war planes (“wild ducks”) flying overhead is further antagonised by the implied moral obligation of the audience to recognise their responsibilities to Others. This obligation is particularly unsettling, given the necessity to recognize, and identify with,
A Relational Narrative Desire

undesirable aspects of Otherness within the SELF:

Now old Bart...he was caught. Now Manresa. Here a nose...There a skirt...Then trousers only...Now perhaps a face...Ourselves? But that’s cruel. To snap us as we are, before we’ve had time to assume...And only, too, in parts...That’s what’s so distorting and upsetting and utterly unfair...[...] What an awful show-up! Even for the old who, one might suppose hadn’t any longer care about their faces...”.

(133-4)

Here Woolf represents the audience’s temptation to deny in the self undesirable character aspects, including tyranny, aging, and bodily defects. This climactic use of an anonymous voice grants equal interpretive opportunities for positing plurality and singularity. By featuring the physicality of Others to dramatise both sides of recognition—identification and negation—Woolf shows how difference is negotiated and integrated in a complex process. By using plural, personal pronouns (“Ourselves?...To snap us as we are...”), Woolf characterises the audience as a target of aggression, captive to identification, “snapped” into self-shattering partial identifications.94 Given such immediacy, there is no opportunity to idealise, glorify, or alter the illusion: “To snap us as we are, before we’ve had time to assume...And only, too in parts...That’s what’s so distorting and upsetting and utterly unfair” (133). The safe illusion of individuality confronts the threatening aspects of relationality, including objectification, critical scrutiny, fear of judgment, and inferiority. In individual attempts to evade self-reflection, “to shift an inch or two beyond the inquisitive insulting eye,” audience members defy what they believe to be a dispassionate judge (135). Thus, the “mirror bearers” are appropriately focalised by Woolf through objective, detached third-person narration: “malicious; observant;
expectant; expository” (Ibid.), or as the poetic distribution of the semi-colon implies, by the communal consciousness, which, cut lose from any single voice, reflects the audience as a whole.

In this scene, the inescapable reflections of SELF-as-Other figure the desire to assimilate and appropriate, and the tendency, as Benjamin notes, of the subject to reduce “difference to sameness, unable to recognize the other without dissolving his/her otherness” (“Shadow of the Other” 234). In other words, Benjamin implies, the subject risks losing SELF (its own otherness) as it attempts to homogenize difference. Based on the ambiguous speech/thought status of this passage, Woolf offers two readings which reflect the problem of this desire for integration and for difference. These readings form an interplay with the inclusive plural pronouns. Either they can be interpreted as a single voice which speaks for the crowd, and thus speaks for all of “us”; or as an unidentified, but communally-instituted, voice, capable of merging multiple perspectives. In this case, the communal voice again uses singularity to speak for the crowd, in terms of a general consensus: “That’s what’s so distorting and upsetting and utterly unfair” (133). Either way, the pronouns suggest that the audience members, separated by diversity, are bound by their shared feeling of outrage. Therefore, despite the audience’s general dismay with this representation, they are bound narratively by Woolf’s stylisation of someone or everyone saying and/or thinking the same thing.

This narrative bonding of multiple subjectivities departs from the other examples of voice-fusion considered so far in its innovative use of free direct discourse, rather than indirect discourse—a style which, if attributed to a single speaker, assumes speech, but alternatively, if attributed to a communal consciousness, assumes an unspoken, interior
monologue reflecting multiple subjectivities and perspectives. Note that this form differs significantly from classical authorial omniscient third-person narration in its attention to *specificity and partialness of knowledges*; omniscient narration speaks on a different experiential plane of knowledge “above” or transcendent to the characters. Here, this particular representation is too intimately rooted in individual characters’ specific perceptions and reflections to reach that level of generalised, authoritative knowledge. Nor does it, however, conform grammatically to free indirect speech or thought which could be definitively attributed to any *one* speaker. If it must be attributed, it has to be attributed to someone “in between” these mediating sources. Thus Woolf’s use of free direct dialogue and/or a *communally-shared* interior monologue (a stretching across and integrating *multiple* virtual subjectivities) supports the representation of subjectivity as a relational construct.95

Thus, captive to identification by the mirroring surfaces, La Trobe’s audience members are asked to bridge difference through direct confrontation with Others “without denying or abrogating it” (see Benjamin “Shadow of the Other” 240-1). As Benjamin argues, this bridging process entails partial negation, a breakdown which *negotiates*, rather than *institutes*, difference, thus preserving rather than foreclosing recognition. By resisting the partialness of their reflections, the audience members are bound in their denial of recognition. With this denial, they ironically constitute themselves as a group consciousness—a consciousness like herd mentality, refusing to “look in the mirror.”

Additionally, La Trobe’s demand that they listen to the din of fragmented script lines, the declamation of previously enacted parts, implicates the audience in a
rationalising, unifying process. Simultaneously reiterating random fragments of the play's dialogue, stripped of context, the actors perform an auditory historical "stew" which mocks the structure of the play just seen. In this way, the actors attest to the partiality of historical and fictive reality that the pageant has just staged, and to the partiality that any pageant could have staged. Equally, however, in presenting the full range of articulation and historical periods, this effect also promotes transsubjectivity—the union across and through heterogeneity. Here, La Trobe (and Woolf) suggest that the presumably infinite scope of alterity cannot be captured by any single act, scene or voice.96 The multiplicity arising from this heterogeneity means an integration of both compatible and conflicting perspectives.

This conflict is embodied in La Trobe's character. La Trobe exposes her aesthetic desire to a critical audience, knowing full well that her pageant will be received with mixed responses, some positive, and more likely, many negative. Here, La Trobe risks public criticism and SELF-censure to let heterogeneity, the Other, emerge "at the expense of SELF" (Silverman, Threshold 91). While La Trobe attempts to constitute and reflect that Other in her pageant, she acknowledges and confirms their partialness. Thus, La Trobe must suffer the indignation and outrage of her audience in constituting the Other for them, but their negative response is projected onto the performance itself. In a self-reflexive strategy, the pageant's truncations and incompletions—its own reconfiguration of parts and partiality—dramatise the very inadequacies shared by the audience. Thus, as an emotional mirror, the pageant's imperfections still create a successful transsubjective connection. Rather, the audience's response to and reconciliation with its flaws form a "critical" bond that unites them as they wonder what the play means: "And
if we’re left asking questions, isn’t it a failure, as a play?” (Between 145) Notably this shared assessment of the pageant is represented by Woolf as both self-affirming and threatening. In its lack of differentiation between subjects, the union created by “Ourselves” grants La Trobe the power to conduct, and even to orchestrate, identifactory possibilities within the scenes. At the same time, this power is interdependent; it depends on the audience members’ ability to recognize their own subjecthoods in the consensus of critical commentary. Thus, as Mimlitsch explains, such a recognition is both pleasurable and displeasurable, compromised by “the recognition, even an elaboration of it [abjection], followed by an attempt to move beyond it into a community where boundaries need not be impermeable for people to feel comfortable” (41). In other words, unlike dominator desire, relational narrative desire is not idealistic in its positing or definition of “reward.” There may not be one. Or, there may be one which is not inherently self-affirming. Thus, transsubjectivity’s unifying effect is depicted as a conscious effort requiring recognition of the boundedness of the ego, within a desire to negotiate the nature of self-Other boundaries.

As the audience members reveal, this unity is constantly threatened by the temptation to deny and disidentify with the Other. But the danger and impossibility of denying the Other in this scene is portrayed through Woolf’s emphasis on Mrs. Manresa’s different response to the mirrors. Despite her largely negative portrayal throughout the novel, here Manresa’s character gains another dimension which reconfigures Woolf’s readers’ identification processes, thus making it difficult to morally judge her, the supposed villain. Manresa responds to the mirrors by using them for her own purpose—to fix up her make-up. This gesture demands respect in its defense of the
individual: "Magnificent!" cried old Bart. Alone she preserved unashamed her identity, and faced without blinking, herself" (135). Bart's compliment signifies Manresa's complicity with patriarchy's version of "woman," while at the same time it manifests her independence as a distinct and separate subject. With the act of "reddening her lips," Manresa protects the intrapsychic boundaries which define her social persona; she embraces the objectification symbolised by the mirror, acknowledging her pleasure in being objectified. Benjamin calls the subject's social persona a shadow; here, Manresa's shadow (her difference) falls upon the audience who attempt to deny externality, but who, instead, internalize the mirrors' objectifications. This means that Manresa is not an object, but rather, an objective other through which the subjects can perceive their differences, under a different "light," so that they see: "not our shadow, not a shadow over us, but a separate shadow whose own shadow is distinguishable in the light" ("Shadow of the Other" 247). Two subjects, two mirroring surfaces, and thus two different lights, or "perceptions." Manresa's response, then, compels the rest of the audience to consider how they would react similarly, and differently, if they were to react. Hence, Woolf's depiction of Mrs. Manresa, insisting as it does on her individuality, still shows that Manresa's "identity" is not a total representation of self. Identity here is reduced to ego, a social persona sustained by Others, situated in community.

In her portrayal of Manresa's "super-ego," Woolf hopes for a non-unified, constructed subject—a subject which is not, as Benjamin observes, merely and ultimately "decentered and dispersed" ("Shadow" 240). By tending to her make-up, Manresa suggests that the mirrors are not just "broken" reflections of diverse realities, but rather
an interactive structure to work with. Bart’s “delight” in her motion signifies the energy emerging from the transsubjective connection in a way that “catches her from within,” without objectifying her (Lane, “A Strength Won” 111). Embracing the objectifying processes which co-create and inform her own identity, Manresa’s act of “facing” the glass symbolises the agency of her subjectivity—a reading opposing those who view Manresa as a “man-thing,” a victim of patriarchal eroticised desire. As an expression of individualism’s endurance within community through the expression of singularised subjectivity, Manresa signifies the positive aspects of transsubjectivity’s integration process which values difference as a means for human connection.

Another way that Woolf manifests communality is through a positive rendering of individual anonymity, which is, nonetheless, granted a narrative voice. One example of this effect is found in Woolf’s portrayal of the anonymous, megaphone-voice with its “colloquial, conversational tone” that concludes the play (136). The belief, voiced through the megaphone, that collectively “we” can defy situating ourselves as “scraps, orts and fragments” through relational identity, is represented as a disembodied voice. To reflect the collective, the projected voice uses inclusive, plural pronouns to directly address the audience: “Before we part, ladies and gentlemen, before we go...[...] Let us break the rhythm and forget the rhyme. And calmly consider ourselves” (135), reminding audience members that it includes itself among them: “...we’re all the same. Take myself now. Do I escape my own reprobation, simulating indignation, in the bush, among the leaves?” (136) By inviting audience members to consider their shared negative characteristics (“Liars most of us. Thieves too...The poor are as bad as the rich...”) by literally “braying” out accusations, the anonymous voice implies that no one can deny
these characteristics, and thus, neither can they deny recognition of self in Other. In this way, the megaphone voice, like that of the gramophone, symbolises a unifying function, paradoxically shaping the audience as a single subjectivity, as a collective, while it affirms their partiality: "What? You can’t descry it? All you can see of yourselves is scraps, orts and fragments" (136)? By representing this voice as attributable to an anonymous speaker, Woolf suggests that it gains an illusion of authority within its gathering power.

However, by including itself among the Others, a listener as well as a speaker, and by disembodying itself from any source, the megaphone voice diffuses its narrative authority, functioning as a “spokesperson,” a representative of a collective-subjectivity, not a dominator. This representation is supported by Woolf’s choice of unmarked, direct dialogue, tonally depicted by sustained italicisation. This technical detailing connotes a distinct lack of narrative authority (the voice is “free” and moves among them), and with its typographical difference, an emphatic emphasis (it is the voice that cannot be denied). In its final statement, the megaphone challenges the very fragmentation that it reflects on by asking the audience to listen to music—Woolf’s ultimate symbol of unity in the novel. The classical music that follows suggests although its source cannot be named or identified (“was it Bach, Handel, Beethoven, Mozart or nobody famous;” 137), the music itself, without being contextualised in a single identity-construction, can still bind together a multitude in a shared listening experience—can still be co-created, a quality symbolised by the music’s endurance through time.

With the non-closure in this scene, and in the pageant as a whole, La Trobe insists that, we can do more, be more, collectively, than we can individually.99 Furthermore, by
leaving the pageant open-ended with an elliptical statement, Woolf implies, via La Trobe’s script, the epilogue, with its interpretive biases, choices and structures, ultimately depends on the audience. Everyone and no one—not even La Trobe—is responsible for providing meanings as they offer up their interpretation of the pageant. In this way, the pageant truly symbolises transsubjectivity: it is a collective interpretation of a combination of multiple voices and perspectives.

This multi-dimensional aspect of the pageant is sustained over the rest of the novel, both technically and thematically. As an interplay of unity and disparity, the music’s reception continues to figure the audience’s defiance in what Beer, given the outbreak of war, identifies as a particular “political and emotional force” (“Between the Acts” 423). Here, individual resistance to the play’s meanings and shared emotions meshed in a social collective, is narratively represented through a third-person narratorial voice of “authority” which ironically insists on unity in its figures: “Like quicksilver sliding, filings magnetized, the distracted united” (Between 137). This bond is reflected in the third-person narration’s elaboration of the “tear” image previously attributed to Isa and La Trobe. Here Manresa’s eyes, wet with tears that “ravage[d] her powder” (137), shows that even she, in all her vanity, recognises and participates in a social reality larger, and more meaningful, than herself. Furthermore, Mrs. Manresa, a symbol of sexual and social power, the “wild child,” is humbled by La Trobe’s testimony to sameness; she, too, grieves the loss of the dead.  

Additionally, Woolf uses transvocalisation that shifts between impersonal and personal pronouns to dramatise the tension of relational identity and the transsubjective bonding of “I” within “ourselves: “On different levels they [the notes, the audience
members] diverged. On different levels ourselves went forward; flower gathering some on the surface; others descending to wrestle with the meaning; but all comprehending; all enlisted”” (137). Building on the war context through the pun “enlisted” (all listening have enlisted, or will enlist in the war), the shift from the impersonal pronoun “they” to the inclusive pronoun “ourselves” within the parallel sentence structure suggests that despite the ultimate, inevitable divergence of distinct subjectivities, we are all bonded. Here, Woolf thematises the irrelevance of difference in terms of interpretation and even intelligence, in that we all share—we are all bonded in—the sharing of these differences.

**Summary**

To conclude this section on narrative transsubjectivity, I will focus on one passage during the pageant’s aftermath. Although very provocative in terms of its narrative stylisation and intertextual allusions, it thematically poses the question of what this particular mode of sociability means in terms of resisting subject-object dichotomies in communicative acts, and what the model of relational identity means for narratology in terms of structure. As mentioned, in light of this passage’s stylistics, I heartily disagree with Barrett’s view that the connections between Woolf’s characters in *Between* “are fleeting at best,” and that any attempt to bring about a common bond between Swithin and La Trobe is a failure (“Matriarchal Myth” 19). In my view, this exchange constitutes an inter/transsubjective connection; Swithin confirms to La Trobe the communicative success of the pageant’s goal: to represent the individual as community. Without Swithin’s comment, La Trobe would not have felt that the pageant was a success and that her glory was upon her.
Although La Trobe’s victorious feeling as a creator (“a twitcher of invisible strings”) (112) has received much critical attention, it has not been considered as a scene particularly important in terms of relationality because of the frequent neglect of the critical role that Swithin plays in arousing this feeling—another sign of her systematic devaluation as a civil identity, even in literary criticism. Swithin’s deliberate act of thanking La Trobe, imperfect as it is, assumes an important thematic function in constituting both characters in a subject-subject relationship. Woolf’s use of virtuality in this scene creates indeterminacies and “telepathic” communication; these effects signify intersubjective connection and shared metramorphosis.

In her decision to defy her brother’s orders to stay away from La Trobe following the pageant, Swithin violates the bordered SELF by connecting with La Trobe (as she did with Dodge, the culturally disprized), thereby transcending their mutually shared abjection through intersubjectivity. By transgressing interpersonal boundaries, Swithin’s unexpected compliment to La Trobe symbolises “a common effort to bring a common meaning to birth” (112). La Trobe receives only two responses to her work: this one, from Swithin, is not formalised enough to be entirely intelligible, and the one from Reverend Streatfield is over-formalised. Streatfield must ply the audience with his fund-raising agenda in order to afford new lights for the church. In terms of inter/transsubjective connection, however, Swithin’s response is the one which most indicates that someone “gets” the play’s meaning. From a narratological viewpoint, the emergence of a “common meaning” constitutes an intersubjective connection. In turn, La Trobe’s interpretation of this meaning gains a transsubjective dimension as she applies it to future works and future audiences. Let us see how Woolf stylises this conversation to
create such themes.

After the pageant, Swithin temporarily violates La Trobe’s space by “popping” her head through the bushes, where La Trobe has been concealing herself throughout the performance. Through ellipses and phrasal fragments that mark Swithin’s hesitant groping for words, she represents her gratitude to La Trobe in a style which clearly signifies the failure of words to express her meaning:

She hesitated. ‘You’ve given me...’ She skipped, then alighted—‘Ever since I was a child I’ve felt...’ A film fell over her eyes, shutting off the present. She tried to recall her childhood; then gave it up; and, with a little wave of her hand, as if asking La Trobe to help her out, continued: ‘This daily round; this going up and down stairs; this saying “What am I going for? My specs? I have ’em on my nose”...’

She gazed at La Trobe with a cloudless old-aged stare. Their eyes met in a common effort to bring a common meaning to birth. They failed; and Mrs. Swithin, laying hold desperately of a fraction of her meaning, said: ‘What a small part I’ve had to play! But you’ve made me feel I could have played...Cleopatra!’

She nodded between the trembling bushes and ambled off.

The villagers winked. ‘Batty’ was the word for old Flimsy, breaking through the bushes. (112)

Most critics characterize this speech as a failure, not reading on to see what alternative dynamics emerge. As in the previous scene with Dodge, Swithin is conspicuously the only character from the entire audience who makes an effort to talk to La Trobe...
Relational Narrative Desire

concerning her deepest fear—the success of her work. Despite her halting words, Swwithin indicates, through Woolf’s paradoxical direct representation of Swwithin’s indirect representation, that the playwright has “given” her something—let us speculate what in terms of the novel’s themes. 103

In confronting La Trobe, Swwithin, like Dodge in the earlier scene, attempts to access the imaginary through reference to her childhood—a state that presumably licenses social intimacy. Third-person narration describes Swwithin’s memory recollection externally, thereby emphasising her failure to recall, in its entirety, her childhood memory, signalling her need for social assistance from the Other (like Lily and Mrs. Ramsay) in maintaining the conversation—a conversation which, as Bart warns Swwithin, violates social conventions by transgressing the author-audience borderlinking. 104 But the desire to help each other out emerges, despite the patriarchal disapproval and fearful reluctance which frame this conversation. For this reason, the conversation between La Trobe and Swwithin, despite its incompletion and truncated phrases, symbolises a mutual exchange in which both of them gain access to one another’s subjectivity. Swwithin provides La Trobe with the affirmation she desperately craves by praising the pageant; La Trobe opens within Swwithin venues for experiencing and integrating Otherness. In this way, both effect, for one another, a mutually shared experience of relational identity.

Furthermore, although Swwithin’s comment which continues the conversation (“This daily round...” etc.) fails to develop her meaning, it demystifies her intervention by lapsing into cliché (“this daily round...this saying”). The stalemated conversation, at this point figured as Swwithin’s “cloudless old-aged stare” when she stops thinking about her childhood (an intertextual image which contrasts negatively with the “lambent” gaze of
her connection with Dodge), functions positively here in recalling Swithin's religious faith in endurance (when she gazes at the "cloudless" sky during the pageant's second interval).

To narratively represent these subjects' temporary estrangement from one another, Woolf depicts the psychic distance between them through third-person perspective, but continues to connect them through a bodily image: "Their eyes met in a common effort to bring a common meaning to birth." As with the Swithin-Dodge intersubjective connection in the nursery, here Swithin's and La Trobe's eyes "meet," but fully embodied and individuated, they fail to meet in making a common meaning, or in sharing an understanding of what this communicative exchange should mean. However, despite this failure to connect, Woolf renders Swithin's next statement in direct dialogue, giving the impression that Swithin will risk her meaning in order to make an interpersonal connection: "'What a small part I've had to play! But you've made me feel I could have played...Cleopatra!'" Despite the fact that Swithin conveys only "a fraction of her meaning" in this statement, she is pleased with it ("She nodded...and ambled off"). Furthermore, La Trobe's interpretation of Swithin's words ("I could have played...Cleopatra!") as "'You've stirred in me my unacted part'" (112) suggests, at least on the level of narrative discourse, that Swithin has successfully represented her intimate, innermost thoughts to La Trobe. Swithin, then, without fear or self-consciousness, attributes to La Trobe her own capacity to be more and feel more—one which equals the beauty and power of Cleopatra, and recalls the earlier image of Swithin as a sensuous young girl (during her intersubjective connection with Dodge).

Moreover, with the comment, "'What a small part I've had to play!'" Swithin
once again acknowledges her own awareness of her partiality (her “Flimsy”-ness), this
time to La Trobe, while simultaneously, through her identifications with the other parts
that La Trobe has presented to her, revealing her capacity for Otherness. Swithin clearly
acknowledges the interdependence of their relation and their identification by directly
attributing its possibility to La Trobe: “‘But you’ve made me feel I could have
played...Cleopatra!’” (112)—a statement directly affirming the experience of co-creation
(“you’ve made me”). Woolf stylises this experience, through exclamatory punctuation,
as one signifying Swithin’s childlike positive belief, her faith, that all is possible.
Woolf’s stylisation of La Trobe’s interpretation of Swithin’s comment, “‘You’ve
twitched in me the invisible strings’...Her moment was on her - her glory” (112),
indicates that La Trobe recognises Swithin as a separate subject, who, while deserving
respect as the widowed old “Batty,” also deserves respect as a virtual subject, who
could be more, and other, than she is. In this reading, the slightly satiric phrase (“of all
people”) reads compassionately, a slightly comic moment, but not a ridiculous one,
thereby implying that such personal powers are not beyond “weak” characters as Swithin.

Furthermore, La Trobe’s rewording of Swithin’s phrasing transcends specific
individuation to a more generalised subjectivity capable of representing any audience
member. Rather than using recognition as a means to mastery, La Trobe repeats in a
different register the conditions for recognising Swithin, and others, who have served as
obstacles within the SELF (Benjamin, “Shadow of the Other” 232). This difference
moves them out of the quest structure associated with dominator desire. Evolving from a
playwright who curses her audience, or even one who desires a play without an audience,
, in this rare moment La Trobe acknowledges the co-creation of her own identity through
Others. The third-person stress on the pronoun she in La Trobe’s transposition functions as a grammatical hinge, fusing the two very disparate, subjectivities in this sequence: “‘You’ve stirred in me my unacted part, she meant’ (Between 112). In this case, La Trobe’s glory emerges from the knowledge that she has been able to expand Swithin’s imagination. If “she” is attributed to La Trobe, then the statement “You’ve stirred in me my unacted part” merely paraphrases Swithin’s words, which La Trobe attributes to Swithin—Lucy meant. If, however, as the quotation marks allow, she refers to La Trobe via third-person narration, then these statements, as well as their punctuation, can be read differently.

La Trobe’s exact repetition of Swithin’s words—“I might have been Cleopatra”—is interpreted by third-person narration (narrator) as an indication of transsubjective connection. In this case, a more generalised, social or communal consciousness narratively represents, and expresses, the bond between these two very different, distanced subjects. In this case, third-person narration, rather than neutralising individual voice, functions as a repository for representing and grammatically binding both voices. If the pronoun “she” refers to La Trobe, then a variation of this reading also confirms a successful intersubjective connection. La Trobe’s transposition of Swithin’s comment means that Swithin (“you”) stirs within La Trobe her unacted part. In this case, La Trobe’s transposition acknowledges a reciprocal exchange that infuses intersubjective connection. Just as La Trobe’s production makes Swithin feel as though she could be Cleopatra, Swithin’s comment itself allows La Trobe to confirm her own partialness—her own unacted part as writer and director. The narrative possibilities for interpretation suggested here show that in every way, Woolf
emphasises, both technically and thematically, the interdependence between two distinct subjects.

Thus, La Trobe's pageant, signifying the acculturated "gaze" both inside and upon the members of the audience, fulfills both her personal desire and her social responsibility to participate in the social fabric. Similarly, in acknowledging her "unacted" part as a community member, Swithin assumes the responsibility of being a provisional signifier for the gaze of the other—that is, as a mutual, relational subject, developing SELF while tending to the needs of other. Woolf uses La Trobe's exploration of her interpretation of Mrs. Swithin's comments to suggest the transsubjective dimensions of such relationality. By retaining indirect discourse to represent La Trobe's thoughts in this passage, rather than entirely shifting into the third-person narration started in the statement ("Glory possessed her"), Woolf represents La Trobe's subjectivity in a relational mode. La Trobe has power only insofar as Others allow themselves to be "bewitched" by her creation. By emphasising La Trobe's agency through free indirect thought ("She was not merely...;" "she was the one"), Woolf symbolically loads the third-person pronoun she with transsubjective dimensions: she as magician, sorceress, witch, alchemist, creator. In her virtual identities, La Trobe is granted multiple subjectivities to create multiple worlds—bestowing upon creativity the power of transsubjective union. The "wandering bodies and floating voices" are intrapsychic identifications shared by Others across age, race, gender, and nationality boundaries. The third-person narrative rendering of the definitive statement ("Her moment was on her—her glory") which caps this passage mimics, through Woolf's emphatic use of the dash, La Trobe's excitement in her success, in knowing that she has
the power to affect metramorphosis in audience members.109

No matter which way La Trobe’s “processing” of Swithin’s comment is interpreted by the reader, by framing it within intermediary stylistic forms of narrative voice, Woolf supports the overall interpretation that Swithin’s comment, despite its hesitations and imperfections, has clearly affected La Trobe in a positive way which expands the concept of both identities, and relieves them (temporarily) of their own mutually shared feelings of isolation. In other words, Swithin’s comment co-constructs La Trobe’s identity so that she experiences the pleasure of relational identity. Thus, the success of her pageant can only be measured in terms of multiple, individual effects communally experienced by the various members of the audience. La Trobe’s worry that her play is a failure is unwarranted, shown by her ability both to participate in this intersubjective connection and acknowledge the transsubjective potential of her play by imagining a communal subjectivity to which she is a valued contributor.

In this chapter, we have seen that Woolf conceives of relational identity as a means to greater social coherence. Although mourning the personal and historical loss that comes with relational identity, Woolf promotes a positive vision of social bonding attuned to the gaps that keep us separate. As these scenes show, inter/transsubjectivity includes both the positive and negative aspects of interpersonal connection. Although she represents the difficulties of communicating with and through difference, she does not perceive such difficulties as insurmountable.

To conclude this work, I will turn to a discussion of what relational identity as narrative desire means in terms of human subjectivity. The last question I pose regards the feasibility of applying inter/transsubjective methods of communication to real-life
situations, undoubtedly a goal shared by Benjamin, Irigaray and Habermas. This question includes a consideration of the role and formation of the ego and the actual “likeness” of Benjamin’s like subjects. These issues take us beyond Benjamin’s recognition stage and into the more exciting prospect of nurturing multiple and diverse sets of social inter-relationships. Obviously, as Woolf’s novels imply, inter/transsubjective bonding requires a vastly different attitude towards the desire to gain knowledge than is prevalent in western democracies, increasingly out of touch with their own relationalities. Such a desire would shift the power of speech to the knowledge of listening, valuing compassionate, power-with over ironic, power-over knowledge. To conclude, then, Let us consider Woolf’s final portrayal of the evolution of non-relational subjects—Isa and Giles—into relational subjects, most poignantly portrayed in Between’s enigmatic final scene depicting the potential union of this married couple. In this scene, narrative voice reconceives their power-over struggle as a power-with/power-within union, a final testimony to Woolf’s optimistic vision of individual desire as the key human unity.
Chapter V

Conclusion: Relational Desire Beyond Recognition

The truth is one has room for a good many relationships.  

Virginia Woolf

The central concern of this work has been to establish the technical and thematic presence of narrative intersubjectivity and transsubjectivity in experimental modernist fiction. The novels discussed reveal how fictional subjects negotiate self-identity while confronting interpersonal differences between two subjects and two desires. My critical goal has not simply been a feminist search for intersubjectivity and transsubjectivity in modernist experimental texts. As we have seen, H.D. and Woolf’s narrative inter/transsubjectivity conceives individuality as a co-created SELF, a notion inclusive of, and interdependent on, Otherness. Such individuality uses a mode of narrative desire not exclusively mediated through the privileged patriarchal channels; thus, relational narrative desire counters Western civilization’s overvaluation of rationality, materiality, and autonomous individualism “anchored” in our current understanding of human subjectivity. But what does this alternative form of desire mean for narrative structures, and for narratology?

To conclude, I will focus on two key concepts recur in this work: love, and what its tolerance means for positing subject-subject pairings in communication; and disembodiment, and what its technological manifestation means in terms of positing identity-as-plurality. Here, Luce Irigaray (1996a, 1996b, 2001b, 2002) and Kelly Oliver’s (1998, 2001) recent theories on love extend Jessica Benjamin’s recognition stage by analysing specific communication strategies that ensure subject-subject pairings. These communicative strategies are implied in Between’s final scene, which emphasises witnessing as the logical outcome of recognition. I will then apply these concepts to the
topic more pressing for narratology: the need to reexamine mimeticism's theoretical parameters in order to include narrative voice's virtuality and disembodiment in more identifiable, analysable ways.

**Beyond Recognition**

Increasingly western feminism has turned to the philosophical concept of love, questioning what love means for theorising human subjectivity and gender equality. Irigaray and Oliver are two theorists who agree on the necessity for dominator culture to develop an *ethics of difference*, the movement of moral systems away from discriminatory practices through examination of socio-cultural and interpersonal boundaries that define and shape Otherness. Certainly, the notion of a co-created SELF presented here implies a continuous reinvention of subjectivity based on an ethics of difference, but we have not yet considered how a subject perceives SELF in Other, or what “love” means as social energy that allows for metamorphosis. We have assumed that the desire to experience oneself in relational terms exists; let us now discuss why.

Recently, Irigaray and Oliver have suggested that the cognitive mechanics, and in some cases, even the linguistic structures that govern inter/transsubjective connection in socialisation processes, are available but are used to a minimal extent. This assumption is supported by H.D. and Woolf, whose novels reflect the desire to bypass subject-object pairings, and set the SELF in alternative modes of social organisation more conducive for female subjectivity than patriarchy. Philosophically, Irigaray and Oliver agree on the basic tenets of relational desire: recognition, witnessing, and love; such tenets assume that human relationality is based on the desire to love through actions made *out of* love.
These tenets directly oppose Freud’s claim that love and desire form a binary opposition. In his essay, “On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love,” an analysis of love as a sado-masochistic desire for domination, Freud asserts that where humans “love they do not desire and where they desire they cannot love” (183). Freud frames love in a mode of singularity which precludes conflicting, enlivening desires; if otherness exists, it must be subdued and controlled. In contrast, Irigaray and Oliver realise love’s paradoxical condition: love acknowledges that two, or more, desires are at work, and that any desire is a shared desire between two or more subjects. In relational desire, this paradox is explicit. The demanding subject (found in dominator cultures) becomes the giving subject (anticipated in relational cultures). In this light, Irigaray and Oliver offer specific definitions of love to detail communication modes that promote the co-creation of subjectivity as a means to human equality.

In *I Love to You* (1996a), Irigaray defines love as filling the gap or space between subjects with the “gifts” of listening and silence. The gesture of *I-love-to-you* is “a silence made possible by the fact that neither I nor you are everything, that each of us is limited, marked by the negative, non-hierarchically different” (117). This notion of love acknowledges subjects’ partialness. In *To be Two* (2001b), Irigaray contextualises love within a broad vision of a (largely Christian) divinity to posit a subject-pairing: “It is not, therefore, in the fusion or in the ecstasy of the One that the dualism between subject and object is overcome, but rather in the incarnation of the two, a two which is irreducible to the One” (59). This irreducibility of “two” characterises the “destiny” of our bodies’ relation to Others in a way that precludes being owned or dominated by another (19). In “Thinking Life as Relation” (1996b), Irigaray similarly argues for a greater number of
logical means for communication between different sexes in the here and now (350). The civil relationship between separate subjects in a non-sacrificial economy must be founded upon a *real rapport* between two individuals in a condition of intersubjectivity which, Irigaray believes, is almost absent in Western tradition with its discriminatory practices against difference. Thus, in Irigaray’s view, subjectivity and objectivity must be brought into a dialectic in the western world. Western women need to learn to put objectivity between *I* and *you*, while western men need to rediscover the Other as subject “beyond his universe of objects” (“Thinking Life as Relation” 355). Both genders need attunement in their own communicative interactions so that the subject-subject relation is neither narcissistic nor sacrificial, since *sexual equality*, as well as sexual difference, informs the conceptual basis of the dialectic of inter/transsubjectivity.

Like Irigaray, Oliver’s ethics of difference in *Subjectivity without Subjects* (1998) focuses on western civilisation’s lack of love as the root cause of gender inequality. Since fathers are (unfairly) divested of body, while mothers are (unfairly) divested of law, Oliver (like Benjamin) imagines a gender-sharing of these authorities. She posits a hypothetical mother invested with authority (even if “outlaw”), and a father who, functioning as “site” for the mother’s love, becomes an imaginary support for identity; both mother and father are virtual, exchangable subjects. Through this gender sharing of roles and identifications, Oliver argues, formulations of self-other relations and revised notions of agency and domination offer a unified, bounded subject based on the conception of a *loving* subjectivity and an “openness to others” (89). This loving subjectivity is a fluid subjectivity participating in *fractal politics*, an interdisciplinary application of chaos theory more responsive to chaotic materiality (historically symbolised by women). In *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* (2001), Oliver argues that feminist
psychoanalytic theories (like Benjamin’s) repress their own conflicts concerning oppression in their desire to value subject-subject pairing against dominator culture by questioning the value of recognition. Here, Oliver argues that recognition is inadequate for the sexual rights movement, since it contributes directly to the cycle of oppression it attempts to oppose. On its own, recognition, dominator culture’s “soft currency” (*Witnessing* 23), merely symbolises the demand of marginalised peoples to be recognized as marginalised by the perpetrators of their own oppression. Thus, Oliver argues, victimisation is voiced, but difference is not.

Therefore, Oliver believes that in a reversed mirror stage, a demand for recognition objectifies and dehumanises those making the demand. Based on her research into Holocaust survivors of extreme forms of personal and political oppression, including Nazi concentration camp survivors, Oliver argues that *witnessing* comprises the basis of subjectivity (85). Witnessing entails a vigilance which, in its valuation of testimonies of difference, works to “ameliorate the trauma particular to othered subjectivity” (*Witnessing* 7, 11-12). By seeing with and seeing *through* “porous” eyes, witnessing subjects oppose the objectifying, contestatory Lacanian gaze which separates subject from object (191). This is the case in *Between’s* final scene, Isa and Giles embrace this intermodal and interpersonal style of communication. Such communication requires social energy manifested in a “double axis of subjectivity” of loving attention that has its “analogue” on the social level (Oliver, *Witnessing* 19, 43). Such attention can only be created, and sustained, through the responsible witnessing of a critical, loving eye which “nourishes relationships across differences” (Ibid. 219). Such an eye requires the ability to set the ego down in front of the Other in order to see one another as separate, equal subjects; this gesture occurs in the final scene of Woolf’s *Between*. 
Isa and Giles: The Final Union

The disminishment of dominator desire in the egotistical “I” is implied in Between’s final scene in its characterisation of Isa and Gile’s union and its thematic emphasis on their love. Woolf stylises this scene (the final novelistic scene she ever wrote) by setting communicative strategies specific to valuing community against what she saw as a primitive form of non-relational, autonomous identity. This comparison points to the social implications of going beyond the recognition stage of inter/transsubjectivity.

Between’s final scene emulates the ethics of difference such as Benjamin’s love-bond by portraying an unexpected union between the antagonistic Isa and Giles, who suffer emotionally in their marriage. In its transcendence of individual egoism, their union symbolises the restorative qualities of relational identity. Here, Woolf uses third-person narration to show how Isa’s and Giles’ assertions of singularity fail. This symbolic death of the Enlightened individual is accomplished through voice stylisations which anonymously organize, and maximize, the existing possibilities for restructuring and reconceiving Isa’s and Giles’ relationship in as a positive subject-subject pairing that invites communication.

While her final work was in progress, Woolf wondered, “to whom at the end there shall be an invocation” (Diary V 13)? This question is clearly relevant for Between, whose conclusion fails to return to notions of self-contained individualism, but instead invokes inter/transsubjectivity’s ideal of recognition and response—an ideal emulating postmodernism’s testimony to a breakdown of classical polarisations: real/fictive, self/other, and subject/object. These breakdowns necessitate the integration of difference existing between polarities, advocating an ethics of difference. This shift, as Irigaray and
Oliver realise, forces any postmodern humanism to progress beyond the recognition stage of difference and into deliberate acts (and actions) of witnessing as *loving attention*. This progression directly influences the nature and purpose of communication between two subjects; a communication architecture founded upon witnessing diminishes self-other oppression.

Woolf represents Oliver’s “witnessing” (synonymous with Lichtenberg’s “wit(h)nessing”) by representing La Trobe’s next play in terms of narrative virtuality. In *Between’s* post-pageant scenes, La Trobe envisions the self-expanding, universalising qualities of inter/transsubjectivity while contemplating the first scene for her next play—the shadowy emergence of two “scarcely perceptible” figures, universal prototypes for man and woman, through which the audience hears “the first words” (*Between* 154). As unindividuated, but separate, anonymous archetypes placed in a romantic (or alternatively, Biblical) setting of pre-history or post-history, these figures symbolise, with minimal human attributes, the persisting bonds of love in La Trobe’s imagination. In this unwritten scene, La Trobe idealises the love bond between herself and her audience based on both their shared respect for each other’s differences, evident in the polyvalent “they” referring both to her visionary figures, as well as her audience: “She no longer saw them, yet they upheld her” (154). La Trobe needs her audience in order to transcend self; she is its “slave” in her desire for intersubjective fusion (153). Thus, La Trobe’s will to create and share her world vision *endures*—despite the audience’s potential censure of her work and her “defeat”: “Still the play hung in the mind—moving, diminishing, but still there” (154). Allegorically, this virtual scene, illuminating the relational bond between La Trobe and her audience, foreshadows Isa-
Giles’s metamorphosis. Despite the obvious failings of their marriage, their love, given Woolf’s stylistic representation of it, endures despite their relationship. Thus, Woolf’s indirect bestowal of archetypal universality upon Giles and Isa affirms the potential for a harmonious connection between these two separate, “warring” subjects.

Without this theoretical framework to describe relational narrative desire, feminist readings of Between’s final scene (DiBattista 1986; Lane 1987; Barrett 1989; Ray 1990; Bazin and Lauter 1991; Cramer 1993) confront Isa’s defeat as a patriarchal subject, given Isa’s power-over conflict with Giles, a highly sexualised conflict. Despite her isolation and personal independence, Isa is, on a deeper psychic level, subjugated to her husband’s demands for her submission to his will. But Woolf’s theatrical staging of this scene offers an alternative reading. The props, the great hooded chairs, the rising curtain, and the placement of the figures against the colourless background suggest that Isa and Giles’s union enacts La Trobe’s archetypal scene, which promotes their inevitable union as a power against the darkness. For this reason, La Trobe’s pageant is, ultimately, more important in what it inspires than in what it delivers—tolerance as a means to loving. Isa and Giles embody tolerance when they confront each other as separate and equal subjects willing to talk to one another despite their differences. In this case, love is an active acceptance of difference. Thus, Woolf suggests that the relational self thinks beyond self-enclosed identities, expressed in an “inclusion that calls for difference, not synthesis” (Benjamin, “Shadow of the Other” 247). In this way, inter/transsubjective “fusion” of SELF and Other respects, rather than eliminates, difference.

Woolf represents Isa’s and Giles’ antagonism as the grounds upon which love cannot be not denied. “Enmity was bared,” claims Woolf’s narrator, “but also love”
Here, as Freud fails to realise, love is clearly expressed as a mode of plurality that allows for its own differences. Isa’s and Giles’ to love supports Irigaray’s and Oliver’s figures of love’s transparency; the subject “sees through” Otherness as a method of comprehending and integrating difference. Woolf represents Isa’s and Giles’ relationship as a primal connection in its sustained openness to Otherness, a house that has “lost its shelter” (159). By emphasising the equal size of these characters (“The great hooded chairs had become enormous. And Giles too. And Isa too...”) and the vehement nature of their antagonism (“first they must fight”), Woolf hyperbolically enlarges the parameters and nature of their opposition to symbolise, equally, their potential to unite: “Before they slept, they must fight; after they had fought, they would embrace. From that embrace another life might be born. But first they must fight, as the dog fox fights with the vixen, in the heart of darkness, in the fields of night” (158). Differences in this case cannot be ignored or repressed; they must be worked through. Woolf’s dramatic emphasis on antagonistic differences which must be resolved before sleep and embrace—in the war-analogy, before peace—Woolf implies that the capacity to love, that is, to witness each other’s pain as part of their civil coexistence, creates a relational bond. The interdependence of their love and hatred lies at the heart of relational identity’s expression of tolerance and disidentification. Isa does not devalue Giles at the same moment she disidentifies with him; thus, her feelings of hating him do not preclude her (equal) ability to love him, even under an obsolete praxis of domination.

Woolf’s narrative stylisation of this scene supports the interpretation of a subject-subject pairing which characterises, and reconfigures, Isa’s and Giles’ intensely antagonistic relationship. By formalising Isa’s thought earlier in this scene when Giles
enters, "'The father of my children, whom I love and hate'" (156), with an intermediary narrative voice, a blend of free indirect discourse, quoted interior monologue (if unspoken) and interior monologue, Woolf's style of narration suggests that whether or not Isa was conscious of this thought earlier (as Woolf's previous stylisations fail to indicate), she is certainly conscious of it now. This stylisation suggests that even Isa herself can no longer evade or deny the loving attention she bestows consciously upon Giles. By repeating the phrase, "The father of my children," with the qualification, "whom I love and hate," Woolf further suggests that Isa's perspective on her husband has successfully (but also consciously, and with effort) been integrated into her own conflicting attitudes regarding their relationship. This integration reflects the redundant stylisation of the past way that Isa thinks about Giles as well as shows her ability to reopen her own alterity and the way she thinks about him. Isa's openness lends credibility to the love scene that presumably follows. Thus, Isa's inclusive SELF, located in a transitory, fragile, and even threatening psychic space, signalled by the melodrama of the scene, values tolerance of the Other.14

Woolf's prehistoric, prelasparian setting for this final scene reflects this characterisation by connoting insecure, interpersonal boundaries, which potentially threatens Isa's and Giles' sense of autonomy. In this case, inter/transsubjective connection—love—becomes the means to SELF-survival. The loss of individuality and assumptions concerning illusions of autonomy, rationality and singularity, signals a vast shift in experiencing identity's social praxis of power. By recognising each other as subjects, and universalising their relationship beyond the institution of marriage, Isa and Giles witness their own traumatic, relational bond and realise that they must work
through their difficulties together.

This passage's predominant third-person narrative lyricism suggests a compassionately compromised authorial voice. By withholding representation of Isa's and Giles' actual dialogue, Woolf resists predetermining the form and nature of their exchange; instead, she merely emphasises its dramatic difference from all the other conversations which may have preceded it. In this way, Woolf intimates radically new potentials in communication predicated upon relational narrative desire. By detaching the third-person pronoun "they" from the individualistic, egoistic identity of "I," Woolf shifts the praxis of power into a collaborative, communal context ("Before they slept, they must fight; after they had fought, they would embrace;" 158). Through her use of parallel phrases and conditional verbs, Woolf implies that such actions exist "beyond" the control of any one subject. Thus, the narrator's incompletion of this scene stands as a desire for relational identity. That Woolf secures communication in intersubjectivity is evident in the novel's sentence: "They spoke" (159). The narrator deliberately withholds the representation of their intimacy—an intimacy entirely dependent upon the ensuing dialogue that occurs when "the curtain" rises. The spoken words, however, as Woolf's narrator implies, will reflect relational desire since "man" and "woman" face each other as separate and equal subjects.

In this reading, I add an alternative choice to feminist interpretations which perceive Isa as a disempowered subject, negatively regressing into, and indeed, even courting, her own oppression. For instance, Patricia Cramer (1993) interprets this scene as Isa's "defeat" ("Virginia Woolf's Matriarchal Family" 178), while Bazin and Lauter (1991) argue that it is a dystopian "return to the primordial instinct," a terrifying reversal
Relational Narrative Desire

of Isa's previous independence constituting a return to violence and passion "on a primitive level with only an instinct to survive" ("Woolf's Keen Sensitivity" 39). Instead, I read this scene as Woolf's depiction of the highest civil social achievement between two separate subjects. Difference, and even fighting over difference, in Woolf's view, does not preclude the desire for like subjects to unite since conflict is not the permanent manifestation of difference.

Woolf's stylisation of third-person narration in this scene supports civil identity's redemptive quality. For instance, the narrator extrapolates from the microcosmic relationship between Isa and Giles to a macrocosmic view of the prehistory of human civilization: "It was the night before roads were made, or houses. It was the night that dwellers in caves had watched from some high place among the rocks" (Between 159). Repetition and parallelism enforce the precondition of "night," the violent aggression which must be won over to achieve the transcendent, temporary securing of like subjects, bonded together through compromise, not through an idealised "fusion" which melts individual differences. Thus, Woolf suggests that Isa and Giles achieve the necessary degree of impersonality in order to unite as separate, equal subjects. Here, impersonality signals a consensual freeing of the "I" so that communication may occur, so that "another life might be born" (158). In this light, "another life" refers literally to another child potentially born from the physical union of Isa and Giles, as well as a newer level of intimacy in their relationship, emerging from the empathetic recognition of, and identification with, the Other.

In this interpretation, "another life" evokes a loving connection that is not specifically restricted to individuals, but, as we have seen from Woolf's portrayal of
intersubjective and transsubjective connections, is spread out over a multiplicity of subjectivities. The phrasing of this sentiment, that “another life might be born,” once again reminds us that such unions and connections are conditional, based on the capacity of individuals to allow new possibilities for human intimacy.\(^{17}\) When the relational \(I\) is inserted into value systems of community and empathy, new forms of cognitive development, which Elizabeth Abel (1983) calls “flashes of recognition,” replace old plot structures (The Voyage In 12). Here, we have seen how Woolf’s portrayal of romantic love questions classical narratology’s conception of plot as the defining element of narrative; now we will see what new conceptions of “plot” mean for narratology and its primary application: computer gaming.

The Co-created SELF and Computer Gaming: New Notions of Individuality

To a certain extent, Woolf’s portrayal of the possibility for co-creation between Isa and Giles undermines modernist concepts of individualism. By using the external world as a way to define inner character, modern individualism has typically been rooted in a defense of freedoms that ensure one’s autonomy, namely, in the freedoms to think, speak and make one’s own understanding of morality and experience. Modernist conceptions of identity as self-unity have been surpassed by the dramatic escalation of technology and economic power in the Information Age (or Age of Globalism), which routinely disembodies subjects from the psychological benefits (and disadvantages) of self-unified notions of individualism. Despite western technology capacity to expresses individuality through digital voice mediums, its matrix, a mass-generated web of relationality, often fails to secure differences in these voices, thus tending towards homogenisation. For instance, despite western corporate media’s attention to site-
specific arrays of diversity, the domination of singular modes of identification (as comedy or tragedy) dispels these differences; although we are now presented (and even deluged) with experiences we could never have as bounded-subjects, at the same time, the media tells us how we should think and feel about them. Thus, our western detachment from difference ensures the resistance of love, and loving—an effect deferring the development of alternative ethical modes. This lack of development is especially prevalent in narratology’s new applications, which merely spin the same story structure, the Oedipal quest, in a greater diversity of mediums. I would like to focus on Michael Young’s *Project Mimesis* as an example clearly exemplifying western, North American corporations’ resistance to consider different structural elements than plot, even in its cutting-edge technology of computer gaming.

I opened this work with specific questions concerning how, and why, narratology’s shift in emphasis from plot to voice would, and could, affect classical conceptions of mimeticism. I would like to return to these questions by focussing this discussion on the narratological applications in computer gaming undertaken by Young’s Liquid Narrative Group at North Carolina State University and its *Project Mimesis*, which fails to move narratological mimeticism out of Aristotelian plot structures. As we have seen, an ethics of difference, evident in Oliver’s critique of subjectivity’s antagonistic stance and Irigaray’s insistence on a dual-incarnation of subjectivity (in her “to-be-two” and “I-love-to-you” theories), takes us directly back to the question of narrative mimesis, with its implied subject-object pairing, inherited from structuralism’s arbitrary privileging of plot and plot’s action. Except for Fludernik’s *The Fictions of Language*, wherein human consciousness is considered the primary source of mediation, narratology has not seriously considered expanding the parameters of mimesis from
action (Aristotle’s mimesis) to consider other structuring devices, such as voice, or alternatively, to consider expanding the definition of mimesis to include the representation of voice. Shackled to a one-dimensional understanding of mimesis which perceives narrative in terms of binary oppositions, narratology neglects experimental representations of human subjectivity structured as communal expressions of diversity and plurality. But since as we have seen in terms of narrative grammar and theme, identity and voice-recognition “is not self” (Benjamin, “The Shadow” 235), nor bound to SELF, then mimesis predicated upon voice necessarily includes other, alternate modalities. As is apparent, one such modality is relational narrative desire, which, by integrating the cognitive and psychic modalities of virtuality, directly increases the possibilities for interpreting and theorising narrative voice.

Along these lines, we have considered how certain experimental modern writers sought to idealise difference, rather than sameness, as the unifying factor in their narratives. Extrapolating from this, a model of relational narrative desire seeks for differentiation as a means to self-empowerment, a process which diminishes the aspect of imperialistic operations of domination, heavily relied on in the computer gaming industry, which bases its operations almost exclusively on plot configurations. These operations do not perceive the gaming “self” or actor as relational—therefore, they prevent the SELF from adopting incongruent positions, voices, and perspectives from which to “create” and simulate virtual subjectivity. Relational desire supports choice—something which computer gaming must limit and control—since choice entails risk. Computer gaming risks involve the option of leaving a specific stage or event unfinished, or running into unexpected possibilities when more than one plot line intersects. In other words, risk reconstructs the narrative as a process of integration (both in terms of reading and
interpretation) which, technically, has, or knows, no end. But as we have seen, choice of readings is one of the primary factors in narratives predicated upon relational desire. Only the reader can formulate new propositions as “a sign of generous reading” and radical participation (Malabouand, cited in Jaarsma n. pag.).

Accounting for narrative virtuality, this style of reading has profound effects for questions of the status and degree of narrative mimesis. For example, since Lacan’s mirror metaphor is not appropriate for understanding realities predicated upon relational identity (Benjamin, “The Omnipotent Mother” 133), a different form of mimeticism needs to emerge. An attuned, relational subject can only reflect “reality” as water(y) mirroring images, pervious to change, since “separate minds can share similar states; [and] shared states can unite separate persons” (Stern cited in Benjamin, “Omnipotent Mother” 133). Subjects can be partially self and partially Other in the bonds that they share. For example, as we have seen, H.D.’s Julia-Bella character pair, as well as the Raymonde-Ermy pair, discover that, to a large extent, the Other exists “outside” of their mental powers, thus evoking my two-mirror (and two-subject) model of relational identity. But through the recognition of this fact (that is, the presence of the second mirror), the Other survives as an effective, non-threatening presence (Benjamin, “Omnipotent Mother” 136). Therefore, the question of mimeticism becomes a symbolic one, that is, one of a reflected reality that can only exist in a virtual mode (or “world”). One can only recognize an image of such a world (as in a computer game), but equally, one can fabricate a subjectivity (and even a sense of self-unity) by the way that “Otherness” is reflected as a relational construct.

In this case, the “Other” is not the “thing” the subject feels, but rather, the subject feels, or seems to feel, “the thing” the Other is. This difference is not a question of semantics, but of
knowing. This kind of cognitive, psychic transport respects individuation within an illusory form of fictional-world omnipotence. With this in mind, let us turn to consider Young’s *Project Mimesis*’ operations in more depth to see if such dynamics are possible. For this discussion, it is useful to recall the two main effects of intersubjectivity and transsubjectivity.

Inter/transsubjectivity signifies the integration of Otheredness within the subject, including the inner negotiation of different voices within the SELF. Such Otheredness is reflected in narrative voices which easily pass through distinct stylistic modes of thought and speech, but whose exact nature, status, and attribution remains ambiguous. Both of these aspects reveal the SELF’s “shadow,” that is, their inability to escape the Other’s externality and embodiedness that directly co-creates the SELF’s social persona. This inescapable concreteness of the Other is, undoubtedly, a popularised (if not pre-requisite) aspect of computer games’ Oedipal quest-structure, which requires the annihilation of difference as the *only means* of negotiating its subjectivity (and subjective power) within its obstacle course.

While perpetuating subject-object relations, Young’s *Project Mimesis* fails to offer alternatives to Oedipal story structures dominating the computer gaming industry. His pioneering work in progress, featured on *Narr Net*, the website dedicated to current research trends in narratology, clearly values elimination over inclusion. Presumably dismissing Fludernik’s persuasive argument that *mediation* (and not plot) is the structuring element of narrative, Young takes interactivity to be the defining feature of *Project Mimesis*. Therefore, despite innovative effects which increase interactive experiences within three-dimensional virtual worlds, Young’s *Project Mimesis* is limited by virtue of its overvaluation of action sequences, and its neglect of the structuring potential of narrative voice. In this way, Young’s gaming interactivity ignores what
Oliver (1998) calls a subject without subjectivity, a *negotiated* or co-created identity. In its labyrinth of hermeneutically enclosed changes, central to digital narrative, non-relational identity emerges as the primary source of mediation. Although Young agrees that communicative acts exist as expectations sensitive to co-operation ("The Co-operative Contract" n. pag.), like all good structuralists, he divides narrative into story (the complete conceptualisation of the story-world), and discourse (the elements responsible for telling the story). For the purpose of generating *Mimesis*’s computer game(s), the narrative discourse is selected, arranged, and mediated in order to achieve intended communicative effects, including the control of voice-over narration, three-dimensional camera and cinematic control, and coherence. Discourse planners use a shared library of communicative actions in order to create action sequences controlled by the game engine’s interface resources “intended to be executed concurrently with the story plan itself” ("Steps Towards a Computational Theory" n. pag.).

But the problem that immediately arises for Young (of which he is well aware) is one in which each step of the story plan is necessarily defined by a set of *preconditions*. If unmet, these preconditions cause problems with coherence, particularly with highly interactive gaming sequences. Young may, or may not, realise that this problem is the same one that Fludernik herself encounters with the paradoxical artificiality of mimesis. The greater the writer’s control over the elements of the fictional world, Fludernik (1993) realises, the greater its mimetic effect, but the less the readers’ imaginatively participate in the fictional world. Young touches on the problem of this effect by attesting to its own contradiction:

The degree of engagement by a user within an interactive narrative lies, to a great
extent, with the user’s perceived degree of control over her character as it operates within the environment. The greater the user’s sense of control over her character, the greater will be her sense of presence, that is, the sense that she is part of the story world and free to pursue her own goals and desires.

Unfortunately, control and coherence are often in direct conflict in an interactive narrative system. ("Steps Towards" n. pag.).

In other words, the more that control is desired by the user (or reader), the greater the number of problems that occur with the game’s (or story’s) coherence. Note, however, that this problem is not shared by narratives predicated upon relational desire, which can more freely restructure conflicts in virtual narrative modes, “bubbles” that may, or may not occur or be reflected in the story line. Young’s style of mimesis, however, does not yet accommodate this option; for example, he identifies one of his group’s largest challenges as one, not surprisingly, rooted in narrative conflict.

As Young realises, narrative conflict, balanced between protagonist and antagonist, is measured in terms of timing and its correspondence with the overall story plan structure. But if such correspondence does not occur, certain paralleling or intersecting story-lines fade-out, dissolve, or divert to another more complementary set of options. Young admits that, in these instances, Project Mimesis “takes an idealised stance in which the user is not accounted for except as a passive observer” ("Steps Towards" n. pag.). His user is not a subject, nor is s/he treated as a relational construct; instead, Young’s user is the game’s passive object, subjugated to predetermined series of performances. Dominator power structures provide the fundamental core for Project Mimesis which assumes that any relations are essentially antagonistic struggles for
victory; in most computer games, these relations are marked by gratuitous violence like beatings, rape, torture, and murder. Certainly such games are not celebrations or adventures in difference, but rather, the gleeful (if temporary) elimination of difference. As Mark Riedl, a member of the Liquid Narrative Group, points out, each character in Project Mimesis, although endowed with an actor or “expert” system containing a full understanding of his/her world, still functions dependently upon the coherence and coordination of all of the other experts/actors, even as it designs its own action plan (“Actor Conference” n.p.). Since these plans may, and probably will, conflict and cancel out part(s) of the character’s “subjective” plan (and by extrapolation, deny certain facets of identity), the system itself, an embryonic manifestation of intersubjectivity, may improvise by adapting or shutting down some of a character’s chosen interactions. Thus, individual characters whose subjectivities gamers take on lack the fundamental dialogic qualities of relational identity identified by Oliver—namely, address-ability and response-ability, thus making the entire game an objectifying operation of oppression: “That which precludes a response destroys subjectivity and thereby humanity,” as Oliver reminds us (Witnessing 7, 90).

By shifting Project Mimesis’ source of mediation, and hence the control of desire, to voice, Young could gain a responsive flexibility that would (ideally) increase coherence via an intersubjective network. At present, the Project Mimesis system can only respond to plurality by deflecting it, that is, by restructuring plot sequences through fly-throughs, non-interactive narrative sequences, interleaved segments of unrestricted narrative interactivity with no camera control, or by preventing a chosen possibility from actually executing (Young, “Steps Towards” n.p.). The only way to respond to problems
caused by such choice-conflicts, Young believes, is to entirely remove the power of camera control. In other words, Young is forced to extract the illusion of subjectivity from the user/reader—hardly a desirable option for today’s market, given the rampant pleasure of appropriation and domination in games predicated upon dominator desire. But what needs to be sacrificed here is the user’s, and game’s, illusion of omnipotence as the only controlling subjectivity. The surrendering of narcissism allows for partial and limited constructions of subjecthood without diminishing interactivity. This shift from plot to voice, from domination to inclusion, respects differentiation and limits aggressive subjects which (or who) believe they must have it all.

By shifting the emphasis from plot to voice, or by reconsidering event structure more rigorously in terms of interpersonal, relational constructs, rather than by arbitrarily segregating action from agent, or voice from consciousness, I trust that computer game designers and narratologists could create new modes of coherence, and even cognitive states, hinging on the pleasure of connectivity, rather than elimination. Such new directions require a full-scale rethinking of the way that technologies and narratologies conceive of, and value, fictional impressions of reality and virtuality, corporeality and incorporeality, presence and absence, embodiment and disembodiment, speech and thought. Anti-mimeticism would be as integral to the games’ possible worlds as its mimeticism. In this work, I have argued that narrative inter/transsubjectivity contains the aesthetic and psychic capabilities for an interface sensitive to attunement through particular stylisations of narrative voice. Hovering in the realm of the intermediary, narrative voice symbolises the fluid interactivity that Young desires. Its mediating power ceases to represent the agent in terms of self-Other conflicts which necessitate systematic exclusion. Instead, it fosters multiple, pluralised dimensions of SELF/subjectivity that can be
simultaneously contained and integrated. If inter/transsubjectivity is a means to inclusivity, and simultaneously a mode of self-development, a different gaming paradigm founded on successful interpersonal communication would result. Such a paradigm acknowledges the paradox of subjectivity that Woolf and H.D. represent in terms of literary devices. While inter/transsubjectivity evokes the profound difficulties of negotiating intimacy between self-Other, at the same time it sustains SELF's ego. An individual's subjectivity is constituted by becoming "Other" to itself for and through an/Other.

Final Words

The co-created SELF, introduced here as the agent of relational desire, practices tolerance as a form of social inclusion. Such a subject remains cognisant of its own imperfections, limitations, and incompletions. It remains subject to ever greater challenges of integrating newer, less organic and more technological experiences with unknowable effects. For instance, although we encounter global difference daily on the Internet and in a wide variety of other communicative mediums, we shy away from meaningful interactions which enliven social settings. In the western world, we appear actively to nurture a network of detachment by limiting ourselves to knowledge of the real world, now evident in the lust for reality TV and cyberdating. We avoid engaging with, and participating in, more complex imaginative worlds that cannot be predetermined; many prefer, for example, watching movie versions of novels, rather than reading the novels themselves. We opt for one model of desire based solely on domination and aggression; as Irigaray argues in *To Speak is Never Neutral*, in terms of science and philosophy, subject is “one,” a finished “machine with no being” and hence, “No more creation of
life. Everything realised in sterile duplications" (1)—a state that Irigaray reacts to with anger and laughter. Obviously stories predicated upon, or interpreted with, relational narrative desire require a different plot than the one currently, and it seems, ultimately, favoured by dominator culture. As Irigaray argues, other languages, or other speech, must intervene, "putting neither the one or the other, the work of difference, back into play, through articulation of that mother tongue with another, with its other, both same and different" (author’s italics, To Speak 139). This desire must override patriarchy’s self-other dichotomy, but as we seen in Young’s Project Mimesis, despite computer games’ almost unlimited capacity to include difference and to be different, they still continue to construct a mimesis of real worlds, past and present. Their potential to envision, and simulate, synthetic liquid, virtual worlds that could remap the way(s) that subjects locates themselves in those worlds remains untapped.

In this context, relational narrative desire and narrative inter/transsubjectivity form a viable alternative to restructuring narrative and interpreting story in a mode suitable for an increasingly technological world. By accommodating and requiring disembodiment—a detachment of identity and voice from subjectivity—the relational narrative desire model ensures the possibility for unity in partialness. Furthermore, communication styles associated with academic research, business, and computer science increasingly seek the capacity for containing multiple, incongruent levels of interdependent exchanges. Inter-relational technology requires a certain state of detachment, disembodiment, and even impersonality to “free” subjectivity from singularised modes of expression. Therefore, an increased sensitivity to Otherness and specific modes of difference helps anchor the relational self, who coheres by recognising
and integrating differences in its signifying spaces, psychic foundations, and value systems.

Such socially sensitive communication may place the subject's identity at risk. It creates indeterminate realms, designations, and identifications. As relational selves, for instance, we may not even know where to go, or what to do. At every turn, we may encounter traumatic identifications that we cannot control or "un-will." Our identities may be tested, and even shattered, by metamorphosis if we relate to otherness by trying to make differences "the same," into SELF-reflections. Obviously, relational identity opposes the dominator positions that embody social power and sovereignty; but equally, the relational subject is not subjugated by such structures. Instead, it defines itself in partial negations and breakdowns in its response to Otherness in a mimesis of life's journey's choices—life's "plasticity." In this way, relational identity continually rebirths SELF, rather than mirroring actions which prove one's "autonomy."

The necessary recognition of a relational self as partially rooted in Otherness makes relational narrative desire provisional and interdependent—a vastly different motivation when compared to Brooks's narrative desire for mastery and completion. Patriarchy's fear of difference prevents its social constructs, including its forms of entertainment, from manifesting themselves as compassionate collectivities sensitive to difference. Advertently or inadvertently, such fears compromise voice's potential freedoms by authorising specific containments of difference. Thus, relational desire supports the necessity for positing and recognising multiple subjectivities, all which, ideally, receive equal conditions for communicating their own differences. Narratologically, relational desire signifies multiple possibilities for self-construction which can neither be fixed nor essentialised. The fluidity, and beauty, of conceiving subjectivity as an open possibility—a mobile, transitory, drifting, but differentiated
subjectivity—is motivated by a narrative desire for recognition and inclusion, a desire
vibrating in the voice-experiments of H.D. and Virginia Woolf's novels.
NOTES

Epigraphs

1 Palimpsest (53).

2 Cited in Miller, Virginia Woolf (29).

3 “Ethics and Self-knowing” (105).

4 “A Desire of One’s Own” (92)

Preface

1 For the purpose of this work, I adopt Mieke Bal’s narratological definition of “subjectivity” as both a source of signification and effect in language during the communication process (see “Narrative Subjectivity” 157). The subject is a medium of semiotic action: “which combines, produces, transmits, and retains—and represses—certain meanings, in accordance with the rules of the [language] systems in which it functions” (Ibid.).

2 In Gerald Prince’s Dictionary of Narratology (1987), voice is narrowly defined as the set of signs characterizing the narrator, and more generally, the “narrating instance” (102-3). Similarly, in Stanzel’s Theory of Narrative (1984), the term is primarily used to represent the narrator’s psychology and involvement in the story—a technique only analyzable in the context of the narrative situation, which includes a consideration of person, perspective and mode (185). As we will see in our discussion of narrative voice’s antropomorphic qualities, this term can be broadened to include representations of characters’ voices, as well as those of narrators.

3 This concept is spread through a number of Habermas’s text, mostly translated in the 1980s.

4 Tomm’s philosophies echo those found in Carol Gilligan’s In A Different Voice (1982), and Lisa Walsh’s examination of Lévinas in “Between Maternity and Paternity” (2001).

Introduction

1 Diaries III 160.

2 Seymour Chatman’s essay in the same collection focuses entirely on voice-overs in film, disregarding any application of his terminological distinctions for literary theory (“New Directions” 1999). Marie-Laure Ryan’s “morphing” metaphor in “Cyberage Technology” addresses narrative voice modulation, but in a descriptive mode, limited mostly to the third-person narrator and free indirect discourse (Narratologies 134-136).

3 See Manfred Jahn’s “Commentary: The Cognitive Status of Textual Voice”: “We should not toss out the voice-metaphor since it is one we live by just for some ill-conceived notion of theoretical purity” (New Literary History 695); Richard Aczel’s “Commentary: Throwing Voices” (New Literary History 703-705), Olsson, “The Greatest Story” 85), and Andrew Gibson’s “Commentary: Silence of the Voice” wherein narratology’s illogical conception of voice: “continually seeks to restore the sense of a human presence whose loss or distance is in fact its own founding condition” (New Literary History 711).

4 Franz Stanzel points out that the writer’s choice of voice has structural as well as stylistic implications for representing narratorial subjectivity (A Theory of Narrative, 1984; 83). His support for this point is backed by examples from the notebooks of Henry James and diaries of Virginia Woolf.
In Aristotle’s Poetics, plot is defined as the imitation of the action, the “mimesis of men in action” (420, 424). In terms of tragedy, Aristotle states that: “The plot, then is the first principle, and as it were the soul of a tragedy: character holds the second place” (425). Plot, an imitation of a complete action, contains a beginning, middle, and end. Thus, plot must conform to certain structural principles which provide a hierarchical singular, controlling action to produce unity and relief through aesthetic closure. Note that although Aristotle’s principles apply predominantly to Greek drama in verse form, they have been liberally applied to novel analysis despite its episodic form—the “worse way,” Aristotle believes to maintain unity. Episodic plots are employed only by “bad poets” to “please players” by showing off how plot can be stretched beyond its capacity in order to break the “natural continuity” (428).

In this view, the subject is analysed in the act of creating its own actantial matrix, or its own structuring devices by which it orders, unorders, and disorders its world. Fludernik’s expansion of the definition of plot along the lines of psychic subject formation is supported by the number of experimental modern texts by women that eulogize the state of being alone, as well as those signifying relational identity. These include: Stella Benson’s I Pose, Kate Chopin’s The Awakening, Anna Kavan’s Let Me Alone, and Christina Stead’s For Love Alone, to list a few. These novels detail the vulnerability of female subjectivity in relatively isolated states. Sequences detailing such psychic states are difficult to categorize as either improvement or deterioration, since the more the female protagonist asserts her subjectivity, the further she is socially devalued.

Note that intersubjectivity is conceived as a “shared” state of consciousness; technically, however, it is a sharing of subject position—an experiential understanding of Other/ness by “fusing” with an imagined (or virtualised) version of the Other’s subject position. This integrative sharing is signalled by active questions which “check out” Otherness, rather than an authoritative mode which assumes that understanding has already occurred. In relation to this strategy, remember that the Other and its subject position may be portrayed in pluralised forms—a technique favoured by H.D.

“The brain, inflamed and excited by this interchange of ideas, takes on its character of over-mind, becomes (as I have visualized in my own case) a jelly-fish, placed over and about the brain... The love-brain and over-brain are both capable of thought. This thought is vision... the love-mind and the over-mind are two lenses. When these lenses are properly adjusted, focused, they bring the world of vision into consciousness. The two work separately, perceive separately, yet make one picture” (Notes on Thought and Vision 22-3).

Chapter I

1 Between the Acts, 1978: 69. All references to this work will be taken from this text. Susan Dick and Mary Miller’s (2002) edition of Between the Acts will be used for its introduction and allusions to the novel.

2 We still lack a well-established feminist poetics of narrative that studies the nature, function, and form of modern women’s narratives; see Brewer (1984), Carruthers (1979), Cornis-Pope (1992), Lanser (1992), Winnett (1990), Porter (1991), Kemp (1990), Hite (1989), and Jacobus (1979). Narratology has produced a critical discourse which perpetuates andocentric privileging and historical indifference to texts by women (see Fludernik, “Beyond Structuralism” 83-84 and Gibson, Towards 25 on this point).

3 This term has been used by a number of feminist literary critics, for example by Nancy Miller (1988), Marianne Hirsch (1989) and Susan Stanford Friedman (1989).

4 The following, however, are valiant attempts in the 1980s to do such analysis: Elizabeth Abel and Marianne Hirsch’s The Voyage in: Fictions of Female Development (1983); Marianne DeKoven’s A Different Language: Gertrude Stein’s Experimental Writing (1983); Rachel Blau DuPlessis’s Writing


7 Elizabeth Wright (1984) defines three means of identification helpful here to describe inter/transsubjectivity: (1) a lack of awareness concerning separation or difference; (2) a result of perceived similarities; and (3) an introjection or internalisation of the other within the ego as a reaction to loss. For a comprehensive classification of the kinds of identifications that readers make, see Hans Robert Jauss (1982; 152-83).

8 Marie-Laure Ryan’s (1991) adaptation of Searle’s diagram of a speech act in a (fictive) possible world (“Voices and Worlds” 66), shows that the virtual subject corresponds to the “slot” of the substitute speaker. The implied reader corresponds to the “implied hearer” in Ryan’s theory of actual worlds and actual possible worlds (Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence 71-73). The implied hearer figures an individual who uses contextual information in order to decode irony and figural expression. This persona is the one who “gets it,” but who uncritically accepts the propositions expressed either directly or after the ironic/figural transformation.

9 In addition to Ryan’s (1991, 2001) conception of narrative virtuality, as Wilson (1981) notes the term virtual (potential) reader has been used by structuralists, including Genette, to stress the latency of the position before its actualisation (857). The term virtual reader has also denoted the ideal reader which, as Wallace Martin (1986) indicates, has received a number of incarnations: Eco’s “model reader,” Rabinowitz’s “narrative audience,” Lanser’s “public audience,” and Ong’s “quasi-fictional role” of the reader (cited in Martin 154). My use of the term stresses the interpretive freedom arising from narrative stylisations of pluralised subjectivity in experimental modern novels.

10 See Ryan’s (2001) Figure 1, Narrative as Virtual Reality (102). As Ryan (2001) explains phenomenologically, the split-subject reader can contemplate the textual world “from the inside in” and “from the outside in” (105). See Eco (1989), Pavel (1986) and Doležel (1998) for variations of possible-worlds narrative theory.

11 Note that I use the terms “partial identity” and “relational identity” synonymously, since the partialness of identity defines us in relational terms.

12 The “implied reader” is also known as the inscribed reader, the encoded reader, the mock reader, the implicit reader, the intended reader, the superreader, and model reader (see Heller, 4, 8; Pier, 11; Wilson, 849; Kalaga, 118; Prince, Dictionary 43). For a thorough discussion of the anthropomorphism of reception theory in Roman Ingarden, Wolfgang Iser, Hans Robert Jauss and Ross Chambers, see Andrew Gibson’s Towards (244-273).

13 Iser bases his understanding of textual indeterminacies on Roman Ingarden’s, The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art (1973). The implied reader assumes an “answering”/responding function with which the reader may identify. This definition has been criticised by Gibson for its anthropomorphic assumptions. Gibson points out that Ingarden and Iser argue that their indeterminacies, although blank and vacant, are structurally present in the text, and thus, “The text is not purely and simply open to construction, but itself constructs the terms in which it is thus open” (author’s italics, Towards 250; see also
Thus, relying on the prospective reader to provide the text’s aesthetic coherence and homogeneous patterning, their theories end up being tied to the representation of human consciousness.

As Kalaga (1990) points out, the implication of pleasure is based on the predominant Western concept of Self, saturated in autonomy and egoism, the subject emerging from the text is often equated with the subject approaching the text (124). Furthermore, in “Discourse Ethics,” Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action (1990), Habermas also notes that this web of moral feelings gives the moral structure of a society its ineluctability (47).

For instance, although Iser argues that we may accept a role without necessarily “liking” the implied reader or narratee (as in the case of Nabakov’s Lolita), he fails to emphasize the fact that this identification is ideologically constructed so that pleasure usually results from same-sex identification.

Of course readerly freedom is compromised by the reader’s own ideological constitution and principles; thus, such freedom is, as Ommundsen (1990) notes, carefully “stage-managed” by the text itself. As York (1987) points out, Iser overlooks the fact that such freedom of choice is a form of rhetorical manipulation: “The reader’s absolute freedom is never a demonstrable, concrete reality in a work; even John Fowles, who offers his readers multiple endings in The French Lieutenant’s Woman, must admit that constraints such as the ‘tyranny of the last chapter’ cannot be bypassed, that, in the final analysis, possibility is not permissibility” (169).

Note that Iser’s model is also challenged when accommodating narrative voice anomalies, like irony. The reader engaged in multiple levels of irony used by modernist writers can still feel sympathy for the targets of irony. As both Banfield (1982) and Fludernik (1995) observe, since irony never assumes a linguistic form, it always involves a choice of reading the text’s intentionality (see Unspeakable 221-2); therefore, the reader, and not the text, is the one making the choice of how to interpret the text. As we will see in some voice stylisations of H.D. and Woolf, irony does not always impose a hierarchy of tone that leads to satire or objectification. It can also destabilize identifications inscribed in dominator-plot models to function non-ironically, that is, as an equalising force. Thus, irony in some stylisations of H.D. and Woolf can dramatise both inclusion and exclusion of patriarchal ideology in the protagonists’ lifeworlds.

The popularity of applied narratology does not extend to what Monika Fludernik (2000) calls “pure narratology” (“Beyond Structuralism in Narratology”). Fludernik interprets recent interdisciplinary developments in applied narratology as a series of determined, but fatalistic, efforts to resist the moratorium on pure narratology, due to its formalist origin (“Beyond Structuralism” 83-84). According to Fludernik, postclassical narratology is an academic narratology, an “erosion” of Gerald Prince’s scientific tenets (“Beyond Structuralism” 83, 90).

José Landa and Susana Onega’s Narratology: An Introduction (1996) and Claes Wahlin’s Perspectives on Narratology (1996), a collection of papers from the Stockholm Symposium on narratology, primarily reproduce essays of classical narratology; Andrew Gibson’s Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative (1996) points to new directions for such studies, while David’s Narratologies (1999a) has a limited section on voice in Ryan’s “Cyberage Narratology” (1999).

The only article attempting to theorize narrative desire outside of Brooks’ model and outside of a treatment of individual authors in the last ten years has been Suzanne’s Juhasz’s 1998 “Lesbian Romance Fiction and the Plotting of Desire: Narrative Theory, Lesbian Identity and Reading Practice.”

Many modernist novels, with their explicit anti-quest structures, including Stella Benson’s This is the End (1925) and Tobit Transplanted (1930), Elizabeth Bowen’s The Death of the Heart (1938) and The Heat of the Day (1949), and Jane Bowles’ Two Serious Ladies (1943), to name a few, resist Brooks’s model of narrative desire, particularly in their representation of female pleasure and ambition.
23 In this respect, Brooks echoes Robert Scholes, “the archetype of all fiction is the sexual act” (cited in de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't* 108). See also Wenche Ommundsen: “The relation between author and reader, or between text and reader, is a textual intercourse” (178).

24 Brooks (1984, 1993) relies heavily on Freud's “Beyond the Pleasure Principle,” “Instincts and their Vicissitudes” and his concept of transference in framing the Freudian debate as to whether or not psychic memories can be interpreted as "fictions" or as representations of real events. Although rarely used in criticism of modernist texts, Leo Bersani's literary and aesthetic studies of desire and domination, *A Future for Astyanax* (1976), *The Forms of Violence* (1985), *The Freudian Body* (1986), as well as *The Culture of Redemption* (1990), form an interesting expansion of Brooks's Freudian theories by considering narrative desire's mobilizing strategies of identification.

25 In his early writings, Freud uses *eros* as a metaphor to personify the life force of sexual instincts. In later essays, he contrasted *eros* with *thanatos*, the Greek personification of the death instinct.

26 By equating the psychic desire to know with narrative desire, Brooks assumes a linear reading experience. He defines plot as a structuring operation elicited in the reader who makes sense of meanings that develop only through textual and temporal succession (*Reading* 37; my emphasis). Limiting his theory to temporal succession, Brooks's understanding of plot aligns with that of the high-structuralists, including Barthes (1975), Chatman (1999), and Propp (1968). Plot is a representation of story (not of expression), and the structural unit of a story is an event. In this view, event and story are seen as micro- and macro-forms of the same textual structure: a successive sequence of beginning, middle and end.

27 By equating the psychic desire to know with narrative desire, Brooks assumes a linear reading experience. He defines plot as a structuring operation elicited in the reader who makes sense of meanings that develop only through textual and temporal succession (*Reading* 37; my emphasis). Limiting his theory to temporal succession, Brooks's understanding of plot aligns with that of the high-structuralists, including Barthes (1975), Chatman (1999), and Propp (1968). Plot is a representation of story (not of expression), and the structural unit of a story is an event. In this view, event and story are seen as micro- and macro-forms of the same textual structure: a successive sequence of beginning, middle and end.

28 Structurally derived narratological grammars, including Dolozel's (1998, 1999) and Bremond's (1996) "possible worlds" and Propp's (1986) *Morphology*, which take action as paradigm, inevitably form a prescription for desire as lack. These theories do not consider narrative voice as a manifestation of alternate possibilities. Instead, they insist that an improvement sequence begins with lack / "disequilibrium" which finally establishes "equilibrium" (summarized by Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction* 27). In this case, causality and closure are obligatory, but arbitrary, criteria for defining events as events (17-18). For instance, as Rimmon-Kenan (1983) argues, causality and closure cannot be posited as obligatory criteria for events because any event can be broken into an infinite number of intermediary states, some "static" while others are "active" (*Narrative Fiction* 14). Thus, it can be concluded that in classical narratology, only certain forms of causality and closure have received critical attention and analysis.

29 Girard identifies rivalry, hatred, and appropriation as self-defense mechanisms driving narrative desire's mimeticism. In *Violent Origins* (1987), Girard argues that desire is learned by imitating the other; the subject acquires a desire not for the object, but to be *like* the object (9). But as Nancy Morrow (1988) points out, this desire becomes a "dreadful game" in that the rivalry between the subject and the imitated other often leads to irreconcilable conflict (11).

   Nonetheless, Girard’s tension between mimesis and difference constitutes a crude version of narrative inter/transsubjectivity discussed here. Ironically, Girard evokes the fusion capacity of intersubjectivity, while erasing the female right to subjectivity in asserting that “Triangular desire is one” (*Deceit* 48). This statement assumes the phallic-oneness that Irigaray consistently critiques through her works.

   A critique of Girard’s model can be found in D.S. Neff (1988), who offers one possible solution: “change the sex of the mediator in the triangle, to replace the Don Juan figure with a powerful woman” (388) in order to posit a distinct feminine desire in the prevailing social-sexual economy.

30 Since Juhasz (1998) calls this concept "laughable" (68), I find it odd that she herself contextualises her analysis of lesbian difference within plot organisations revolving around measurable outcomes / rewards (partners, jobs, motherlove), and not the psychic connections examined here.

31 Although these conquests have recognizable literary structures, largely because criticism and theory
have made them so, female "plots" appear amorphous and undifferentiated.

32 Balzac, Stendhal, Flaubert and Zola.

33 I evoke Kristeva's phrase "le sujet en procès," the "subject-in-process" to signify this decentering (cited in McAfee, 69). "Subject-in-process" refers to the exploratory nature and dynamics of subject construction, an identity's "rough draft," no recognizable "I." It assumes the subject's refusal, and inability, to fix meanings, its ability to oscillate relationally between different points of view in its sometimes painful "trial-and-error" approach to self-development.

34 I am grateful to Robin Cryderman for drawing this source to my attention. I expand Marion Lomax's gender distinction between styles by using Starhawk. As Lomax (1994) points out, feminist literary critics need to make the distinction between what has been called a "masculine style" of writing, as opposed to a "patriarchal style" when making comparisons to the "feminine" style described by Hélène Cixous ("Sorties" 2) and other French / French Canadian feminist critics in the 1980s, including Madeleine Gagnon and Annie LeClerc. According to Lomax, a "patriarchal style" exhibits characteristics associated with male supremacy and the denial of feminine expression; for this reason, a "masculine style" may, or may not, be patriarchal in intent and nature. "Feminine" or "female" modes of expression, in contrast, reflect the world in terms of ambiguities, pluralities, processes, continuities, and complex relationships (2).

35 Such individuals/groups are not theoretical constructs; they can be found in many grass-roots activist groups that work toward developing strategies of resistance to dominator, power-over models. See Starhawk (1988), as well as student-lead groups in the organisation From the Ground Up: Reclaiming Our World at the Grassroots website available at: <http://www.umich.edu/~aamgi/>.

36 With these questions, I reframe Genette's (1980) often quoted question: "Who speaks?" (186) to ask: "What subjectivity (or subjectivities) mediates the narrative, and how does it express itself stylistically?" These questions go beyond Gerard Genette's definition of narrative voice, which fails to account for the mimetic illusion of narrative voice. Genette contextualises "voice" within the narrating instance, thereby moving it to the realm of depersonalization, evident in his typography of "person" to represent the narrator's relationship to, and status in, the story (Narrative Discourse 186). He warns that, as a term, "voice" is "merely borrowed" and thus, no pretense of basing it "on rigorous homologies" is made (31-2).

37 Also cited in de Lauretis, Alice Doesn't (134).


39 For a discussion of this effect, see my essay "The Pain of Mirth: Sadomasochism as Narrative Strategy in Frances Burney's Evelina and Camilla" (1993).

40 In particular, see Hillis Miller's chapter "The Narrator as General Consciousness" (53-90).

41 This effect occurs in the novels of Woolf and H.D., as well as in those of other Victorian and modern women writers who undertook the reconstruction of female subjectivity for social and political liberation. These authors include: George Eliot (Marian Evans Cross), Dorothy Richardson, Kate Chopin, Ada Cambridge, Mona Caird, George Egerton (Mary Chavelita Dunne Bright), Isobel Violet Hunt, Margaret Oliphant, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, and George Paston (Emily Morse Symonds). For the specific works of some of these writers that exemplify this effect, see my Works Cited.

Premodern novels by male authors focussing on themes on women's liberation include George Gissing's The Odd Women (1893) and H. Rider Haggard's She (1887). Previous to these, major female novelists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including Frances Burney, Sara Fielding, Jane Collier, Emily Bronte and Jane Austen employed extensive stylistic experimentation with narrative voice, including epistolary and diary writing-voices which offered open-ended closures, widespread use of free indirect and reported speech, and allegorical scenic tableaus which would temporarily "freeze" the plot.
As Friedman and Fuchs argue, "This neglect of women innovators is partially a legacy of modernism as interpreted through male critics" ("Contexts and Continuities" 5); additionally, as Lanser notes, "as long as female subjectivity remained marginal, so too could the writings that represented it" (105).

One example of this kind of devaluation is in Leon Edel's *The Psychological Novel, 1900-1950* (1955). Edel argues that in comparison to Joyce and Faulkner, Dorothy Richardson is the "least artist of the three" because of her representation of a "quieter, less dramatic" life—in other words, *the life of a woman*. Furthermore, gender differences play an important part in Edel's rejection of Miriam Henderson, as a valid character study: "Returning to Pointed Roofs after two decades, I found once more that my interest lagged. The author was involving me in a world of chirping females, and I had to force myself to absorb the contents of each page. The heroine struck me as immature and wholly without interest" (13, 67). Besides implying that the life of a man is more interesting than that of a woman, Edel resents having to read from a feminine perspective. This view is strongly critiqued by Lanser ("Contexts and Continuities" 105) who insists that male critics (like Edel) are gender-blind to the overt feminist aims in these novels.

The term that Mezei (1996a) uses to describe the reader's interpretation of textual ambiguity.

My use of the term characterises the female subject as a *subject-in-process*—implications which Fludernik glosses over (see *Towards* 360-366). Bouson's 1989 cognitive definition of compassion evokes a number of literary aspects that I wish to emphasize here in terms of narrative inter/transsubjectivity as represented by H.D. and Woolf. Primarily, Bouson identifies the cognitive and communicative *listening* aspects of empathy, the sense of thinking oneself into the inner life of an other through a transient identification and feeling of oneness. This union, followed by a sense of separation, results in an appreciation of the other, and for the experience of fusion (22-3). Bouson points out that as well as an emotion, empathy is also a *position from which the subject makes identifications*. In psychoanalysis, for instance, the analyst must choose "which imagos, or transference object, to stand behind and empathize with" (23). Empathy mirrors the nature of partiality that I locate in my definition of narrative inter/transsubjectivity.

To a certain extent, Fludernik herself touches on this effect in her recent analysis of George Garrett's free indirect discourse, wherein the character reflects or embodies the narrator's function and discourse—a function that although focalised and expressed through the character, must have its knowledge-source elsewhere ("New Wine in Old Bottles").

"Understanding as Overhearing" 605; "Commentary: Silence of the Voice" 712, respectively.

Stein derived this notion of time from the theories of William James and Henri Bergson (DeKoven *A Different Language* 27).

David Hayman describes Stein's literary cubism as one that presents simultaneously, if schematically, all sides of a given object, and the tendency to break the object (in this case, *lives*) into components that cannot be conjoined smoothly by the reading eye, *nor* considered as separate entities. Thus, *Three Lives* creates a tension between structural *gmentation* and undeniable subjective coherence that I wish to emphasize here ("Paratactics" 151).

In *What Are Masterpieces*, Stein calls this effect an "evenness" which creates the sense that each sequence and each passage has the same value. This effect counters hierarchy and telos by freeing words of their associations (cited in Friedman and Fuchs in "Contexts and Continuities" 16).

As my analyses of H.D. and Woolf show, Fludernik's understanding of naturalization goes *beyond* the questions narrowly associated with reader-reception. As an interaction between text and reader which defies or resists anthropomorphization, modernist experiments with voice-centered narratives call for an
introduction of Gibson’s conception of voice as disembodiment, figured as its “haunting” or “spectrality” (“Commentary: Silence of the Voice” 712). The opposing view of communication models of narrative texts suggests that every narrative word or statement must be attributable to a human source (see Fludernik “New Wine” 622).

53 “It is Percival,” said Louis, “sitting silent as he sat among the tickling grasses when the breeze parted the clouds and they formed again, who makes us aware that these attempts to say “I am this, I am that,” which we make, coming together, like separated parts of one body and soul, are false...” “Such is the incomprehensible combination,” said Bernard, “...My son is born; Percival is dead...This then is the world that Percival sees no longer” (The Waves 92, 103).

54 In Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology (1996c), Fludernik does much to expand and revise Banfield’s concepts regarding diegetically empty-centre sentences, which, as she argues, can induce identification because they include features of a subjective nature moreso than Banfield allows. Fludernik distinguishes the term “figuralisation” (197) from reflectorisation. “Figuralisation” does not entail a specific focaliser (such as a character- or narrator-persona), nor does it require the ironic echoing of discourse associated with reflectorisation, as Stein’s use of free indirect speech and thought implies. Without a dissenting authorial position, figuralisation evokes irony of “an empathetic mold” (203, 215), apparent in Stein’s sympathetic portrayal of three distinct women, who despite their individual flaws, may, as a collective symbol for the condition of modern women, be pitted. This distinction is useful when looking at non-ironic uses of free indirect discourse and other intermediary forms in modernist fiction which simulate an empathetic, inter/transsubjective connection.

But in Gibson’s view, Fludernik resorts to empirical methods as a “disguised hermeneutic manoeuvre” which, in turn, sends us back to Banfield’s theoretical position, but without the empirical security “that even she herself wants” (149-51). In response, Gibson attempts to flog Bakhtin’s concept of the “dialogic polyphone” and diverse feminist narratological approaches to evoke the plurality, “fluidity” and “division” that he wants to present in a more psychologically-sensitive conception of voice. However, Gibson still bypasses the entire question of how subjectivity is technically and audibly constructed in a text. For all of its pluralising effects, Bakhtinian dialogics, for instance, still works within distinct boundaries (levels) that can, presumably, be verbally and grammatically drawn. Thus, while supporting feminist narratology’s return to the “more classical” conception of voice, Gibson advocates further deconstruction of narrative voice because self-presence is not guaranteed. Voice, in his mind, may be reduced to a “spectral form stripped of identity” (Towards 167-76) evidenced in his works on Joyce and Derrida.

55 Fludernik uses the phrase “the fictions of language” to refer to the illusive effects of mimetic representation that language evokes by means of rhetorical strategy, including the intonation of narrative thought and speech that has escaped technical analysis in classical narrative theories (Towards 201).

56 See Teuna A. van Dijk’s article “Philosophy of Action and Theory of Narrative” (1976) an alternative to Bremond’s and Ryan’s “possible / alternate worlds” theories. Van Dijk presents the relative worlds of the narrative universe, including hypothetical worlds, intention worlds, wish worlds, moral worlds, obligation worlds and alternate universes (838-39). Due to the emphasis on different facets of the psyche, this theory fares better in this analysis than does Bremond’s (1996), which still imposes a hierarchical ordering on “possible worlds.”

57 Fludernik shows that Garrett (like Woolf) offers no recourse to single explanation of authoritative teller or viewer. Rather he employs a “superior historian” who has a “godlike” access to his characters, consistent with the 1960’s interest in secularising religious categories. However, in this external presentation of characters’ minds, the reader interprets certain narratorial passages “as if the character had become the narrator” (“New Wine”629).

58 Woolf, Moments of Being (1976).

Chapter II
The only considerations of H.D.’s intersubjectivity use the Freudian model of love/desire which I depart from here. These include Kerns’s “War and the Politics of the Pre-Oedipal” 1999, Friedman’s “Return of the Repressed” 1990c, and Holland’s “Tribute to Freud” 1989. Expect for a brief mention by Kerns, none of these works focus on Benjamin’s theories.

Materialist applications of Benjamin’s theories have been made to the works of Mexican American chicana feminist lesbian writers Cherrie Moraga (1952) and Gloria Anzaldua (1942). See Fowlkes (1997).

Another example of imprecise terminology can be found in Joan Douglas Peters’s (2002) analysis of Mrs. Dalloway. Peters attributes Woolf’s style of textual unity wholesale to the general posture and authority of omniscient narration (137) that represents a character’s “larger metaphysical identity” (154), thus glossing over Woolf’s careful crafting of markers of selective individuality within collectivity, which I stress in my definition of narrative transsubjectivity.

Object-relations theory moves away from the essential views of the Neo-Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic approaches. The Neo-Freudian approach (N. Miller 1988, Gilligan 1982, 1998) relies more on cultural and personal evaluations, rather than unconscious internalisations and psychological qualities. This approach operates in an empirical psychology of sex differences, arguing that women are repositories of affiliativeness, relatedness, empathy, and nurturance. The Lacanian approach—most at odds with the object-relations theory—shows how [Freudian] sexualisation is asymmetrical and unequal, arguing for an anti-humanistic account of the fragmented, alienated, subject. See Chodorow’s (1989) “Psychoanalytic Feminism” in Feminism (184-98) for a detailed discussion of each approach. Some previous literary examples of this approach include: Abel (1982), Abel & Hirsch (1983), and Kuhn (1985).

See Christopher Blazina’s “Part objects, infantile fantasies” (2001) for a full list of the works supporting this idea.

Note that the term “parent” or even “primary caregiver” may be substituted for “mother” in the various theoretical arguments that follow. I retain the use of Benjamin’s term, mother, to evoke the “maternal” connotations in her feminist revisions of Freud and Lacan.

First presented in his 1936 essay and lecture “The Looking-Glass Phase,” and then developed in “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience” (1949).

In Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis (1978).

I believe that we would have to conclude, somewhat ironically, that Benjamin’s model is less illusory, at least in terms of this analogy. For instance, by placing a finger or object (or infant) between the two mirrors, Lacan is right: the mirror reflection is an illusion. But depriving the mirrors of an object placed between their reflecting surfaces, we can say that they reflect back what is present—each other’s reflecting surface, and nothing else.

Benjamin (1988) attests that the destruction of maternal values in present postmodern culture is not the result of women’s liberation; rather, it is “the consequence of the ascendance of male rationality” (Bonds 185).

This observation is supported in Sandra Harding’s article “Is Gender a Variable in Conceptions of Rationality?” (cited in Lorraine, 1990). Harding argues for a gendered connection between socially constructed desires and the distinctive definitions of rationality held by men and women. As a “rational” person, a woman values her abilities to empathize and connect with others in order to “learn more complex and satisfying ways to take on the other of the particular other in relationships,” while a “rational” man highly values his ability to separate himself from other and to “make decisions independent of what others
think—to develop ‘autonomy’” (Lorraine 53-54), so that he learns more complex and satisfying ways to take the role of the generalised Other.

Daughters receive different valuations of the literal and figurative in the Symbolic Order. In *Bearing the Word* (1986), Homans argues that daughters, as partial entrants in the Symbolic Order who never need a phallus, value figurative substitutions as a language of presence or bodily connection, rather than reminders of loss. In her view, women’s language is more intersubjective than men’s language, but unfortunately, in its primary identification, it accommodates Western culture’s privileging of the phallus, and women’s obligation to accommodate that privilege (see 11-13, 24). Tasmin Lorraine (1990) also focuses on the daughter’s special status in the Symbolic Order, arguing that women’s receptivity gives their daughters “nothing.”

Found most explicitly in *A Room of One’s Own* (1929), *Orlando* (1928) and *Three Guineas* (1938). Woolf makes this point in “Professions for Women,” where she argues that women must try all kinds of occupations and experiences before one can understand what a “woman is and what she is capable of.” The same holds true for male subjects of patriarchy, who may have denied many modes of experience associated with the self-development of women, such as emotional expression, friendship bonding, and parenting, all outside the “bread-winning” drive.

Benjamin visualises “inner desire” as inner space, a continuum that “includes the space between the I and the you, as well as the space within me; and, further, the space within should be understood as a receptacle only insofar as it refers to the receptivity of the subject” (“A Desire” 95).

Naturally, patriarchy, in this restructuring, would, of course, cease to be patriarchy in its current manifestations—a point often glossed over in Benjamin’s and Irigaray’s argument.

Although Benjamin extends this thesis to the *Story of O* (Bonds 55-6), I disagree that such violations necessarily entail a submission on the part of the victim. Western violence, and in particular, violent crimes, completely bypass the recognition of the Other; the perpetrator acts autonomously. Nonetheless, Benjamin is right to suggest that people “really do” consent to relationships of domination, and that “fantasies of domination play a vigorous part in the mental lives of many who do not actually do so” (55). In this view, paradoxical benefit of domination for the victim lies in the protective capacity which is built into the authority of violence—but I insist that desire for protection, however, cannot be mistaken for a desire for pleasure. See Christine William’s article “Sadomasochism nurtured by bureaucratic structures” (2002) for a similar argument.

The paradoxical fear of freedom is borne out in a number of disturbing modernist scenes which depict masculine brutality in novels written or published between the two world wars. One example is in Anna Kavan’s novella *A Scarcity of Love*, in which a daughter, deprived of a loving mother, willingly lets her father outline the shape of her body by firing bullets into a wooden wall behind her. This complicity recurs in Kavan’s novel *Let Me Alone* (1930). Here, a wife is figured as prey hunted by her surrealistic mouse-husband. At the scene’s end, anti-closure restarts this terrifying hunt by reproducing the exact same scene. This effect suggests that the mere thought of escape is futile for the protagonist. Kavan’s representation of violence reveals the folly of female complicity.

Note that Lacan conceives of recognition simultaneously as a state of recognition and loss. The subject recognizes itself at the same moment and to the same extent that it loses itself in and as the Other. For Lacan, true intersubjective connection between two subjectivities cannot occur, in this case, since the other “is the foundation and support of [the subject’s] identity, as well as what destabilises or annihilates it” (Grosz *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction* 41). Thus, Lacan’s conception of intersubjectivity supports phallocentrism; identity is a “(false) recognition of an other as the same” (my italics, Ibid.).

Obviously, on this point, Benjamin’s model of relational desire rejects Freud’s claim that what a woman lacks is a desire of her own (“A Desire” 84). Instead, she argues that the satisfaction found in ideal romantic love and maternal identification symbolises women’s acts to “seek their desire in another, hope to
have it recognized and recognizable through the subjectivity of an other” (85). In this view, dependency, passivity, and even masochism, represent different forms of love, couched in desperation for female recognition. In contrast, the love-bond of intersubjectivity assumes the possibility of interacting with others in a context where desire is constituted for the self.

21 William Desmond’s 1987 categorization of identification fusion styles sketches the psychic dynamics of inter/transsubjectivity. Based on modes that differentiate between source and direction of mediation, Desmond identifies one style as metaxological (“middle”). Here, external difference is mediated from both sides—that is, from the side of the Other, as well as from the self (Desire, Dialectic 6). This relation most clearly describes the inter/transsubjective dynamic. The metaxological relation, the middle space between the subject and other, is intermediated from both directions, thus resulting in subjective plurality. The metaxological relation is the one valued in community in that it identifies and respects the complexities in assuming the position of the Other while maintaining an inner sense of selfhood, situated in a logos of between which Desmond calls “centrifugal” self-articulation (51).

22 Silverman’s description of this process as a mode of “leaping” in her analysis of Eisenstein’s theory of cinematic identification (Threshold 91).

23 “Fading,” George Herbert Mead’s term, distinguishes two different socialisation modes of subjectivity (the I and the me). Through fading, the “I,” becoming “me,” becomes a subject: “it is only through the constant process of “fading” that the subject comes to be” (cited in Dews “Paradigm Shift” 507). The I is the creative agent in a temporary state of disintegration and flux caused by the breakdown of habitual, social expectations of others, while me, the “generalised Other,” signifies the socially constructed self, established through the reactions of and identifications with others (590). Habermas uses Mead’s me to include all the normative expectations that others have; the projection of expectations “beam out from society onto me ... how I should be, seen from the standpoint of society” (508). In feminist application, then, Habermas’s me signifies patriarchy’s inscription of inauthenticity and repression upon female subjects, as analysed in the next two chapters.

24 See Silverman’s arguments for a cultural identity (1988) parallel Irigaray’s civil identity. What is needed, according to Silverman, is not so much the “masculinization of the female subject, as a ‘feminization’ of the male subject” (see Acoustic Mirror 149).

25 This right is addressed in Elisabeth Porter’s Women and Moral Identity (1991). She argues that when women concentrate on moral responsibility and relations, at the expense of their own individual rights, not only do they “lose” by not claiming their legitimate place in the moral world, but they render the “morality” of their actions as questionable (xvi). Since philosophy evaluates dualistic principles hierarchically, phallogocentric evaluation has provided justification for women’s inferiority, denying women their full moral identities (Porter 25).

26 As Irigaray points out, subjectivity cannot be reduced to saying I. The female subject who says I without she, “remains in a subjectivism without a subjectivity-objectivity dialectic” (I Love 65-7). She is not recognised because she is not heard, as illustrated in Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s short story The Yellow Wallpaper.

27 Irigaray’s recent research on women’s syntax shows the following general principles: 1) men take up a subject position in language, while women efface themselves; 2) women’s use of the first-person pronoun “I” does not necessarily indicate a feminine identity; 3) women’s own self-representation is absent from language; 4) women are more likely to engage in dialogue and interpersonal relations, while men privilege the relation with the world and the object; 5) women are not more emotional or subjective than men when they speak; and 6) surprisingly, women are less abstract than men and take into account context (summarized by Whitford in her introduction to The Irigaray Reader).

From these characteristics, Irigaray concludes that since women do not assume the “I” in discourse, “their messages are addressed for validation to the ‘you’” (Whitford 78). In contrast, the messages of men
who live within the "closed universe" of the first-person pronoun, "are often self-affirmations which leave little place for co-creation with an other sex" (Ibid.).

28 In terms of the social viability of civil identity, Morwenna Griffiths (1996) and Allison Weir (1996) analyse female identity as a mode of individuality and collectivity. Although both argue for female agency in patriarchy as a lack of recognition, they offer different explanations as to how the enmeshed self maintains its own aspect of heterogeneity. Griffiths depicts identity as a web or patchwork-self and redefines autonomy as the subject's self-creation, emphasising the importance of self-determination while acknowledging the significance of relationships for experiencing a meaningful life. Weir also attempts to balance the negative sacrificial logic of identity that insists on lack, exclusion, repression and domination with a model of identity including heterogeneity and connection. But she critiques the psychoanalytic object-relations approach (including Benjamin's) for its conflation of separation / autonomy with domination, and the post-structuralist approach with its emphasis on language (including Butler's) for rejecting identity altogether.

29 The fact that an economy is at work is an observation made by, but not often credited to, Freud in his 1920 essay "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (A General Selection 141).

30 This belief frequently emerges in modernist women's writing through the motif motherlove. Its controversial positionings frequently symbolise this paralytic state in modern feminist liberation. Motherlove refers to a mother's sadomasochistic desire for revenge on a social system that has denied her the right to subjecthood. "the woman who is a mother was subject as a daughter" (The Mother/Daughter Plot 170). Ironically, and tragically, the mother furthers the dehumanising and sinister work through her domination of her own daughter(s). See Eliot Bliss's portrayal of this style of mother-daughter relationship in her 1934 novel Luminous Isle.

31 See an application of this concept in my essay "‘Put her back in the valise’: Jacque Derrida’s “Les evois” in Le carte postale" (1993).

32 Luce Lemoine-Luccioni’s acceptance of this "background of oneness" is criticized by Irigaray in “The Poverty of Psychoanalysis” (The Irigarary Reader 84-91). Irigarary interprets the neutrality of psychoanalytic discourse as a sign of its indifference to gender difference. In this light, she perceives Lemoine-Luccioni’s masculinisation of feminine difference "lends" women the benefit of slavery that men enjoy in relation to mastery (91). In other words, Lemoine-Luccioni’s view implies her complicity with patriarchy, as long as women benefit from their slavery in tangible ways.

33 See the chapter "Two of Us, Outside, Tomorrow" in I Love.

34 The possibility that genetics plays a part in this conditioning has not yet been ruled out. Cultural conditioning could also contribute to any genetic structures or functions responsible for diminishing the emotional capacity of men. One personal example of this cultural conditioning comes to mind. After rescuing a four-year old boy from a pond, I dispassionately marched him home and cleaned him up. I took charge of the external aspects of the situation, not once stopping to inquire how he felt, despite the fact that he was clearly frightened. On the other hand, had this situation occurred to one of my own daughters, I would have conversed with her at length about the emotions involved—hers and mine. The cultural implications of withholding my recognition of this boy's emotional reality did not even cross my mind until I revised this chapter.


36 See Dews “Paradigm” where he argues that Habermas poses "a different conception of what might be termed ‘reason as and in the other,’ a reconciling power which nevertheless transcends the conceptual grasp of finite human subjects" (490).
Relational Narrative Desire

37 See also Moral Consciousness 133-5.

38 See Communicative Action II (397).

39 Habermas, however, must be credited with his observations concerning the gendered inequalities of capitalism. He argues that an entirely different social system would emerge if the praxis of labour was shifted to that of communicative action ("An Alternative Way" 315-22). The most fully developed exposition on the connection between psychoanalysis and the practices of capitalism, specifically its figuration of desire as material deprivation, of course can be found in Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus. See also Kathryn Bond Stockton's God Between Their Lips (1994).

40 Albrecht Wellmer critiques Habermas's model as one governed largely by a "matter of judgment," which is heavily biased to favour masculinised powers and logics of rationality. According to Wellmer, rationality in Habermas's model is insensitive to "whole domains of experience and dimensions of validity, and thus is an incapacity to relate the various dimensions of experience and validity to each other in an appropriate way" (see Dews 497-8). In patriarchal culture, this insensitivity would obviously be directed toward its most powerless subjects: women. Therefore, Wellmer argues that more than one paradigm of intersubjectivity must exist, or that there must be "a variety of positions within such a paradigm" (cited in Dews 499).


42 Despite its obvious flaws, however, Habermas's theory of communicative action has been recently used (albeit cautiously) by a number of feminist philosophers, including Maeve Cooke (1999) and Noelle McAfee (2000), to advocate gender equality. Habermas's communicative action implies that a female subject, "as a separate subject who deserves a fair hearing" (Schlosberg 294), should be, and need be, guaranteed equal rights for articulation and reception for inter/transsubjective communication. Such a hearing is assumed in this model of relational narrative desire.


44 Butler's (1987) work is based on comparing Hegel's Phenomenology and Being to the works of Kojeve, Hyppolite, Sartre, Lacan, Deleuze and Foucault.

45 For a parallel concept, see Cooke 185.

46 See the essays of Cuddy-Keane, Delorey and Mezei in Ambiguous Discourse (1996a), edited by Kathy Mezei.

47 Note that a particular Habermasian conception of unity helps here. Communication is not a unity of "perfect parts," but rather "a unity of particulars always capable of being united, at times in harmony and other times in struggle" (Inghilleri 142), a kind intersubjectivity and commensurability.

48 See Lanser, Fictions 12.

49 See Marie-Laure Ryan's (1990) model of illocutionary boundaries for more on this stylisation.

50 See Diengott (527). Along these lines, the illusion of shared subjectivity is sometimes produced by the integration of "speech" into the listener's response—an effect that Watts likens to a "veritable conversational fugue in miniature" (45).

51 Note that Lacan's later writing on the relation between the subject and the Other depicts an intersubjectively shared system of meanings which is dialectical [circular] without being reciprocal, "since the Other always precedes the subject who must find him - or herself within it" (Dews "Alternative
Way” 514). In this way, Lacan takes into account the dissymmetry of intersubjectivity and specifically, its dialectical, non-reciprocality. This point is also supported by Talbot Taylor in his 1982 article “Communication and Literary Style.” Communication, he states, is possible without intersubjectivity (40). For this reason, intersubjective connection may more accurately be perceived as a certain effect arising from a specific form of communicative exchange, rather than something that can be structured into communication itself.

Butte compares the contrasting paradigms of intersubjectivity offered by Sartre and Merleau-Ponty in his article on Jane Austen’s Emma.

This dissolution may constitute, to a certain degree, “a world seen without a self,” but, as I argue, not without a subject (see Kemp 100 for her interesting analysis of selflessness).

In Lichtenberg’s view, the matrixial and castration complexes are different psychical dimensions, heterogeneous to one another, and so feminine difference does not stem from masculine difference (“Transgressing” 197).

Lichtenberg believes that the first glimpse of this matrixial borderline emerges in Lacan’s late teachings with his concept of sinthôme, relating the baby’s relation to the maternal body “as an interior-exterior envelope” to the possibility that there is more than one possible sexual reference for the two sexes(cited in “Metramorphic Borderlinks” 147-148). Note that Lichtenberg does not dispense of the Lacanian objet a. Like Lacan, she believes that it determines subjectivity, but that the objet a which “escapes the destiny of the real,” resists as “residual in metonymic forms” (like the oral, anal, gaze, kinaesthetic movement, voice, touch), taken together, a central zone in which “Law is prohibited” (“Metramorphic Borderlinks” 151).

Lichtenberg defines virtual subjectivity as the matrixial stratum of subjectivization, which reveals subjectivity to be an encounter of elements co-emerging through metramorphosis (“Metramorphic Borderlinks” 125).

In her analysis of Lacan’s discussion of Sophocles’ Tiresias, Lichtenberg argues that Tiersias is a transgressional, borderline figure. As a transgressional figure (matrixial I/) between man and woman, Tiersias (like Antigone) carries traces of the matrixial non-I, a cross-inscription, never fully cognised, but also never entirely separated, or in Lichtenberg’s terms, “cut away”: “co-emerging and co-fading I(s) and non-I(s) interlace their borderlinks in metramorphosis” (“Transgressing” 194). Furthermore, separation in the feminine can only be figured as separation-in-jointness, a co-poietic psychical borderspace shared with several others from the start (“Trangression” 192). Thus, the female body of Tiresias is the “passage of a matrixial other, and not the last barrier from the Other-beyond,” a belief that Woolf illustrates in the maternal figures of Isa and Lucy Swithin, and the feminisation of William Dodge, whose bodies instigate and “birth” intersubjective connection (Ibid.).

In her discussion of Lichtenberg Ettinger’s painting techniques, Christine Buci-Glucksmann offers this description: “Neither the painting nor the blurred photo can be fixed, positioned: it deterritorializes the gaze to such an extent that the image is but a displaying of affects” (authors italics; “Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger” 289).


Chapter III

1 Trilogy1973, 5-12.

2 This effect is found in Lichtenberg’s visual pictograms.
H.D.’s first experimentation with narrative voice as palimpsest can be found in her earliest surviving piece of prose, “Paint it Today.” Here, an anonymous “I” meditates young Midget’s narrative, an effect creating “a palimpsest that violates conventions of narration and temporality” (Friedman, “Paint It” 441). Because the narrative voice is unattributable, the reader cannot determine if it reflects Midget’s self-critical voice, or it is a voice external to her psychic realities. Either way, “Paint It Today” uses narrative voice as palimpsest.


Kloepfer interprets H.D.’s stylisation as a return to the bicameral mind. He takes this idea from Julian Jaynes, The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind.


This view has some merit. For instance, in Bid Me, Julia insists: “The story must write me, the story must create me;” and of this novel, H.D. admits, “I had to get the [time] period off my chest or, in some way, ‘perfect’ it, project it...” (Richard Aldington 187). See Friedman, Penelope’s Web 232-33.

Autobiographical associations can be made to her first fiancé, Erza Pound; her first female love, Frances Josepha Gregg; her first lesbian partner, Winifred Bryher; her husband, Richard Aldington and his first mistress Dorthea Yorke; her first mentor, D.H. Lawrence; and the father of her daughter, Cecil Gray. Janice Robinson notes that H.D. herself admitted that she attempted to draw a “composite figure of the men” in her life to achieve a kind of palimpsest. In “Hipparchia,” for instance, she tried to combine Lawrence and Cecil Gray into Verrus, and in “Secret Name,” the third section of Palimpsest, she tried to combine Lawrence and Aldington into the figure of the Captain (Robinson, H.D.: The Life and Work 358).

Swann (1962); Milica (1986); Zilboorg (1991); Sword (1995); Gregory (1997).


For instance, M. Miller (1997) analyses the three-way relationship between Mrs. Thorpe-Wharton, Helen, and Mary as a disrupting force to the subtle controlling force of Britain’s imperialist presence (78, 92).


The only work on H.D. that touches on Benjamin’s model of intersubjectivity is Maurine Perrin Kern’s 1999 dissertation, War and the Politics of the Pre-Oedipal: Love and Abjection in H.D. and Sylvia Plath, but once again, this work is based on a reading of Kristeva’s pre-Oedipal subjectivity and only one of H.D.’s novels (The Gift). Kern interprets the pre-Oedipal as a mode of shifting identifications with otherness that resists gender categories that, posited as a psychic victim/executioner dichotomy, leads to

16 See Chisholm’s analysis of H.D.’s women characters’ “symbolic deprivation” (88-89). For other examples, see analyses of H.D.’s abject *femme fatale* in Laity’s *H.D. and the Victoria Fin de Siècle* and Rado’s *The Modern Androgyne Imagination*.

17 Like Hipparchia, Hedyle’s status in the Roman court reflects a denial of subjecthood, evident in public knowledge of her position as a kept-woman:

She [Hedyle] had no authentic “position,” but there was nothing, no one, who held precedence over Hedyle. Some said she was an “indifferent prostitute,” some said a “queen in hiding,” some said a “goddess.” She held all of these attributes lightly, passed swiftly from one to another. Nothing held her. (*Hedylus* 28)

Secure in the illusion that she holds power over the co-creation aspects of her identity, like Hipparchia, Hedyle experiences SELF as a mirage, as a disembodied entity (*Hedylus* 140). Because this mirage is never challenged by the benevolent Douris, her son, or lover, Hedyle is trapped as a non-relational being, commodifying “love” as an emotion with transferable power, rather than as an interactive, mutual bond shared between two subjects. Thus, Hedyle, like Hipparchia, represents a parodic inversion of the connection that intersubjectivity offers. In terms of H.D.’s *oeuvre*, this replicated personality, recurring within the novels, structures a transsubjective connection between them. (Douris is presumably a fictional figure for both Richard Aldington and Cecil Gray, who provided H.D. with what Milicia calls a “sleepy sort of paternalism” see “H.D.’s ‘Athenians’” 586).

18 See *Watson, Paradox and Desire* 94.

19 According to Janice Robinson, H.D.’s imagination worked in these historical parallels: “An event that occurred in one time and place, one dimension, was often transposed to another time and place, another dimension” (*H.D.: Life and Work* 270). In “Notes on Recent Writing,” H.D. states: “I do not wish it to be thought that I am dealing with a vague, mystical commonplace when I speak of ‘re-incarnation.’ It is the sense of continuity that inspires me” (my emphasis; *H.D* 270). In relation to H.D.’s “Synthesis of a Dream” (1947), Richard Aldington called this particular technique H.D.’s “folded pleats of time,” thus stressing one of the difficulties of her non-represenational work. Along the same lines, Joseph Milicia describes H.D.’s literary treatment of history as a “movement as if backwards in time but forward into a mythic/psychic state” (“H.D.’s ‘Athenians’” 582).

This effect gives H.D. the effect of a mind that can recall “all of its previous stages and retain the same traits, thereby possessing mental continuity in the midst of physical discontinuity” (Margolin “Individuals in Narrative Worlds” 860). See also Matthew Kibble, “The Still-Born Generation” (543) and Janice Robinson, who calls H.D.’s use of historical allusions a “feminine” perspective on history, since events are interpreted in terms of the “timeless natural world rather than in terms of the historical process” (*H.D.: The Life and Work* 56). In my reading, however, this essentialist view is not supported by H.D.’s novels such as *Palimpsest*, which clearly historicize women’s liberation as a political movement through specific acts of social resistance—and not purely in aesthetic terms, as indicated by Robinson’s interpretive context of psychological realism.

20 See Kloepfer “Fishing the Murex Up” (185) and *The Unspeakable Mother* (96). See also Gilbert and Gubar (1979) who view “palimpsest” as a paleographic image in which a masculine text is founded with a feminine subtext in *The Madwoman in the Attic*, one of the first in-depth studies of women’s modernism. Margaret Higonnet develops this view by showing how an ironic, cross-written text is able to provoke different modes of feminist subversion (“Spatial Metaphors in Feminist Literary Theory” 501).

21 Friedman, “Dating H.D.’s Writing” (49). There is much controversy over the dating of this novel, as it was dropped and picked up many times. H.D. writes to Aldington on December 27, 1952: “Madrigal was literally on the job for 30 years. I added and subtraced and worked and destroyed till I got the ‘perfect
Relational Narrative Desire

formula” (Zilboorg, Richard Aldington & H.D. 193).

22 As in all of H.D. roman à clef novels, Bid Me depicts the dissolution of the marriage between herself and her husband Richard Aldington, sketched in several of her former prose pieces, including Palimpsest. H.D. cynically alludes to this dissolution by prefacing Bid Me with Robert Herrick’s poem “To Anthea”—one of Aldington’s nicknames for H.D. Ironically, the poem’s female antagonist is the one who “voices” the title of the novel, thereby recentering, from the start, the romance plot. As is apparent, even the address of this novel evokes a married “past self” that no longer exists. Even the self-sacrificing pose of Herrick’s persona (“[Thou] hast command of every part, / To live and die for thee”) is here figured as a self-serving coercion of feminine desire to fulfill the physical and egoistical needs of men. In Bid Me, H.D.’s I is inconceivable apart from a connection with the Other—a conception which narratively departs from classical Victorian authorial omniscient narration and its insistence on a heuristic conception of individualism.

23 Forword to “Paint it Today” 440. Janice Robinson points out in H.D.: The Life and Work (101), that in her poetry, H.D.’s recurring symbol for the state of marriage is the city of Troy, “a walled city, itself a labyrinth, that is always under attack by the lusty Greeks.”

24 Dr. Gordon Fulton notes that while the first “you” in this passage might be replaced with “one,” with little change of meaning, the second “you” cannot be, emphasizing the impression that Julia is taking up, or at least allowing, this negative judgment of her.

25 Transvocalisation may be defined as the manifestation of an “inaudible” or latent, submerged second voice coming through the psychic space of the subject. I believe that the virtual nature of transvocalised narrative voices, particularly in regard to their mobility and permeability, create an effect similar to that of Lubomir Dolezel’s 1980 “possible worlds.” Neither authentic nor non-authentic, they “create an indeterminate space between fictional existence and fictional non-existence” (Dolezel “Truth and Authenticity” 10, 23).

26 See Diengott, “Mimetic Language Game” 527.

27 Note that in many passages representing Julia’s inner reflections, H.D. may shift tense up to seven or more times in a single paragraph.

28 In Benjamin’s view, repression does not deny our desire, but forms it by becoming desire’s “willing retainer, its servant or representative.” Therefore, as Benjamin points out, repression of desire and by extension, obedience to patriarchal law, does not exorcise aggression: “it merely directs it against the self” (Bonds 4).

29 A fictional portrayal of 44 Mecklenburgh Square in Bloomsbury, where H.D. lived in 1917-1918 (Zilboorg, “The Centre” 30).

30 Madame Butterfly, originally a novella by John Luther Long (1861-1927), adapted to the stage by the American David Belasco (1900). Giuacomo Puccini rewrote this version as a tragic opera (1904) to recount the story of a fifteen-year old Geisha girl in Nagasaki who falls in love Captain Pinkerton, a U.S. naval officer. He is aware of her fragility, comparing her to a butterfly: “I must pursue her even though I damage her wings.”

31 As Weatherhead points out in this case, Julia notes that there is security, too, “even in the heart of a destructive situation” when one can view things “according to a geometrical situation” (“Style in H.D.’s Novels” 41).

32 As Friedman observes, Julia “suddenly realises her common bond with Bella as a woman caught in a patriarchal system of representation” (Penelope’s Web 147).
33 For this reason, the subtitle finally chosen for _Bid Me to Live_, “A Madrigal” may not be, as Friedman argues, only an ironic comment evoking a lyrical form in the midst of war. Here the “madrigal” may also evoke the love commonly associated with romantic love, in this case reflecting the compassion between Bella and Julia as they share their anguish.

From Lichtenberg’s “Metamorphic Borderlinks” (128).

35 The fact that Julia has been transformed is inherent in a later passage preceding one of Rafe’s visits which reinvokes the same figuration of the section under discussion: “Whatever he said would make no streak and spark, fireworks in this room. The fireworks had sizzled out, the show was over. The chemicals in the test-tube had done their job. They had projected her out, the same, different, the same, a little clearer, a little harder, a little (to quote Rico) more dangerously frozen. All that had been for this--that she herself should simply be where she had been in the beginning” (_Bid Me_ 128).

34 See A. Kingsley Weatherhead (“Style in H.D.’s Novels” 541), Margaret M. Dunn (“Altered Patterns” 55-56) and Deborah Kelly Kloepfer (“Fishing the Murex Up” 189-191) for an analysis of additional details and motifs that connect the stories by forming repetitious links between them. Some of these include each woman’s fascination for a particular jewel that connotes aspects of the “universalities of experience” (Dunn “Altered Patterns” 55), as well as the characterisation of each as a “spider self” who weaves memories. An important connection noted by Weatherhead is the fact that in each story, each protagonist comes in contact with a younger woman capable of alleviating stress (see “Style in H.D.’s Novels” 31). Laity emphasizes the “connective tissue” generated by recurring images of Egypt (“Fishing the Murex Up” 189). Nicoletta Pireddu also notes that all protagonists confront an archaeological past, which is both personal and cosmic “which asks to be unearthed and deciphered under a new light” (“H.D.’s Palimpsest Texts” 60).

36 See Quinn _Hilda Doolittle_ 56.

38 Hysterial/delirium enacts meanings beyond and outside of the phallogocentric communicative system of non-individuation. As Chisholm argues in “H.D.’s Autoheterography,” the “I-less core” enacts the desire to “locate the ground of identity, some sign of difference, some position, to mark her off from the enveloping, nebulous world” (87; see also Irigaray, “Questions” in _The Irigaray Reader_ 138).

39 Marius’s letter from the front reveals him to be a co-created self. He openly acknowledges his love for Hipparchia as the “Other” who co-creates him.

40 This dynamic can also be seen in Part III of _Palimpsest_ in H.D.’s portrayal of Helen. Dunn argues that Helen’s infatuation is presented as a weakness, while her disavowal of Rafton is seen as a strength (57). Pireddu (1992) adds to this argument by suggesting that Helen’s ability to create different identities “along with the spatial displacements she undergoes” is also seen as a strength (“H.D.’s Palimpsest Texts” 60). Thus, by both fearing and desiring the intimacy, Helen believes that self-concealment is the only way to protect her “accurately measured” selves from the loss of autonomy (_Palimpsest_ 176).

41 For instance, Dodge in Woolf’s _Between_ conceives of Swithin’s compassion for him as a _favour_ to be returned and passed onto others, thereby motivating his decision to initiate an intersubjective connection with Isa later in the novel.

42 “The mirror brings the examining glance back to the surface of the skin, upon which the bracelet rests, embracing—at one time in harmony with, and in contrast to, the life pulsing in the fluid veins beneath” (_Hedylus_ 148).

44 See also Julie Gerhardt’s _Narratives from the Crib_ (181-182) for an affirmation of this thesis.
To go through fantasy, Haddad claims is to know how one “came through” (82). In other words, since the subject is partly determined by fantasy, Haddad believes, going through fantasy helps determine “how the subject also came through” (Ibid.). Haddad’s phrase of “going through” in this context alludes to Žižek’s concept of social fantasy in The Sublime Object of Ideology (see Wells, 123). “Going through” fantasy is a form of communicative action which opens individuals to possibility, since it is a kind of language that insists on its own materiality, its intersubjectivity, its distance from both the real and the ideal speech situation (123). In this definition, fantasy is not an emotional escape, but rather, as it is for Hipparchia here, an examination of its origins and effects, the mechanisms constituting the reflexive structure of desire that forces her to confront the foundations of her own subjecthood.

Note that woman in the Lacanian fantasy of “oneness,” attributed to woman-as-masquerade, represents a relationship to the phallus in disguise—the exact opposite of what is meant here in relationship to the Imaginary. In intersubjective fantasy of oneness, woman does not become this “Other for herself” (her own Other), or “this Other for him.” Instead, she, “being not all,” has the intersubjective capacity and voice for cognitively integrating her own subjectivity with that of an Other—not just subjugating another consciousness to her own.

Other examples of fantasies may include eroticised landscapes, lesbian relationships, or even sudden career changes, like Chopin’s Edna Pontellier’s “artistic” endeavors in her husband’s backyard in The Awakening, or Orlando’s political career in Turkey in Woolf’s Orlando.

See Rosemary Jackson (23).

One of these insights includes Ermy’s realisation of Raymonde’s similarity to Mavis in a serious criticism of Raymonde’s character: “You are like her. Those people in the nursing-home were right. You might have been her sister. And I have it” (Palimpsest 125). Here, the ambiguous “it” not only marks Ermy’s insight regarding Raymonde’s potential for cruelty, but also Raymonde’s desire to revenge herself on Mavis by appropriating Ermy’s circumstances. In articulating this insight, Ermy exposes and diffuses this strategy, moving it out of the dominator dynamics: “the girl [Ermy] spurted out as a last gasp toward some (until this moment) insurmountable barrier which she now saw hope of conquering, “I see it. You are like her...” (Palimpsest 126).

See Fludernik’s analysis of similar technique in “New Wine in Old Bottles” (2001).

These superimpositions are complicated by a supplemental interjection of Raymonde’s extended memory originating with her recovery from the stillbirth of her daughter while still in the London hospital (beginning in section V, Palimpsest 110). H.D. stylises Raymonde’s memory as two opposing sets of voices: “two layers of people. The worst. The very best. The most cruel, the most tender and subtly apprehensive” (111). As in Bid Me, one set of voices are attributed to cruel and insensitive nurses who comment on her weakness and show no compassion for her (110), while the other set is attributed to a sympathetic doctor who had understood and who “had cared. He had seen it. He said, “I’m sorry. Mrs. Ransome, it was a beautiful little—body—” (111). Due to its context as a parallel narrative, it is clear that H.D. intends for the reader to separate Ermy and Mavis into these “types,” the insensitive and cruel Mavis and the compassionate Ermy, who has a softening effect on Raymonde.

This idea of the facilitory presence of the Other as essential for an intersubjective connection occurs in H.D.’s own life. Shortly after giving birth to her daughter, H.D. credits Bryher as the one responsible for her extraordinary “bell-jar” vision (recounted in Advent) and for opening up the “so hermeneutically watertight compartment of her own subconsciousness” (Palimpsest 138): “There was, I explained to Bryher, a second globe or bell-jar rising as if it were from my feet. I was enclosed. I felt I was safe but seeing things as through water. I felt the double globe come and go and I could have dismissed it at once and probably would have if I had been alone. But it would not have happened, I imagine, if I had been alone. It was being with Bryher that projected the fantasy” (cited in Friedman, Penelope’s Web 9).
Friedman also cites Mary Mason's article "Other Voice" to support the concept of women's self-creation-through-Other in terms of autobiographical writings themselves (see Penelope's Web 73).

This use of "epiphany" loosely corresponds to Stephen Dedalus's use of the term in James Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. In his conversation with Cranly, Stephen's description of epiphany as "the gropings of a spiritual eye which seeks to adjust its vision to an exact focus" ( ) evokes H.D.'s concept of an over-mind which seeks to adjust its lens to capture reality's underlying psychic meaning. H.D.'s epiphanies refer to a profound psychic revelation of self to self, a moment of self-transformation. In contrast, in Portrait of the Artist, Stephen emphasis epiphany's profoundity as a one specially suited for writers. He locates epiphany's "sudden, spiritual manifestation" in the writer's need to record, and to a certain degree, appropriate, "the most delicate and evanescent of moments" ( ). Whereas Stephen (and by implication, Joyce) locates epiphany in grasping the object as "one integral thing" ( ), H.D. locates epiphany in understanding the "object's" multiplicity, that is as more than "one integral thing."

Chapter IV

1 From Woolf's diary entry for June 1923 (Diary II): "I daresay its [sic] true, however, that I haven't that 'reality' gift. I insubstantise, wilfully to some extent, distrusting reality—its cheapness. But to get further. Have I the power of conveying the true reality?" (248)

2 Diary V 289.

3 September 23, 1903 (Woolf, A Passionate Apprentice 211).

4 Although one may presume The Waves (1931) to be an obvious choice in this study, due to Woolf's stylistic homogenization of voice in this novel, I have not included it since I am focussing on how Woolf represents voice heterogeneity within a communal source of mediation via stylistic shifts—not continuums. For a study of intersubjectivity via metonomy, see Wallace's "Theorizing Relational Subjects: Metonymic Narrative in The Waves" (2000). For a more general article on subjectivity in The Waves, see Booker (1991) and McGee (1992).

5 Woolf's phrase dated April 26, 1938 (Diary V 135).

6 Cuddy-Keane (1990) argues that Woolf's use of the Greek "choric voice" serves a political function in its act of unifying difference (275).


For specific works on To The Lighthouse, see: Schug 1979; Parkes, 1982; Hillis Miller 1983; Lidoff 1986; LaCapra 1987; Daughterty 1991; Currier (S.) 1998; Goldman 1999; Walker 1997; and Kato 1999.

8 These critics argue that even the punctuation in Between, including parentheses, colons, semicolons and ellipsis, implies a form of distinction which paradoxically evokes unity and connectedness.

9 For instance, in discussing Between, these critics remark upon the intergeneric embedding of the pageant into the novel; the authorial and parenthetical containment of polyphonic voice; and, as I do in greater
depth here, the pluralised and ambiguous forms of pronominal references that open possibilities for attribution.

10 However, as we will see, even this overturning requires a relational identity; La Trobe cannot achieve this carnalivesque feat without Swithin’s affirmation of her work.

11 These critics isolate specific markers of the narrative’s inability to cohere on any level of unity, including sentence structure and typography. For example, they typically consider incomplete phrases or sentences; sudden, deliberate juxtapositions of imagery or topics; graphic breaks, including frequent ellipses and spatial interruptions; non-signifying repetition; unattributable voices; figurative images which signal a return to primitivism; and truncated plot development.

12 For instance, as in Wang (1992), Marjorie Hellerstein’s book *Virginia Woolf’s Experiments with Consciousness, Time and Social Values* (2001) is narratologically useless. As well as failing to analyse the only two narrative techniques she identifies (compression and rhythmic juxtaposition), Hellerstein lumps all of Woolf’s voice stylisations into one category—“streams of thought”—used to produce “an ambient psychological atmosphere from which several characters draw feelings” (59). Peach’s claim discussed earlier also echoes this terminological generalisation, while Maria DiBattista (2000) separates Woolf’s styles of voice into two modes of authorship: the ventriloquist’s and the soliloquist’s (132), thus accounting for her narrative depiction of silences, but not her intermediary forms of narrative voice.

Without narratological training in interpreting voice, these critics scratch the surface of Woolf’s stylisations, and miss some of her most dramatic innovations, including the polyvalent pronominalisations and intermediary voices which straddle, as well as include, free indirect discourse with interior monologue and direct speech, all lending force to the illusion of multiple “fused” subjectivities.

Some critics, searching for a theoretical model for transsubjectivity, often based on Jane Harrison’s idea of an “aggregate personality” (A. Miller 48, Cuddy-Keane “The Politics” 274-5; Maika 7), produce some provocative, but narratologically imprecise definitions. For instance, see Olson’s study of “pantheism” (*Authorial Divinity* 79) and Parkes’s “montheism” (“Imagining Reality” 39) in relation to Woolf’s narrative voice. As a general description of Woolf’s communal consciousness, Hillis Miller’s 1983 work suffices. However, what it misses is an in-depth analysis of how Woolf’s voice stylisations reflect the specificity of individual difference within such structures of anonymity and collectivity.

13 As Friedman (M.) notes, this metaphysical conception of a social identity can conflict with certain feminisms that emphasize the gendering of individuated selves as masculine; the cultural inheritance of certain moral obligations and expectations, as well as shifts in relationships that one makes over time (“Feminism and Modern Friendship” 191-194).

14 See Silverman’s *Threshold* for her use of this term.

15 I Include Greenberg (2001) and Moran (2001) in this group.

16 For instance, Busse suggests that since Clarissa Dalloway’s “own ideal image of herself is no more authentic than the image she creates to please others...internal identification obeys rules similar to the external ideal” (80). Because Mrs Manresa “faces” the mirror in *Between*, Busse suggests that she just displays a more sophisticated insight into the symbolic order, by deftly substituting “her own version” of her identity, rather than confronting an “empty core,” that “devastating intelligence” that the rest of audience must face (86). Deppmann echoes this reading: “Seen from the other side of the mirror, women are looking-glasses” (“Rereading the Mirror Image 40).

17 Of these critics, Mimlitsch is the only one who perceives the recognition aspect of the mirror image as an opportunity to connect with a larger social whole, that is, as an attempt “to move beyond it [abjection] into a community where boundaries need not be impermeable for people to feel comfortable” (“Powers of Horror” 41).
This between-space, allowing for intimacy and detachment, explains how Woolf’s characters can experience relational desire. For instance, the traumatic intrusions into the symbolic framework of Miss La Trobe’s play by her audience members, in Busse’s view, can only symbolise “gaps and fissures” between subject and history, self-splitting processes signifying the imaginary’s failure to “cover up the inconsistencies in the symbolic universe” (Busse 78, 88). Judith Greenberg (2001), for instance, interprets Woolf’s textual acoustics (voice fragments, echoes and silences, including what I am calling the communal consciousness) as indications of trauma’s ability to be shared, but ultimately to be “unknown” (54), while Patricia Moran (2001) argues for trauma’s impossibility of transference in that traumatic events possess their victims as “the self’s discourse with itself” (Culbertson cited in “Gunpowder Plots” 8).

Woolf’s interest in Freud’s and Gustav Le Bon’s concept of the “group mind” or herd mentality, as well as the feminist theories of Jane Harrison and Ruth Benedict on ritual, grew during Hitler’s rise to power. Woolf read Freud’s essays “Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego” and Civilization and Its Discontents while writing Between (McLaurin, “Consciousness and Group Consciousness” 38; Cuddy-Keane 274). In these works, Freud tries to explain Hitler and the Second World War with an analysis of group formations.

During this time, Woolf was drafting her biography of British art critic and theorist Roger Fry, a work providing for her an escape from war news and war talk, as shown in the following: “...how I bless Roger, & wish I could tell him so, for giving me himself to think of what a help he remains in this welter of unreality” (10 Sept. 1938, Diary V 167).

The setting of Pointz Hall.

While Woolf was in Rodmell, newspaper accounts of the war overseas were interspliced with details of small-scale destruction of personal and urban properties in Britain, reminders of the war’s movement to the home front (30 May 1940, Diary V 289). These reminders, for Woolf, made the potential for large-scale annihilation of human heterogeneity possible, and even probable. “I cant conceive that there will be a 27th June 1941. This cuts away something even at tea at Charleston” (cited in Beer, Between 401; 27 June 1940, Diary V 299). Since there could be no reality outside the war, Woolf made a suicide pact with her Jewish husband, Leonard Woolf and their friends who planned to gas themselves in their garage when Hitler’s armies arrived in England. See Pridmore-Brown (2000) for further discussion on Woolf’s reception of the media during this time, as well as Johnston (1987) for a detailed description of the politics in this historical context.

Found in the French social psychologist Gustave Le Bon’s famous work Psychologie des foules (1895). In relation to Woolf interest in the group mind, McLaurin refers to her review of the unanimist writer Jules Romains’s novels Les Copains and The Death of a Nobody: “What really interests him is the feelings of persons, not as individual characters, but as members of groups; what he delights and excels in doing is to trace the mysterious growth, where two or three are gathered together, of a kind of consciousness of the group in addition to that of each individual of the group” (cited in “Consciousness and Group Consciousness” 34). See also Cuddy Keane’s “The Politics of Comic Modes” (273) for a brief introduction to Le Bon’s theories, as well as Cramer (166-167) for historical context.

June 1923.

“‘I’ rejected: ‘We’ substituted” is a phrase Woolf used to describe her early concept for Between (Diary V, 26 April 1938, 135).

See H.D.’s question in this work’s opening epigraphs: “What is thought without emotional achievement?”
The only application I have found of Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger’s psychoanalytic theories to Woolf’s work is Humm’s (2001) analysis of Woolf’s Monk House photograph albums (“Matrixial Memories”).

Similarly, in the essay “Professions for Women,” the speaker’s conversational tone is interspersed with pertinent questions addressing the nature and objective of women’s liberation: “How are you going to furnish [your room], how are you going to decorate it? With whom are you going to share it, and upon what terms” (63)? Without indicating any single direction for approaching these questions or suggesting any answers herself, the speaker authorizes and invites her audience members’ speculations.

This scene gains greater poignancy since Mrs. Ramsay’s socialisation powers are constantly called into question by the narrator, and even by Mrs. Ramsay herself. Woolf also uses free indirect thought to reflect Mrs. Ramsay’s conscious exploration of her own altruistic motives, suggesting that even for a strong character like Mrs. Ramsay, there is no singular, unproblematic way of being. Carmichael’s dismissive treatment of her has some validity, thus constituting her own self-parody: “That was what she minded … that she was suspected; and that all this desire of hers to give, to help, was vanity. For her own self-satisfaction was it that she wished so instinctively to help, to give, so that people might say of her, ‘O Mrs. Ramsay! dear Mrs. Ramsay … Mrs. Ramsay, of course!’ and need her and send for her and admire her?” (41)

Individuality is valued within a communal structure as each listener participates in the unity of speaking voices; as Gillian Beer notes, “singularity is composed out of the shared materials of a community in time” (“The Body of People” 99). Thus, Woolf’s insists on individuality as a play within plurality.

Detached from interpretive possibilities for Mrs. Ramsay’s multiplicities and emotional complexities, Lily is, as Tomm argues, also closed off from her own desire to integrate difference: The desire for integration disappears when the inner space is occluded. Access to the most important dimension of one’s consciousness is obstructed, causing one to be out of touch with one’s own power of relationality—the source of sympathy, and, therefore, of justice. The possibility for creating intersubjective space in which selves are revealed and known to each other is thereby excluded. (“Ethics of Self-Knowing” 106)

Presumably unsympathetic to one another, the two subjects here are locked in distinct, but similar, attitudes of intolerance. Paradoxically, Lily’s yearning desire to become “one” with Mrs. Ramsay—the object of her adoration—can only be interpreted as appropriative, not relational.

Fludernik’s “minimal” syntactic conditions for a free indirect discourse reading include: 1) a deictic, anaphoric alignment of ‘personal’ referential expressions to the reporting discourse, and 2) the absence of verb-plus-complement clause structure (“Linguistic Illusion of Alterity” 95).

Ulanov is cited by Tomm in “Ethics and Self-knowing” 102-3.

However, as Tomm (and Irigaray) warn, a subject’s search for the enlivening, intimate exchange found in intersubjective communication should not make one insensitive to the value of “I-You” relations. We need to exist as separate subjects, as well as engage in interpersonal space and relationships (Tomm “Ethics” 103).

Note here that all changes (actions) are contextualised as communicative acts or effects; the broad reference it, for example, never leaves the boundaries of the intersubjective connection—third-person narration, for example, does not specify singularity in defining, or identifying, what that it may be, thus leaving interpretive possibilities open.

As we will see, this scene, and its abrupt omission of Bankes’s final response to Lily at its end, forms a significant contrast to the audience’s understanding of Miss La Trobe’s pageant. Although everyone is undeniably affected by the pageant, no one—not even Mr. Streatfield—asks La Trobe for her interpretation of it. Rather, Between emphasizes the partialness of identity in a transsubjective mode. While everyone
offers their differing interpretations of the pageant non-relationally, Woolf stylises the narrative grammar to posit the transsubjective gathering of these individual perspectives. Consequently, Miss La Trobe feels that although something had been taken from her (112), nothing has been given back. Hence, she experiences an overwhelming sense of inner emptiness, and the despair of non-relational identity, which she attempts to overcome by consuming alcohol at the pub. But when the subject is viewed as a relational identity, transhistorical conceptions of the SELF (past, present, desired) merge in this novel. Such plurality invites the integration of multiple perspectives, each received and respected with equal treatment, as found in Woolf’s more formal treatment in Between of a transsubjective group consciousness.

38 See Hussey, “‘I rejected; we substituted’” 117.

39 Note that this kind of stylisation is distinct from realist omniscient narration because its inclusion of selective markers of individuation creates a knowledge basis which, emerging through the voice it portrays, is communally constructed. This style of communal consciousness projects its own multiplicity onto other aspects of the narration, including the creation of paralling intradiegetic psychic spaces as unchained links of subjectivity: one shared consciousness capable of simulating multiple styles and forms of mediation, narratively (astral)-travelling through the lifeworlds of distinct subjects, thereby simulating the fusion effect of inter/transsubjective connections.

40 The narrative stylisation of this scene is examined in Chapter Four.

41 According to Currier, this intersubjective connection transports Lily and Mr. Ramsay to an “Edenic new world” of social attachment, wherein Lily discovers that she can care for Mr. Ramsay in a way that does not “injure” herself (“Liberation Fables” 179).

42 Dominator characters, like Mr. Ramsay and Augustus Carmichael in Lighthouse, and Giles and Bart Oliver in Between, are characterised by Woolf as vulnerable in resisting their own partiality. These men experience sheer will as a coercive form of power disguised as love but demanding obedience, represented in the violent rivalry between Mr. Ramsay and James, wherein James internalises his father’s will for violence: “Had there been an axe handy, or a poker, any weapon that would have gashed a hole in his father’s breast and killed him, James would have seized it” (4). Dominator-desire, inevitably resulting in psychic or physical violence, leads to what Woolf perceptively analysed as a perpetuation of a class system discriminating against difference, whether it be based on gender, age, education or ethnicity, embodied in characters of violent sterility, such as Giles and Bart in Between. However, equally Woolf suggests that with the “healing” ointment of inter/transsubjective connection, even these these “hardened” characters are not beyond redemption.

In Between, for instance, Giles Oliver, characterised as an angry little boy, encased in a soldier’s uniform, is well aware of the fact that military imperialism results in senseless, meaningless death—his death, the ultimate sacrifice of individuality (Between 80). His outrage over his political (and possibly domestic) impotence signifies his deep unrest with his inability to control the future. His masculine brutality systematically projects an ethics of exclusion (Kaivola, All Contraries Confounded 54). But in her use of narrative transsubjectivity, Woolf offers a sympathetic reading of Giles, emphasizing the fact that the passivity he hates is communally shared (“We remain seated—We are the audience;” Between 47). Thus, his rage, while directed towards convenient targets of his antagonism (Isa, Lucy, Dodge), can be interpreted as a virtual projection of his partial (not total) identity. Thus the reader can feel sympathy for Giles, who is “manacled to a rock” (47), an actor in a part he has not chosen. Thus, even his silences indicate that he is implicated in his unavoidable identifications with Others, and perhaps more importantly, in the identifications that Others make with him. To underscore Giles’ humanism, as well as his dehumanisation, Woolf confirms Giles’ capacity for love, and for loving Others as distinct subjects in the novel’s final scene where he and Isa reunite.

43 November 23, 1940.

Theoretically, although the “feminized” Dodge could also be included in this discussion, I am leaving him out since his specific gendering as male does not immediately position him as “object” in the Lacanian symbolic order.

The critical interpretation of possible incest rests upon the fragmented narrative details that characterise the past of Swithin and Bart. Woolf’s own past molestations by her step-brother, as well as focalised statements attributed to Swithin that could be interpreted in that way (see the analysis of this “grimmer” subtext in Lawson 1978; DiBattista 1986; Babcock 1990; and Beer’s 1994). For instance, Swithin’s ambiguous comment to Dodge, “we have other lives. I think, I hope...We live in others...We live in things” (Between 55) while sitting on the bed upstairs may be interpreted as her defense coping mechanism against past violations, and her belief that such violations can be transcended. This interpretation reverberates with even more pathos, considering the narrative’s emphasis on Lucy’s dependence upon her brother for her material security—a dependency which may be used to justify such transgressions (10). For an analysis of allusions to Swinburne’s poem “Itylus” which support the incest interpretation, see Barrett (26). For allusions to the Isis-Osiris myth, which depicts the “marriage” of a brother and sister, see Madeline Moore’s The Short Season Between Two Silences (155-7).

Given her capacity for intersubjective connection, Swithin is, as DiBattista notes, the only character free of the “pandemic hatred” which seems to infect the other characters in the novel (143-4). Perhaps her inability to hate partially explains her ambiguous relationship with her brother (26). Swithin may be able to forgive Bart, whereas for other characters, hatred merely reflects their own self-loathing.

In this way, Mrs. Swithin can be compared to Susan in The Waves, who, in her domestic role, continually challenges the social stereotyping which attempts to confine and disempower her.

Refers to the use of interior monologue to represent a writer in the process of composing. See my MA Thesis, “Disembodied Voices.”

The “donkey,” typically a subjugated animal bearing a heavy load, characterises Isa’s lot in life as a discontented wife. The donkey, as sacrificial victim of human cruelty, is a recurring figure in a number of Aesop’s fables, often contextualised with morals directly applicable to World War II. For example, in “The Ass and the Mule,” the Ass is unable to convince the Mule to share his load even if is more than he can bear, thus killing them. But in “The Ass and the Charger,” the Ass is relieved not to be the Horse with special privileges since the soldier mounts the Horse and rides him into battle when war breaks out.

Bart Oliver also mentions the “donkey” who cannot choose between turnips and hay, and “so starved” (47; see Aesop’s “The Ass and the Horse”), and “The Ass and His Masters”), a recurring motif in Between signifying Isa’s discontent as mother or artist: she is both and so cannot choose. See Dick and Miller’s 2002 edition of Between, who add allusions to the allegory of ‘Buridan’s ass,’ from Joannes Buridanus (1300-58) (135).

Equally, this image evokes the Christian allusion to the donkey upon which the Virgin Mary enters Bethlehem—Isa is a mother “untouched” by patriarchal impositions upon her body, a channel manifesting the divine—an awareness, simultaneously, powerful and humbling.

Stanzel argues in his 1990 work on narrative typology that in certain cases, free indirect speech can cease to function as a dual voice and is replaced by the monologue-like reflector mode of the figural situation (“A Low Structuralist” 809). In this example, it becomes apparent that this “monologue” form of interior reflection most effectively (and ironically) portrays the failure of free indirect speech to produce irony. It is the technique, in other words, that most succinctly portrays the protagonist’s inability to criticize or objectify in a compulsion to empathise with another human being. See also Fludernik (The Fictions 1993) and Banfield (Unspeakable 221-1).

Dick and Miller suggest that the painting could be identified as Thomas Gainsborough’s portrait of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire (1757-1806) (Ft. 21, p. 129 in their 2002 edition of Between the Acts).
Dick and Miller note an allusion to a U.S. ship called the *Marie Celeste*, abandoned in the Atlantic in 1872, symbolic of recent occupation and a mysterious vacancy (see 2002 edition of *Between the Acts* 136).

The same effect of perceptual transference is later used to describe Swithin’s sexually ambiguous or incestuous relationship with her brother. For instance, third-person narration describes Swithin as “perching” on a chair in the library, transposing her own figuration of the barn swallows setting out to Africa as a figure *for herself*: “She perched on the edge of a chair like a bird on a telegraph wire before starting for Africa” (87). Because Bart “reads” and interprets this figuration with the third-person perspective (that is, as a “swallow”), this statement could reflect Bart’s focalisation of Lucy, as well as interjecting and evoking the potential for Bart’s own incestual undertones, with the transposition of the verb in Swinburne’s line from *Itylus*, “O sister swallow, O sister swallow” (86), to “Swallow, my sister, O sister swallow” (87). As in the passage under discussion, the subtle, and nearly indistinguishable, intertwining of third and first-persons within figural modes serves to make the subjective, as well as grammatical, boundaries between subjects (or narrative voices) porous and mutually exchangeable.

Note that the inclusion of the male perspective is one that H.D. does not make in similar examples.

This empathetic connection between Dodge and Swithin is echoed in a parallel scene at the end of the pageant. Dodge seeks out Swithin, who has again forgotten his name, at the fish pond to thank her. Repeating his statement, “I’m William,” Mrs. Swithin once again revives “like a girl in a garden in white among roses”—another one of her “unacted parts” (149). Here Dodge’s comment, “So I thank you” (150) gains plurality, as he voices the very words of appreciation that Mrs. Swithin feels for La Trobe at that moment. This transsubjective connection counters dominator negativity, opposing Bart’s earlier act of forbidding Swithin’s expression of gratitude to La Trobe—just one example of his senseless, tyrannical domination of his sister: “It was always ‘my brother...my brother’ who rose from the depths of her lily pool” (150).

Presumably the ideal function of a good psychologist or psychoanalyst.

Swithin’s gesture of touching the “tight” feeling in her forehead, could, as the ellipsis allows, be interpreted as a signifier of her own pain (the “blue vein” wriggles like a worm on her forehead), or conversely, as her sympathetic pain reflecting Dodge’s past treatment—in the borderspace of shared trauma described in Lichtenberg’s model. Consciously or not, Swithin indicates that she realises his pain is a psychic one caused by social—and not sexual—dysfunction. With either reading, this double attribution leaves Dodge unobjectified, thus emulating the thematic import of this scene, the subject-subject relation of civil identity.

As Dodge realises, Giles silently curses him with a number of expletives, including “half-breed” (40). However, Mimlitsch points out that Giles hates in Dodge what he despises in himself, already “mired in” the abjection symbolised by war (38). The self-reflexive nature of Giles’ hatred is evident when it comes to the guilt produced in his “labelling” of it. For instance, when it comes to calling Dodge a “homosexual,” the narrator tells us that even in his mind, Giles “puréed his lips” over a word “he could not speak in public” (8). In this case, even Giles’ inner psyche is represented by Woolf as a public forum in which certain meanings must be repressed. In direct contrast, when Isa guess the word “that Giles had not spoken,” she probes the significance of the term, as well as its implications: “Well, was it wrong if [Dodge] was that word? Why judge each other? Do we know each other?” Not here, not now” (49).

Woolf also shows that Giles’ hatred of the homosexual Dodge forms a complex identification. Like Neville in *The Waves*, for instance, they both share the hatred of authority, while remaining in love with sadistic images of its power; Giles converses easily with Bart, and Dodge lusts after Giles’ hard body. Woolf uses the similar character-trait shared by these “enemies” to “bind” characters despite, and within, their differences. This identification reveals a deep need for security that both heterosexual and homosexual men share.
Furthermore, unanswered questions like these continue to expand Swithin’s and Dodge’s differences valued in their connection. For instance, Dodge’s rhetorical questions about Swithin’s cross necklace, “How could she weight herself down by that sleek symbol? How stamp herself, so volatile, so vagrant, with that image?” (57) suggest that such an explanation may not be available to him. However, this possibility does not undermine the validity and relevance of his questioning, as the image of Swithin’s leaning out of the open window suggests. She may be “holding out” her cross, and its potential meanings to William as an alternative, restorative belief system to the suffering he has endured.

This first impression very much parallels Lily’s initial assessment of Tansley in Lighthouse. Lily is highly critical of the academic, socially inept Tansley, who, she believes, is the “most uncharming human being she had ever met” in light of his constant assertions to prove himself in the company of the Ramsays (86).

Dodge’s attentiveness can be compared to that of Bankes in Lighthouse, as well as Raymonde’s in the later stages of her conversation with Ermy. In both cases, there is an undeniable growing sense of familiarity, despite the fact that these are virtual strangers conversing with one another.

“Unmarked” in this context refers to the lack of punctuation marking the difference between direct and indirect forms of speech and/or thought (e.g., typically a lack of quotation marks or, as in the case of Joyce and H.D., the lack of the dash—their alternative to quotation marks). According to Fludernik (Fictions 230-2), typographical signs of expressivity which “mark” the reporting status of indirect discourse and free indirect discourse include: the addition of redundant quotation marks; explicit “loanings” from characters’ lexis marked with the use of inverted commas; separation from the words of the narrator proper by means of a colon or semicolon; italics or capitals; exclamation marks and question marks; and spellings indicative of dialectal, sociolectal or other linguistic deviations, from the narrator’s noun.

As DiBattista notes, the portrayal of Giles’s sexuality constitutes Woolf’s fictive characterisation of the fascist man with his sterility and aggressive destructiveness, as portrayed in Three Guineas: “...the quintessence of virility, the perfect type of which all the others are imperfect adumbrations” (Woolf cited in DiBattista 138).

Dick and Miller (Between 2002) identify this as a mythical allusion to Procne and Philomela, where Procne draws the knife to kill Itylus (146).

This irony extends to the imperialistic implications of the scene. With her son’s reappearance, as Cramer points out, the crone must consider her contribution to the war: “her cowardice, disguised as mother love, had aided the destructive effects of her warrior son on human history” (179). This reading is in keeping with Woolf’s here, criticising Nazi Germany’s rationalisation of human genocide through national and political expansion.

This conflicting identification describes Isa’s perspective on Mrs. Manresa herself. Woolf characterises Isa as one who, despite her hatred of Mrs. Manresa, is not totally repulsed by her, and is even appreciative of the difference that Mrs. Manresa brings to the company. In this light, Isa can be seen as a “subject-in-process,” engaging with alterity, the “other in herself” because it is within—“not because it is homogenous” (Kelly Oliver cited by McAfee 133).

Intertextually, this image directly refers to Isa, whom Dodge previously wished to see placed as a classical statue against an “arum lily or a vine” (79).

As Dr. Gordon Fulton points out here, although Dodge, historically, has no public homosexual identity available, he does not represent a threat to Isa as a mother of children or as a woman. Isa does not discriminate against Dodge as a hedonistic, self-centered enjoyer of male privilege and masculine sensuality, just as he does not discriminate against her as a subject denied political and social stature.
In his comments on a draft of this work, Dr. Gordon Fulton supports this attribution and its application to the model of narrative transsubjectivity, which I believe is worth quoting in full here:

It sounds odd to attribute a statement to a narrative rather than to a narrator, but in this text the category ‘narrator’ is called question and is certainly dissolved as a boundary fixed on the text or its interpretation. It is such a move from the boundedness of a narrator to the boundless of narrative that motivates/justifies your claim that the narrative/text moves (or at least gestures) beyond intersubjective connection between characters to intimate a transsubjective reality in which they—and readers in their acts of reading—are subsumed. If Hopkins’ inscape suggests interiority in persons and things, Woolf here opens up an inner reality in the process. The nearest analogy that I can think of is what happens at the limits in calculus where, at any given point on a curve we can calculate an equation to describe the line tangential to the curve at that point.

These tangential “virtual” realities, whether of thought or space, accurately describe what I am refer to as “expansion” in intersubjective and transsubjective connection. In this comment, Dr. Fulton also contextualises Woolf’s illimitation in Beneviste’s statement: “Dans le verbe comme dans le pronom personnel, le pluriel est facteur d’illimitation, non de multiplication.” Fulton applies this phenomena to Woolf’s apprehension of transsubjectivity as a crucial moment when the extension beyond the SELF transforms from multiplication (SELF + SELF + SELF ...) to illimitation (SELF → beyond SELF with SELF included but no longer bounded as individual one and potentially alone).

Dr. Fulton’s analogies portray, exactly, the kind of narrative plurality that I point to here. See also Lanser’s analysis of Woolf’s diffused authority (Fictions of Authority 114-116), discussed in the next section.

This sentiment, as well as depicting the transitory nature of intersubjective connection, echoes Dodge’s thought when, later in the novel, he takes time to thank Swithin since “it was unlikely that they would ever meet again” (150), a gesture inspired by, or merely illustrated by, this comment and context here.

Indirect references to the war and its potential for destruction are made throughout the novel, but typically in the form of a poetic meditation, in dramatic lines from the pageant’s script, in statements parenthetically enclosed in third person narration, or, as in the following, lyrics from a song overheard by Bart and Lucy during a piano practice: “For this day...Will be over...Will be over, over, over.../O the winter, will fill the grate with ashes, / And there’ll be no flow, no glow on the log” (88).

See Dick and Millar’s discussion of this punctuation in their 2002 edition of Between the Acts (xlvii).

Other critics who address this effect in less detail include Hussey (“‘I rejected’” 173); Lawson (28); and Blain (122). Interpreting Between’s audience, Hussey supports Lanser’s view by qualifying the communal voice as a source of anonymity which emphasises Woolf’s mediation between the poles of individual assertion and group similarity (“‘I rejected; ‘We substituted’” 173). In “Technique and Function of Time in Virginia Woolf’s Between the Acts,” Lawson calls the communal consciousness a corporate character which considers itself an integral part of the pageant” (28). Similarly, in relation to The Voyage Out, Virginia Blain (1983) explains, “It is too simple to say that the authorial voice becomes one with the heroine’s: the perspectives are broader than any single viewpoint” (122).

My research shows that transsubjective structure of narrative voices can be found in many modern novels by women prior to H.D. and Woolf. For instance, transsubjectivity has been represented as a communal construction combining the intellectual powers of several female protagonists in a single decision-making process, often expressed as a single voice. For instance, in The Three Miss Kings: A Novel (1894), Ada Cambridge Cross uses the fictive device of deceased parents to allow three sisters maximum freedom in the task of constituting themselves as subjects in Australian society. The sisters form a supportive network by confiding in each other; when making decisions, the sisters work in a collaborative way that respects their differing perspectives.
For example, when Mabel Hopkins comes on stage as “Reason,” the synecdoche eyes figures the entire audience, while the questions that follow remain unattributed and unanswered in terms of narrative voice: “Eyes fed on her as fish rise to a crumb of bread on the water. Who was she? What did she represent? She was beautiful – very... England was she? Queen Anne was she? Who was she?” (90-1) Although this stylisation suggests that a singular voice is thinking (or speaking) these questions, by evading specific attributions, it suggests that any one, or any number of audience members, could be sharing the same thought, and thus, one voice speaks for the “whole.”

This view is supported by Woolf’s critique of James Joyce’s stream-of-consciousness method in Ulysses, which she believed was too “SELF ”-centered.

I am adhering to Dr. Fulton’s insertion of the comma in this passage in order for it to make sense.

It is debatable whether or not, in Between, Woolf portrays what Benjamin calls the “object relations kind of SELF ”—the inclusive SELF that calls for the suspension of identity, that calls for difference, not synthesis: “where identity once grounded the ego, the relation to the other must now ground a SELF that would live without identity” (“Shadow of the Other” 250). Instead I argue in the following sections that even with the communal SELF, Woolf insists on the subject’s desire to experience identity in a relational mode, and not, as suggested here, as a total dissolution or abandonment of it. “Egoic” distinction is necessary, but not destructive, if the SELF is conceived, as I argue, as a relational construct experienced in a conditional state of plurality.

See John Betjeman’s autobiography in verse Summoned by Bells (1960), and T.S. Eliot’s “Burnt Norton,” Part IV, Four Quartets: “Time and the bell have buried the day, / The black cloud carries the sun away.” I am indebted, once again, to Dr. Fulton for identifying the source of these references.

Resonances with chapter three of James Joyce’s Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, and/or chapter one of Ulysses.

See Charles Schug (1979) who describes this style as an “extended structure emblematic of central insight,” akin to the Romantic persona (194).

This statement alludes to the final stanza of T.S. Eliot’s 1917 poem “Alfred J. Prufrock”: We have lingered in the chambers of the sea / By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown / Till human voices wake us, and we drown,” and contrasts with the choric song in Tennyson’s The Lotus-Eaters (1842): “Music that gentlier on the spirit lies, / Than tir’d eyelids upon tir’d eyes; / Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies” (electronic version).

Reference to the violence against the German Jews on Kristallnacht, November 9, 1938 (see Dick and Miller Between 148).

A direct allusion to Alexander Pope’s 1733 Essay on Man, Epistle I, Part 10: “All discord, harmony, not understood / All partial evil, universal good” (II. 291-292).

Could refer to Joan Miró’s 1923-24 surreal painting The Tilled Field, a fanciful juxtaposition of human, animal, and vegetable parts, featuring a large ear attached to a tree. While working on the painting, Miró stated that he finally “managed to escape into the absolute of nature” (cited by Spector n.p.). Spector notes that this painting also makes political reference to Catalonia’s attempt to secede from the central Spanish government—an undertone that once again evokes the war context in this novel.

As Fludernik reminds us, the interpretation of indirect discourse must be attributed to the reader’s comprehension of a voice shift alignment with a referential shift (“The Linguistic Illusion of Alterity” 95). By planting alternative readings, and interpretations, into this passage by sharing or spreading a dual or “split” focalisation across multiple characters, possibilities for connecting emerge in communication in
innovative ways. Here Woolf opts for a continuum of representation and characters’ “idioms” that make themselves open to the integration of Other, of difference.

This continuum is predicated on Woolf’s ability to make tangible narrative evocations of another’s consciousness in a single narrative discourse, that is, a reinvention of another’s discourse, so that the Other is experienced in a relational praxis (see Fludernik, “Linguistic Illusion of Alterity” 103-5). This reinvention comprises the “illusion” or what Fludernik calls the “mimetic” quality of free indirect discourse. This narrative form of voice structuration supports Woolf’s thematic emphasis on the desire for connection within the need for separation, thereby confounding any “neat” attribution of voice—if such an attribution is needed.

89 Beckett’s mime Act Without Words I was first performed at the Royal Court Theatre in London in 1957.

90 An allusion to the final part of T.S. Eliot’s The Wasteland, What the Thunder Said: “Then a damp gust / Bringing rain / Ganga was sunken, and the limp leaves / Waited for rain, while the black clouds / Gathered far distant, over Himavant” (electronic version). See also Dick and Miller’s edition (166), who identify an allusion to Walt Whitman’s “Sea Drift.”

91 For an example of these feelings, see the dinner scene in The Waves: “sitting together here we love each other and believe in our own endurance” (83).

92 My view here directly conflicts with Madeleine Moore’s, who argues that despite Woolf’s intentions, she could not destroy the egotistical “I” and replace it with a collective “we” in the novel. According to Moore, Woolf’s autonomy was “too embattled to enact the aesthetic/political Utopia which she originally envisioned” in her initial manuscript of Poyntz Hall (“Between the Acts and Anon” 147). Without a model theorising narrative transsubjectivity, and so validating the collection of individual selves within a communal structure, Moore cannot locate the effects and strategies specifically supporting Woolf’s utopic, idealised version of unity and so she misses the main theme played out in this scene. Just as no individual should dominate any group, nor should any group erase the distinct perspectives and ideologies of individuals that form the group. As this theme indicates, communal structures will always be rife with, and enlivened by, contradictions, oppositions and ironies—far different from the utopian vision of homogeneity that Moore attributes to Woolf. Although Woolf implies that the partialness of human identity is resisted, she suggests that it is a strength and not weakness of human subjectivity. This denial is extended to the ending of the novel where the emotionally fragile marriage of Isa and Giles is temporarily mended by their willingness to participate in a relational mode, as a single union of two separate subjectivities.

93 Note that these mirroring surfaces are also comprised of glass or metal or anything that will reflect light. This point again refutes Busse’s assumption of the Lacanian mirror denoting the illusion of a “perfect” and SELF-unified reflection.

94 At this point in history, I am thinking of Bush’s “war on terrorism” following the 9/11 attack in the metaphoric reading of the World Trade Center Towers as these SELF-reflecting mirrors whose “truths” can no longer be denied.

95 Along these lines, and at risk of adding yet another term to the plethora of narratological definitions, I propose specifying this particular form of interior monologue as a communal interior monologue. This term acknowledges the presence of fused multiple subjectivities, and like my term “compositional monologue,” specifies its particular mode of stylisation.

96 Ames interprets these strategies on the part of La Trobe as “marvelous encapsulations” of the modernist sense of the present: “silence denoting a period we do not know historically; the glass mirroring our hopeless fragmented state; and voices as a cacophony of echoed bits and pieces from the past” (400).

97 In her examination of fascism in Between the Acts, Joplin (1989) extends this thesis by arguing that, for the first time, Woolf seizes the “gap, the distance, the interval, and the interrupted structured” associated
with abjection not as a “terrible defeat” to continuity or aesthetic unity—rather, the interrupted structured is elevated to a “positive formal and aesthetic unity” (211).

98 Although Lane believes that this characterization provokes judgment, Ricoeur argues that Manresa’s shameless preservation of SELF is defined by “an identity which endures in time and otherness embedded in the alternatives offered by experience” (cited in Lawson, “Technique and Function” 40).

99 See Silverman: “the aesthetic text can help us to do something collectively which exceeds the capacity of the individual subject to effect alone” (Threshold 5).

100 Bound in time and responsibility to one another, Manresa’s tears could even be read as her regret concerning her SELFish antagonism of the situation between Giles and Isa that she has been promoting. For this reason, I again disagree with Sears’ view that La Trobe succeeds only in attacking her audience, “not in having them see—or at least admit—why” (229).

101 However, as Cuddy Keane argues, La Trobe’s feelings of glory, which quickly dispel, do not signal a “new center” for the community. La Trobe remains “a background, rather than foreground figure, a prompter and catalyst rather than a director and guide” (“Comic Modes” 279).

102 Mark Hussey (1990) remarks on this transsubjective interdependence: “Each individual consciousness, each subjectivity, is like a vortex in a stream; subjectivity extends to all the creatures in the world” (151). This facet governing the characterisations of Mrs. Swithin and La Trobe here fulfills Woolf’s desire for a creativity of perception which creates “what is not mind or body, not surface or depth, but a common element in which the perishable is preserved, and the separate become one” (cited by Cordish 194). The original source for this quotation is the Pointz Hall Transcript from the Berg Collection (57-8).

103 This exchange directly parallels the one in Lighthouse, when Mr. Bankes appraises Lily’s painting in theme, if not style.

104 By retaining third-person narration for the simile “as if to help her out,” Woolf creates a triple reading of the image and the narrative stylisation of this phrase. Either Swithin is gesturing as a request for help; or La Trobe is interpreting the gesture as help; or Swithin is actually gesturing in a request mode, accurately interpreted by La Trobe. In all of these readings, there is a common denominator: a connection is being initiated, whether from one, or both side(s).

105 Once more, Woolf represents this response of “the Other” as a hybrid combination of voice styles that continues to defy objectification of either subject. Although free indirect discourse of Swithin’s comment in this passage could privately ridicule or satirize her egotistical desire to “play” Cleopatra (a senile old lady enacting the powerful Egyptian queen), here Woolf stylistically retains direct dialogue to avoid these ironic (or even sardonic) overtones in the transposition. The same stylisation of these different dialogue statements suggests that both interpretations are the same, in deserving equal respect.

106 Primarily through the transposition of the “you-I” relationship to the “you-thou” relationship as outlined by Ulanov; and indirectly to the resonance with Bart’s earlier statement that the audience plays an “important part” and as a futural echo with Streatfield’s interpretation: “We act different parts” (139).

107 The “Hegelian synthesis” problematised by Butler (1987).

108 Fludernik realises that interpretation is crucial for a reading of free-indirect discourse; that is, a free indirect discourse reading is only a potential interpretation of, and not an actual, manifestation in the text. In order to actualise such a reading, the reader needs to comprehend a voice shift alignment with a referential, and therefore, a conceptual, shift. In Fludernik’s description, the “notional discourse SELF” coincides with the kind of communal, unattributable, virtual consciousness I am emphasising here: FID [free indirect discourse] can be defined by means of the conjunction of an interpretative intervention on the part of the textual recipient, who posits a discourse of alterity (that is, a notional
discourse SELF different from that of the reportative SELF or the current narrator-speaker), with a minimal set of syntactic features, which constitute a sort of necessary condition, a mold that has to be fitted ("The Linguistic Illusion of Alterity" 95). With this definition, Fludernik deliberately characterizes what I identify as the communal, virtual subject as a different SELF apart from the narrative voices attributable to the narrator and character. This difference, however, is stylised as a certain “mould” that the unidentified voices must “fit” in terms of syntactic features, therein offering a clear description of how Woolf fashions a narratological bond between the disparate voices and perspectives that infuse this scene.

Furthermore, it shows that the authority of discourse lies with La Trobe, since it repeats the content of her phrase “Glory possessed her,” a statement initially rendered in free indirect thought, now certified by the authorial voice of third-person narration.

Chapter V

1 23 November 1926 (Diary III 117).

2 See Benjamin, “A Desire” (80-81); “The Omnipotent Mother” (133).

3 “It was never a question—except in an abstract manner?—of the relation between two individuals here and now present one to the other, even, in fact in the context of marriage” (Irigaray, “Thinking Life as Relation” 354).

4 See Irigaray’s “Thinking Life as a Relation”: “...to live maternity, men should accomplish two cultural revolutions: to prefer life over death, to be capable of a radical respect of the other’s alterity. Without these two mutations, I think that men are not capable of engendering the living endowed with autonomous existence with response to them” (348). Walsh’s “Between Maternity and Paternity, Parts 1 & 2” also argues this point.

5 Oliver’s placental model advocates intersubjective fluidity within and between identities; she conceives the body as a porous entity governed by movement, arguing that the maternal body is analogous to communication, a similar circulatory system. The placenta sets up a circulatory system between (and within) the maternal body and the fetus, so that “rather than destroy each other through the mediation of the placenta, they engage in mutually beneficial fluid exchange” (Subjectivity Without Subjects 150). In terms of intersubjectivity, the placental model accommodates changing identifications, while providing secure boundaries.

Anne Caldwell (2002) echoes this alternative. In relation to equality, Caldwell suggests that liberal democracies fail to recognize differentiated identities and needs of citizens, since the “norm of abstract equality excludes the very idea of plurality ... Unable to recognize plurality, politics can only be ‘crowd control,’ the form of power suited for an undifferentiated citizenry” (“Transforming sacrifice” n.p.).

6 This research is based on Shosana Felman and Dori Laub’s (1992) analyses of eyewitness testimonies of the Holocaust in Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History. Discussed in Oliver’s Witnessing, in the chapter called “The Necessity and Impossibility of Witnessing” (85-230).

7 Oliver adapts J. J. Gibon’s psychological model of “ecological optics,” an intermodal sensory-perceptual system to postulate a parallel system of facilitating potentials and opportunities in communication to describe this kind of vision (see Witnessing 191-96).

8 I agree with Dibastista’s (1986) interpretation that the fragile relationship between Isa and Giles may arise from an aggrieved spirit of “thwarted individuality” on both sides: “from the mistimed conjunctions of will and desire, from the intolerable passivity that is compensated by real or imagined acts of sadistic aggression” (151). This interpretation problematises the denial of subjectivity for both male and female patriarchal subjects. Giles is just as unhappy as Isa, and gains little more (if anything) than she does from
their current living conditions. Giles’ unhappiness emerges through Woolf’s motif of passivity evoked the novel’s war setting as well as the “tragic” dimensions of relational identity, when mutual respect of difference is not present. Reese (1996), for instance, argues that this sense of tragedy stems from characters whose problems originate in “mutual violation of inner personas” (141), the inability to sustain difference without psychic violence.

By placing Isa’s ambiguous feelings concerning her marriage in the context of her ability to nurture an aesthetic interior life of her own, Woolf empowers her within and beyond the domestic sphere, as her deft acts of refusing to meet Giles’ eyes or to share his “banana” imply (Between 128, 155).

9 26 April 1938.

10 See Marder (1988) for parallels between this scene and Bertolt Brecht’s epic theatre (433).

11 Harper (1982) interprets this scene as dissolution of perspective and “openness in consciousness”: “Nothing specific remains except the eternal drama of consciousness itself” (317). To me, this dissolution and openness suggests an overall expansion of inter/transsubjectivity.

12 An allusion to Joseph Conrad’s critique of British imperialism in Africa in Heart of Darkness (1898).

13 See Lane’s (1987) analyses of Woolf’s characters’ “act’ions, despite their “apparent impotence and debilitating vacillations between love and hatred” (104)

14 Woolf’s contextualisation of Isa’s individual thought regarding romantic love—“it was time someone invented a new plot, or that the author came out of the bushes” (156)—suggests a momentary superimposition of Isa and La Trobe’s characters. Just as La Trobe envisions her new play, Isa needs a new play. This superimposition suggests, once more, the virtuality, or non-presence of identity desirable for intersubjective connection.

15 Also see Kaivola (1991): “The ending is far from utopian: it is not a matriarchal fantasy that Woolf indulges but a language that would write directly toward what culture represses, that would write of the night, of the unconscious, and of unexplored regions of female subjectivity” (57).

Rather than emphasising the primal, aggressive instinct to survival, I believe that Woolf connotes protection and connection through shared fears in her figure of the “watching” cave dwellers. Whether interpreted in relation to the impending war, or just to Isa and Giles’ marriage, my more positive reading of the prehistorical allusions suggests that fighting must happen before civilization can be restored.

16 Harriett Blodgett’s (1983) note on this scene seems correct here—hate, “the underside of love,” is preliminary to love (34). Similarly, but with a more explicit feminist slant, Ray (1990) argues: “Therefore, to read the conclusion of the novel as Isa capitulating to the enemy by going to bed with her husband is to ignore the profound significance of the power gradually gained by Isa through her silent discourse. Just as she has prevented both fable and newspaper story from reshaping her life according to their dictates, Isa will similarly prevent marriage from dictating the usual closure to the end of a day” (47).

Although I don’t agree that Isa achieves power through silence, I agree that Isa, through communication with her husband—whether it be through silence or speech—Isa actively shapes the marriage into the union that it could be—rather than follows the dictates of what it should be. This interpretation is supported by Woolf’s choice of setting. The separation of Isa and Giles from the rest of the family supports Woolf’s thoughts concerning the artifice of social display and the authenticity of the self emerging in privacy: “I think action generally unreal. Its [sic] the thing we do in the dark that is more real; the thing we do because peoples [sic] eyes are on us seems to me histrionic, small boyish. However I havent [sic] got this expressed and I daresay difference of sex makes a different view” (Letters VI 122, cited in Roe 144).

17 As Beer (1994) suggests, although this scene is “sexual, theatrical, war-like,” it does suggest “continuance” (397).
Works Cited

Primary Sources


-----. *This is the End*. London: Macmillan, 1925. First printed 1917.


----- *Change the Name*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1941.


----- “Notes for Reading at Random.” *Twentieth Century Literature* 25.3/4 (Fall/Winter 1979): 374-76.


**Secondary Sources**


-----. “Understanding as Over-hearing: Towards a Dialogics of Voice.” *New Literary History* 32.3 (Summer 2001b): 597-619.


Ames, Christopher. “The Modernist Canon Narrative: Virginia Woolf’s *Between the Acts* and Joyce’s ‘Oxen of the Sun.’” *Twentieth Century Literature* 35 (Winter


Bazin, Nancy Tapping and Lauter, Jane Hamovit. "Virginia Woolf's Keen Sensitivity to


Works Cited


-----.

-----.


-----.


**From the Ground Up: Reclaiming our World at the Grassroots.** Available at: <http://www.umich.edu/~aamigjb>. [June 23, 2003].


Greenberg, Judith. "'When Ears are Deaf and the Heart is Dry': Traumatic Reverberations in *Between the Acts.*" *Woolf Studies Annual* 7 (2001): 49-74.


-----.

-----.


Hokanson, Robert O’Brien. “‘Is It All a Story?’: Questioning Revision in H.D.’s Helen in Egypt.” *American Literature* 64.2 (June 1992): 331-46.


“Stanley Fish and the Constructivist Basis of Postclassical Narratology.” *NarrNet* (Narratology Network). Available at: <http://www.uni-koeln.de/~ame02/jahn00.htm> [January 1, 2003].


-----.”The Novel, the Play, and the Book: *Between the Acts* and the Tragicomedy of History.” *ELH* 60 (Fall 1993): 787-812.


Metzger, Mary Janell. “‘Oedipal with a Vengeance’: Narrative, Desire and Violence in Luisa Valenzuel’s ‘Fourth Version’.” *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature* 14.2


NarrNet. An international website for individual and group-sponsored research into narratological projects, debates and resources. Available at: <http://www.narratology.net/index1.html> [January 8, 2003].


-----. “The Female Subject in Atom Egoyan’s Speaking Parts.” Unpublished manuscript, Directed Reading (Current Feminist Theory). University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C., April 1990b.


-----.


Spender, Dale. *The Writing or the Sex? Or, Why you don't have to read women's writing to know it's no good.* New York: Pergamon, 1989.


“Voice and Human Experience: Special Issue.” New Literary History 32.3 (Summer 2001).


