Silent Modernism

Soundscapes and the Unsayable in Richardson, Joyce, and Woolf

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How do you represent thoughts, feelings, and experiences for which words do not suffice? This question lies behind many of the experiments that characterize modernist fiction. *Silent Modernism: Soundscapes and the Unsayable in Richardson, Joyce, and Woolf* examines one of the solutions to the problem of representing the unrepresentable: letting silence speak instead of words. By closely examining the form and function of silence in the works of three central modernists – Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf – this award-winning study argues that silence is part of a modernist aesthetics that emphasizes suggestion rather than precision. Through silence, these three writers not only draw their readers' attention to difficulties concerning literary representation but also suggest the very content they cannot properly represent. Silence in the modernist novel is thus not an absence but an expression in its own right – and an essential aspect of modernist realism.

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Note on Editions

All references to the works of Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf will be given directly in the text, the only exception being essays and non-fiction, letters, and journals. The following editions and abbreviations are used throughout the study:

Dorothy Richardson

Pilgrimage, vol. I-IV (London: Virago, 1979); referred to as *P* and by volume (in the Richardson chapters, *Pilgrimage* will only be referred to by volume and page-number).

James Joyce

Dubliners, ed. by Jeri Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); referred to as *D*
    A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, ed. by Jeri Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); referred to as *PA*
    Ulysses: The Corrected Text, ed. by Hans Walter Gabler et al. (London: The Bodley Head, 1986); referred to as *U* (reference given by episode and line)
    Finnegans Wake (London: Penguin Books, 2000); referred to as *FW*
    Stephen Hero, ed. by Theodore Spencer, John J. Slocum, and Herbert Cahoon (New York: New Directions Books, 1959); referred to as *SH*

Virginia Woolf

The Voyage Out, ed. by Lorna Sage (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), referred to as *VO*

Night and Day, ed. by Suzanne Raitt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), referred to as *ND*

Jacob's Room, ed. by Kate Flint (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), referred to as *JR*

Mrs Dalloway, ed. by David Bradshaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), referred to as *MD*

To the Lighthouse, ed. by David Bradshaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), referred to as *TL*

Orlando, ed. by Rachel Bowlby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), referred to as *O*

The Waves, ed. by Michael Herbert and Susan Sellers, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Virginia Woolf (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), referred to as *W*

The Years, ed. by Hermione Lee (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), referred to as *Y*

Between the Acts, ed. by Frank Kermode (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), referred to as *BA*

The Collected Short Fiction of Virginia Woolf, ed. by Susan Dick (San Diego: Harcourt, 1989), referred to as *CSF*

Introduction

It seems more natural to associate the early twentieth century with an influx of sound than with silence. The changing urban environment, the new technologies, and the emergence of a new mass culture made the soundscape something very different from what had existed before.[1] But the busy sounds of the modern age also prompted a need for calm and stillness. Consequently, silence is often presented as a space for reflection and meditation in the early twentieth century; its representation in the literary texts of the period repeatedly connects it to the inner lives of characters. Silence in modernist fiction is presented not only as an element of the aural setting but as an aspect of inner life itself. There is thus an essential doubleness to moments of silence in modernist fiction: while they define the soundscape, and are as such part of the external reality in the fictional world, they also represent occurrences in the mind and consciousness of the characters experiencing the silence.

This study examines silence in modernist fiction, explaining how and why silence forms a central aspect of the kind of realism that the modernist novel aimed to achieve. It is concerned with the concept of silence both as it relates to the texts' soundscapes and to the literary expression of which they are a part; I argue that these two kinds of silence are often related in modernist fiction, and that silence as part of the soundscape frequently represents aspects of human experience and the 'real' that are difficult to convey concretely in words. Throughout this study, those aspects are re-

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1 The term 'soundscape' was coined by R. Murray Schafer in *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1977). Initially used to refer to the sound-setting of actual life – which is also how it is used above – it has subsequently been appropriated to refer to the sound-setting of literary texts as well, which is how it is used throughout this study.

ferred to as the unsayable. Silence in modernist fiction is thus a response and a solution to formal and linguistic problems connected with the representation of mind as well as with emotional and spiritual experiences.

While the study examines silence in connection to the generic features of the modernist novel at large, it also looks more closely at the work of three central modernist novelists: Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf. The manifestation of silence in the work of these three writers exemplifies its presence in modernist fiction in general at the same time as it reflects the individual concerns and aesthetics of each writer. For a study focused on modernist fiction, the choice of Joyce and Woolf seems self-evident; as most attempts to define the modernist novel place these two writers centre-stage, it is relevant to look at their use of silence for what it reveals not only about their own writing but about the genre at large. The choice of Dorothy Richardson seems pertinent, too, because of the importance of silence to her thirteen-novel sequence *Pilgrimage*. Richardson's work has moreover attracted increased critical attention in recent years, prompting a re-evaluation of her position as a modernist 'outsider'.[2]

It should be noted that this study deals with silence in modernist *fiction* and not with silence in modernism at large. The various art-forms and cultures that the term 'modernism' has been made to encompass are too many and too incompatible to fit under the same umbrella. This is true even for literary genres. Beyond a number of shared broad concerns – for example, themes such as consciousness, rupture, urban life, and alienation, to name a few – the formal experimentation that is often emphasized as characteristic of the period looks very different in prose and poetry. Tracing early twentieth-century developments in literature through fiction and poetry respectively will consequently produce two very different narratives concerning the genealogy of modernism. In fact, anyone who delves into

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2 Deborah Parsons's *Theorists of the Modernist Novel: James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson, and Virginia Woolf* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007) indicates the change in Richardson's position within the modernist fiction canon, placing her centre-stage together with Joyce and Woolf. Another clear indication of the growing interest in Richardson's writing is the newly launched journal for Dorothy Richardson studies, *Pilgrimages* (2008-), as well as the ongoing Dorothy Richardson Editions Project, which aims to produce scholarly volumes of Richardson's letters and fiction (Oxford University Press).

the mass of critical studies concerned with 'modernism' is likely to wonder at some point if these studies actually discuss the same subject. The narrative about the men of 1914, for example, defines modernism in terms of anti-romanticism, Classicism, and impersonality.[3] Such a definition does not fit the modernist novel, which generally emphasizes a highly subjective perspective, the flux of experience, and the personal. Conflicts like these have become intrinsic to the term, however, and by now, we are used to talking about modernisms rather than modernism as one uniform movement.[4]

What follows, then, is not a precise definition, but rather an attempt to delineate a subgenre that – much like any other genre – refuses to sit still for its portrait. When reading the modernist novel in relation to the history and development of the novel as a genre rather than to the broader movement of modernism, the break with what went before does not appear sudden but gradual. The roots of modernism in fiction can be traced to the late-Victorian novel where an interest in psychology as a science is clearly manifested in works such as George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*.[5] It was not until the 1890s, however, that the growing interest in the human psyche came to influence not only the contents of the novel but

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3 Maud Ellmann claims, for example, that the 'notion of impersonality is crucial to modernist aesthetics'; *The Poetics of Impersonality: T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1987), p. 3.

4 Shari Benstock's *Women of the Left Bank: 1900-1940* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986) questions earlier accounts of the modernist period by focusing on female writers that had previously been largely ignored. Similarly, Bonnie Kime Scott's edited volume *The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1990) draws further attention to a number of female writers from the early twentieth century, among them Dorothy Richardson. Following Peter Nicholls's *Modernisms: A Literary Guide* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995), suspicion towards 'monolithic' definitions of modernism has become standard practice (p. vii).

5 George Levine argues that Eliot's late fiction is characterized by the same 'scientific-empiricist world view' that shaped Joseph Conrad's works; this 'world-view', shaped by the ideas of T. H. Huxley, John Tyndall, and W. K. Clifford, according to Levine, awakened Eliot's interest in things unseen and in the mind as an organism. See *The Realistic Imagination: English Fiction from* Frankenstein *to* Lady Chatterley (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 252-90. See also Philip Davis, *The Victorians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 163-96.

also its form.[6] This development was a dynamic process and did not constitute a clear linear movement.[7] While the years in focus for this study are roughly 1900-1940 – the years in which Richardson, Joyce, and Woolf were active – I consider the late nineteenth century as the starting point of this process and thus include the work of Joseph Conrad and Henry James in my consideration of the modernist novel as a subgenre.[8]

What predominantly sets the modernist novel apart from what came before, then, is its manifold experimentation with form. The modernist novel not only presents the flux of its characters' minds, but represents it. It does not describe; it demonstrates. In the modernist novel, form becomes content; to understand exactly what a specific modernist novel is suggesting about the human mind, readers must pay as much attention to *how* something is said as to *what* is said.

Certainly, far from all novels that appeared during these years can be considered modernist. As Chris Baldick asserts, modernism was a 'minority current' in the early twentieth century, and works that are now canonized were then read only by the few.[9] In fact, the terms 'modernist' and 'modernism' were rarely used before 1940. Instead, early twentieth-century critics like Cyril Connolly talked about the 'modern movement', a movement that had its roots not in the work of Conrad, James, or even Joyce, but – perhaps surprisingly – in the writing of E. M. Forster, who to

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6 Harry Levin notes that modernist fiction 'was spurred to such feats of self-consciousness by the revelations of psychoanalysis', a view that has often been repeated and is sometimes taken for granted; 'What Was Modernism?', in *Refractions: Essays in Comparative Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 271-95 (p. 289).

7 Peter Brooker suggests that we should adopt the term 'early modernism' instead of 'premodernism' when discussing, for example, the works of Conrad and James, 'since it allows us to think of modernism as a process of change and development rather than an "evolution" upwards towards an achieved end from which there is then a falling away'; 'Early Modernism', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Modernist Novel*, ed. by Morag Shiach (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 32-47 (p. 33).

8 Joyce wrote the first version of what was to become *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in 1904, when he submitted the semi-autobiographical essay 'A Portrait of the Artist' to the newly launched journal *Dana* for publication (it was refused); soon after, he began writing the first stories in *Dubliners*. Richardson began writing short fiction pieces in 1908, and finished *Pointed Roofs*, the first volume in *Pilgrimage*, early in the spring of 1913.

9 Baldick, *The Modern Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 3.

Connolly 'established a point of view, a technique, and an attitude to the reader that were to be followed by psychological novelists for another thirty years'.[10] Moreover, Connolly's 'modern movement' did not only include the literary experiments of those writers who are now referred to as modernist, but also George Gissing, Oscar Wilde, John Galsworthy, Saki, and H. G. Wells.[11]

It is standard procedure in discussions of modernism to point out that the term is a critical creation from the second half of the twentieth century, and that, in the words of Morag Shiach, there would be no modernism without 'institutionalized literary criticism and without a pedagogy of English that constitutes and disseminates its canon'.[12] This is true as far as the term itself goes, but even though experimental early twentieth-century writers did not define themselves as 'modernists', they did set themselves apart from their predecessors and more conventional contemporaries. In fact, it is a characteristic of the modernist novel that it repeatedly sought to define itself as not-novel, in order to emphasize its break with the past. For instance, Woolf referred to her writing as her 'so-called novels' and considered 'elegy' a more fitting term for *To the Lighthouse* (1927); Ford Madox Ford wrote in response to the 'nuvvle'; and Richardson's Miriam in turn attacks the 'hideous, irritating, meaningless word *novvle*' (*P*, IV, p. 239).[13] T. S. Eliot wrote that *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) was Joyce's only novel and *Ulysses* something else completely: 'If it is not a novel, that is simply because the novel is a form which will no longer

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10 Connolly, *Enemies of Promise* (London: George Routledge, 1938), p. 32.

11 Connolly, pp. 33-4.

12 Shiach, 'Reading the Modernist Novel: An Introduction', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Modernist Novel*, ed. by Morag Shiach (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 1-14 (p. 5).

13 Virginia Woolf, 'A Sketch of the Past', in *Moments of Being: A Collection of Autobiographical Writing*, ed. by Jeanne Schulkind (San Diego: Harcourt, 1985), pp. 64-159 (p. 70); *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Anne Olivier Bell, 5 vols (London: The Hogarth Press, 1977-84), III: 1925-1930 (1980), 34; Ford Madox Ford, *The English Novel: From the Earliest Days to the Death of Joseph Conrad* (London: J. B. Lippincott, 1929; repr. Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1997), p.105.

serve'.[14] What all these attempts to redefine and rename demonstrate is a recognition of difference, perhaps even radical difference; by renaming it, writers and critics emphasize what the modernist novel is *not*. If our understanding of the novel as a genre today is different from what it was a hundred years ago, it is because early twentieth-century writing changed our notions about what the novel can or should be.

If the form of the modernist novel is something new, its focus on silence is by no means revolutionary. Silence has been a trope since the beginning of literary expression, usually presented as one half of a binary pair. It has been coupled with plenty of partners; most commonly, it is contrasted against sound or speech. In her study of the history of silence, Eva Österberg suggests a number of other pairs: noise vs. stillness; 'the world's turmoil' vs. nature/mysticism/God; openness vs. secrecy; publicity vs. privacy; memory vs. forgetfulness; life vs. death.[15] Besides designating an absence of sound, silence has been used to describe and represent the most variegated phenomena, such as emotions, states of mind, relationships, suppression, power, propriety and social norms, and spirituality. It often relates to the ineffable, and at times to the unthinkable – that which cannot be put into words owing to the risk of trivializing or normalizing the horrific.[16] In the second half of the twentieth century, silence has also been

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14 'The novel ended with Flaubert and with James', Eliot continues; '*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth', in *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. by Frank Kermode (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), pp. 175-8 (p. 177).

15 Österberg, *Tystnader och tider: Samtal med historien* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2011), p. 33 (my translation). To these pairs can be added community vs. alienation or aloneness.

16 An aspect of such silence, in connection to bereavement and the First World War, is examined in chapter six. Silence as the unthinkable has often been discussed in relation to Holocaust literature. According to Jean-François Lyotard, transcribing the horrors of the Holocaust is impossible, because there is no idiom in which to justly represent it; *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, transl. by Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), §160, pp. 104-6. Nicoletta Simborowski writes that in works like Primo Levi's *Se questo è un uomo* (1947; in English, *If This Is a Man*), based on Levi's own experience of the Holocaust, much is left unsaid, partly because the author himself wished to 'spare his readers', but also to create in words 'a kind of deliberate resistance and partial antidote' to the 'brutalizing effects' of the 'subject described', which to Levi enters 'the realms of the obscene and therefore cannot be discussed'. To Simborowski, Levi's unwillingness to speak of the crimes of which he was a victim demonstrates both how he has

associated with nothingness, lack of values, and nihilism – moving towards what Ihab Hassan refers to as 'anti-literature'.[17]

While the use of silence in literature from different epochs sometimes adheres to similar patterns, it is also possible to discern differences in how silence is used during different periods. As Silvia Montiglio reminds us, silence as a concept is culturally specific, and how it is understood and defined depends on the time and place to which it belongs.[18] When silence in modernist fiction is contrasted with its function in, for example, the nineteenth-century novel or the Edwardian novel, differences emerge, and these differences connect the use of silence to the dominant aesthetics and philosophical paradigms of each period.[19] For example, the materialist re-

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been silenced and how the horrors of the crimes themselves move beyond comprehension and thus beyond language. See *Secrets and Puzzles: Silence and the Unsaid in Contemporary Italian Writing* (Oxford: Legenda, 2003), p. 28.

17 Hassan, *The Literature of Silence: Henry Miller and Samuel Beckett* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), p. xi, *et passim*. 'The force of evasion, or absence in the new literature is radical indeed', Hassan writes, suggesting that absence 'strikes at the roots' of literature, '[inducing], metaphorically, a great silence'; the words on the page that remain are cries of 'outrage', and voices of 'apocalypse' (p. 4). Here, too, silence has been related to the horrors of the Holocaust. For example, André Neher – attempting to reconcile the idea of a Biblical God with the fact of Auschwitz – writes of God's inexplicable silence before human suffering; see *The Exile of the Word: From the Silence of the Bible to the Silence of Auschwitz*, transl. by David Maisel (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1981), pp. 135-7, 142-3.

18 Montiglio, *Silence in the Land of Logos* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 3.

19 The use of the term 'Edwardian' to specify a certain kind of novel is fraught with all kinds of difficulties, especially as the Edwardian era, strictly speaking, only lasted the nine brief years of the reign of King Edward VII (1901-1910). However, the writers often referred to as Edwardian – usually Wells, Galsworthy, and Arnold Bennett – were still active after 1910 (and, in fact, often began their careers before 1900), and continued to dominate the literary scene at least until the 1920s. In the following, I use the term 'Edwardian novel' to refer to a subgenre of realist fiction, and not as a temporal designator (although, certainly, the Edwardian novel – or at least its writers – is associated with the first decade of the twentieth century); I return to and discuss this subgenre more thoroughly in chapter one. Anne Fernihough refers to the 'long Edwardian period', which lasted until the outbreak of war in 1914; *Freewomen and Supermen: Edwardian Radicals and Literary Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 48. John Batchelor uses the term 'Edwardian' in a strictly temporal sense and includes in his discussion writers that today are generally considered

alism of Edwardian fiction seldom attempts to represent the inner lives of its characters directly, and descriptions of silence are but rarely associated with anything other than the soundscapes of the external world. Silence is used, however, to create dramatic pauses in dialogue or to shroud certain characters or experiences in mystery. By contrast, silence in modernist fiction is often a subjective experience that may be read as a representation of a character's inner life. There, silence is connected to experiences of life and self that are not necessarily unintelligible, but rather ineffable or non-verbal by their very nature.

Because the study of silence in literature has become such a disparate field – encompassing many incompatible definitions and approaches to the topic – the kind of silence that is examined in this study requires specification. First, a distinction needs to be made between two different types of silence: silence as the unsayable and silence as the unsaid. This study focuses on silence as the unsayable, a term that refers to something that cannot be put into words because it corresponds to ineffable or ungraspable experiences; in chapter one, I argue that the focus on the unsayable in the modernist novel is connected to an early twentieth-century language crisis. The unsaid, on the other hand, refers to something that could have been stated or spoken but for some reason is not. These two categories roughly correlate to Patricia Ondek Laurence's differentiation between three kinds of silence in Woolf's writing: a. The 'unsaid', 'something one might have felt but does not say'; b. The 'unspoken', which is 'something not yet formulated or expressed in voiced words'; and c. The 'unsayable', 'something not sayable based on the social taboos of Victorian propriety or something about life that is ineffable'.[20] Laurence's second category, the

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modernist or early modernist, such as Conrad and Ford Madox Ford; see *The Edwardian Novelists* (London: Duckworth, 1982), p. vii. For further discussions of the term 'Edwardian', see Jonathan Rose, *The Edwardian Temperament 1895-1919* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1986), pp. xiii-xiv.

20 Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 1. Silence as the 'unsaid' has, of course, elicited a great deal of criticism, focused largely on the act of silencing or the state of having been silenced by someone or something. Tillie Olsen's *Silences* (1978), for example, is a seminal critical work engaging with such silences from a feminist perspective, including a discussion of the work of Virginia Woolf. See *Silences* (New York: Delacorte Press/Seymour Lawrence, 1978;

'unspoken', appears to correspond to silences that could also be categorized as either the 'unsaid' or the 'unsayable'; nonverbal thought content, for example, is considered an aspect of the 'unsayable' throughout this study, as it essentially defies language. Moreover, something that is not sayable because of 'Victorian propriety' appears to be silence as the 'unsaid' rather than the 'unsayable'. In the present study, the unsayable refers to experiences and states of mind that cannot be represented linguistically.

Furthermore, in attempting to establish a method for reading and interpreting the nuances of silence in modernist fiction, I distinguish between form and function. Silence as form constitutes its *manifestation* in the literary text – that is, silence as sound-setting, literary style, graphical representation, conversational attribute, and narrative gap. Function, on the other hand, has to do with the *meaning* of the individual silence, and affects how the manifestations of silence should be understood. There are many such functions, which may, for example, relate to spiritual or emotional experiences, non-verbal thought-processes, or implicit power structures. In the following, my discussion of modernist silence encompasses all forms that suggest the unsayable, but it concentrates on the connection between silence as soundscape and silence as an aspect of literary expression.

Primarily, the study focuses on descriptions of silence that are part of the texts' soundscapes. This includes what will in the following be referred to as 'stated silences' – that is, silences that are directly described and defined in the text, such as Marlow's description of the jungle in *Heart of Darkness* as 'a great silence, an impenetrable forest'.[21] At times, it also includes what will be referred to as 'unstated silences'; these are silences that are distinguishable only by inference: they are construed by the absence of any mention of sound or the perception thereof. Both stated and unstated silences generally correlate to individual characters' perception of and interaction with the external world.

Often, both kinds of silence have to be understood in relation to sound; their meaning emerges through contrast and connotations, noticeable, for

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repr. New York: Feminist Press, 2003).

21 'Heart of Darkness', in *Youth, Heart of Darkness, The End of the Tether*, ed. by Owen Knowles, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Joseph Conrad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 43-126 (p. 77).

example, in how silence is frequently associated with private, inner worlds and sound with the external, social world.[22] Silence frequently marks moments when the inner life of a character overrides perception, signalling, in such cases, a contemplative stance or inner experiences. If, as Steven Connor has argued, sound and listening turn the self into a membrane, making the boundaries between self and world opaque, silence shuts the grids, as it were, blocking sense-impressions of the outer world.[23] Characters who have turned their focus elsewhere do not appear to register the sounds in their surroundings, and thus unconsciously think of the setting as silent. In the following, I refer to this type of stated silences as silent moments: they mark instances when stated silences suggest inner experiences.

While silence in literature is often discussed in terms of absence, the defined silences that are examined in this study are very much present in the texts.[24] In a sense, these silences represent something that is absent from

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22 It has been suggested that auditory perception is the dominant sense of the modernist text; see primarily Angela Frattarola, 'Developing an Ear for the Modernist Novel: Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, and James Joyce', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 33.1 (2009), 132-53, and Steven Connor, 'The Modern Auditory I', in *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present*, ed. by Roy Porter (London: Routledge, 1996). Both Frattarola and Connor argue for the 'rise' of the ear with reference to Martin Jay's notion of an age of 'antiocularcentrism', developed in 'The Rise of Hermeneutics and the Age of Ocularcentrism', *Poetics Today*, 9.2 (1988), 307-326, and *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision on Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). It should be noted, however, that Jay's argument is centered on French thought, in which he identifies a 'remarkably pervasive and increasingly vocal hostility to visual primacy […] ever since the time of Bergson'; 'The Rise of Hermeneutics', p. 308.

23 Listening, Connor argues, turns the self into a membrane, a 'channel through which voices, noises and musics travel'; vision, by contrast, separates not only objects from each other, but the self from the world. To Connor, the 'auditory self discovers itself in the midst of the world and the manner of its inherence in it, not least because the act of hearing seems to take place in and through the body. The auditory self is an attentive rather than an investigatory self, which takes part in the world rather than taking aim at it'. See 'The Modern Auditory I', pp. 203-23 (pp. 207, 219).

24 Discussions of silence as absence often make an issue of the claim that what we designate as silence in a text cannot be completely silent, because if it was, we would not know it was there. As Susan Sontag claims, as 'a property of the work of art itself, silence can exist only in a cooked or non-literal sense', for any suggestion of silence in a work of art is thus negated by the fact that the work of art exists at all: the act of expression rejects the idea of a complete silence; see 'The Aesthetics of Silence', in *Styles of Radical Will* (London:

the text, but what is absent is its expression – its sound, as it were – not its existence. Often, the presence of silence in modernist fiction implies that an undefined *something* is silent; what is absent is its verbal expression. Throughout this study, I read silence in modernist fiction as part of what Allon White has termed an aesthetic of obscurity, which attempts to say the unsayable through symbols, metaphors, associations, and negations.[25] Ultimately, my examination of modernist silence aims to explain an aspect of the modernist novel's experimentation with form: how it circumscribes rather than describes, and how the silent 'something' still constitutes a presence in the text. Chapters two to seven below trace silent presences in the works of Richardson, Joyce, and Woolf. While these authors' respective use of silence is often idiosyncratic and particular to individual scenes and contexts, this study shows that they share a number of formal concerns and solutions.

Whereas numerous studies analyse and discuss silence from different perspectives, no full-length study has previously been devoted to silence as part of the soundscape in modernist fiction. Instead, studies of silence in literature tend to define silence as absent speech-acts or as narrative gaps or ellipses.[26] Works on silence in modernist fiction are apt to focus on in-

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Penguin, 1966, repr. 2009), pp. 3-34 (p. 10). Partial silence – that which is obscure but yet present, if only as a trace – should thus, some critics argue, not be treated as a silence as all. Jacques Derrida categorizes such partial silence as 'indecision', arguing that 'if something is implied, it is not silent, and not unsaid, but 'undecided', and is cut off, 'in spite of appearances, from all meaning […] and from all referents'; see 'Mallarmé', in *Acts of Literature*, ed. by Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 110-26 (pp. 120-1).

25 See White, *The Uses of Obscurity: The Fiction of Early Modernism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981).

26 Gérard Genette, for example, defines 'ellipsis' as a 'nonexistent section of narrative' that corresponds 'to some duration of story'; *Narrative Discourse*, transl. by Jane E. Lewin (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), p. 93. The Genettian ellipsis can be, on the one hand, either definite (when the duration is indicated) or indefinite (when the duration is not indicated), and, on the other hand, either explicit (that is, stated in the text) or implicit ('not announced in the text' and only inferable through 'some chronological lacuna or gap in narrative continuity'), or, finally, hypothetical, that is, 'impossible to localize' and only revealed at a later point in the text through an analepsis (pp. 106-9).

dividual authors and follow the same pattern.[27] Laurence's study of silence in Woolf's fiction, for example, examines different kinds of silences, but generally focuses on absent speech-acts. Moreover, Laurence's perspective on Woolf's silence is largely feminist, which adds a political strand to her analysis; to Laurence, Woolf construes silence primarily as a female experience that seeks to evade the dominance and false certainty of male language.[28] While this perspective leads to some interesting conclusions, it tends to overlook how silence is used to represent the minds and selves of both male and female characters in modernist fiction. Similarly, Laurence's insistence that Woolf writes silence 'more than any other modernist' ignores the presence of silence in modernist fiction at large, and especially its significance for Richardson's *Pilgrimage* (1915-1967).[29] This significance is not lost on David Stamm, however, whose study on Richardson provides a useful survey of silence in *Pilgrimage*, contrasting it with sound and music.[30] While my own reading of Richardson's soundscapes builds on some aspects of Stamm's insights, it devotes more attention to the connection between silence and various states of mind – that is, how silence often represents not only Miriam's moods and emotions, but her very consciousness.

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27 For detailed references to research on silence in Richardson, Joyce, and Woolf, see chapter two (Richardson), chapter four (Joyce), and chapter six (Woolf). Full-length studies of silence in the works of other modernists are few, but see John Auchard, *Silence in Henry James: The Heritage of Symbolism and Decadence* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986).

28 As many of Woolf's central characters are women, it is easy to infer that intense experiences of silence belong to a woman's sphere. Such a reading gains some force from many modernist writers' habit of speaking about 'feminine' and 'masculine' prose – this is for example how Richardson distinguished between her own project and those of the more conventional realists. See Dorothy Richardson, 'Foreword', in *Pilgrimage*, 4 vols (London: Virago, 1979), I, pp. 9-12. To Richardson, not all writers of 'feminine' prose were women: she includes Joyce and Dickens in her description. Renée Stanton has suggested that the reference to Joyce and Dickens is sarcastic, however; see 'Genette, Paratexts, and Dorothy Richardson', *Pilgrimages*, 5 (2012), 82-109 (p. 107).

29 Laurence, pp. 8, 12 *et passim*.

30 *A Pathway to Reality: Visual and Aural Concepts in Dorothy Richardson's* Pilgrimage (Tübingen: Francke Verlag, 2000); see chapter four, 'Silence: In Quest for Truth', pp. 173-211. Stamm's study is discussed further in chapter two.

In the literary soundscape, as in actual life, sound is the given: that which is heard, experienced, and (most of the time) understood.[31] By contrast, silence represents the enigma – that which remains 'ungiven' and unclear, even to the perceiver. Humankind belongs within and without this silence, which can be experienced but rarely completely understood. By evading definition, it can at once be everything and nothing. To Ludwig Wittgenstein, language is able to describe only a very limited part of reality. The famous seventh proposition of his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1918) – 'What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence' – suggests that anything existing outside the limited reach of words is silence.[32] Wittgenstein's eloquent phrase captures the scepticism towards language that was generally felt around the turn of the century, and that is clearly noticeable in the late nineteenth-century novel and onwards. In the modernist novel, descriptions of silence as part of the soundscape suggest the unsayable, drawing attention to those aspects of human experience that cannot be captured in words. Consequently, the modernist novel is not silent about that of which it cannot speak, but chooses silence as its way of speaking.

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31 As Don Ihde writes, sounds 'come unbidden into presence' and by listening to it, 'humankind belongs within the event'; *Listening and Voice: Phenomenologies of Sound* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), p. 109.

32 Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. by D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness ([London]: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961; repr. Abingdon: Routledge, 2001), 6.54, p. 89.

Chapter 1
A Crisis of Realism

'Half the words we use have no meaning whatever and of the other half each man understands each word after the fashion of his own folly and conceit [...] [W]ords, once pronounced, die'

Joseph Conrad, 1898[1]

In an early scene in *Orlando*, the protagonist struggles with the capriciousness of words, finding them unable to get to the core of the matter at hand: 'He was describing, as all young poets are for ever describing, nature, and in order to match the shade of green precisely he looked […] at the thing itself, which happened to be a laurel bush growing beneath the window' (*O*, p. 16). His examination of the 'thing itself', however, leads Orlando to despair over the difficulty of finding words to represent it, as '[g]reen in nature is one thing, green in literature another' (*O*, p. 16). How to write the right kind of green? Orlando concludes despondently that nature and literature have 'a natural antipathy; bring them together and they tear each other to pieces' (*O*, p. 16).

This portrayal of a young poet's struggles satirizes a scenario common enough in the early twentieth century, and, moreover, touches on circumstances that often troubled Woolf herself as a writer: the conflict between the wish to portray reality in words and the difficulty of making language

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1 Letter to R. B. Cunninghame Graham, 14 January, 1898, *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad*, ed. by Frederick R. Karl and Laurence Davies, 9 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983-2007), II: 1898-1902 (1986), p. 17.

not only express, but represent, perceived reality.[2] It is surely no coincidence that it is in the modern period that Orlando finishes her great poem 'The Oak Tree', after several centuries of poetic struggle. She does so in a manner characteristic of the modern period; giving up on writing the right kind of green, Orlando opts for a blank instead:

> For it has come about, by the wise economy of nature, that our modern spirit can almost dispense with language; the commonest expressions do, since no expressions do; hence the most ordinary conversation is often the most poetic, and the most poetic is precisely that which cannot be written down. For which reasons we leave a great blank here, which must be taken to indicate that the space is filled to repletion. (*O*, p. 242)

The passage is followed by six lines of empty space, presumably for readers to fill as they wish. Significantly, Orlando's solution to the dilemma is directly associated both with the 'modern spirit' and with early twentieth-century literary practices; finding that no words will mirror her exact experience of nature, she leaves a suggestive silence, inviting readers to fill the blank with their own experience of the colour green.

Throughout this study, I address early twentieth-century linguistic difficulties in terms of a crisis of realism, since what is at stake here is the (im)possibility of achieving mimesis of certain aspects of reality through the use of language. The crisis primarily concerns the representation of mind and consciousness, a subject that forms the focus of the modern psychological novel that appeared at the end of the nineteenth century and developed into what is now generally referred to as modernist fiction.[3] The

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2 Several critics have argued that Woolf's description of Orlando's writing actually ridicules Vita Sackville-West's literary ambitions. See for example Victoria L. Smith, '"Ransacking the Language": Finding the Missing Goods in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 29.4 (2006), 57-75 (p. 66), and Jane Goldman, 'From *Mrs Dalloway* to *The Waves*', in *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Susan Sellers, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 49-69 (p. 64).

3 For discussions of the development of modernist fiction, see George Levine, *The Realistic Imagination: English Fiction from Frankenstein to Lady Chatterley* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 229-319, and Michael Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

term 'realism' is used throughout this study to describe any work of fiction that is, in the words of Pam Morris, 'based upon an implicit or explicit assumption that it is possible to communicate about a reality beyond the writing'.[4] The early twentieth-century crisis of realism, I argue, corresponds to a change in how psychology is represented in fiction. The problem is not only, as George Steiner suggests, the increasing 'awareness of the gap between the new sense of psychological reality and the old modes of rhetorical and poetic statement', but it is also that language was felt in this period to be a contradictory means of representing nonverbal aspects of consciousness.[5]

The notion of a crisis of realism implies that the representation of 'reality' – the world outside the self – had been experienced as unproblematic in the past but that something occurred around the turn of the century that unsettled writers and made them question the link between word and world. The representation of reality was certainly not as straightforward in the nineteenth century as is sometimes suggested by critics, however.[6] As George Levine convincingly argues, all realist fiction attempts to 'use language to get beyond language', and a novel like George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871-2) also illustrates how the 'true orders of reality' lie beyond language.[7] The tendency to question the possibility of representing the 'real' in the novel grew stronger towards the end of the nineteenth century.

Modernism is often defined in terms of conflict and discontinuity; here, I instead argue that the response to the crisis of realism that characterizes the early modernist novel reveals an attempt at continuity.[8] For all their

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4 Morris, *Realism* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 6.

5 Steiner, 'The Retreat from the Word', in *Language and Silence: Essays 1958-1966* (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), pp. 30-54 (p. 46).

6 For example, to Philip Weinstein, 'realism proposes […] that the representational field of space and time and others […] corresponds to the objective world itself'; *Unknowing: The Work of Modernist Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 2.

7 Levine, pp. 6, 261.

8 As Chris Baldick emphasizes, modern novels should not be read as 'subversions of the realist tradition but as extensions of it into what was often understood at the time to be a "psychological realism"'; see *The Modern Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 190. Likewise, Pam Morris writes that 'Modernist writers wrote out of a troubled sense that "reality", whether material or psychological, was elusive, complex, multiple and

positioning against their predecessors and more conventional contempo-
raries – an aspect of modernist-novel aesthetics to which I return below
– the writers of modernist fiction did not so much break with the high-re-
alist novel as develop it. Realism, Ford Madox Ford wrote in the late 1930s,
'is a frame of mind reinforced by the new literary technique of impression-
ism', which is Ford's term for the modern novel.[9] Likewise, Richardson,
Joyce, and Woolf did not abandon realism as an aesthetic paradigm; they
just redefined it.

Throughout this chapter, I chart variations between different kinds of
realisms by examining their various uses of silence, tracing a vague but
discernible evolution from the high-realist novel of the second half of the
nineteenth century to the (early) modernist novel of the 1910s and early
1920s. As mentioned in the introduction, the concept of silence has differ-
ent meanings and connotations in different cultures and contexts. That
this is so is clear from even a cursory consideration of the dissimilar shapes
given to silence in what is referred to below as the high-realist novel, the
Edwardian novel, and the modernist novel, respectively – the three realist
modes that will be compared in this chapter.[10] In each case, the configura-

unstable, but they still believed that the aim of their art was to convey knowledge, by
some new aesthetic means, of that tangibility' (p. 17). Dorrit Cohn, using the spiral as a
metaphor, argues that the history of the novel consists of a series of returns 'to its inward
matrix' – the 'mimesis of consciousness' – suggesting that the '"inward-turning" of the
stream-of-consciousness novel is not nearly so singular a phenomenon, nor so radical a
break with tradition as has been assumed'; see *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for
Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 9. For
general discussions about modernist fiction as realist fiction, see Baldick, *Modern Move-
ment*, pp. 189-211; Deborah Parsons, *Theorists of the Modernist Novel: James Joyce, Dorothy
Richardson, and Virginia Woolf* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), pp. 21-53; and Wayne C.
Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* 2nd edn (London: Penguin Books, 1983), pp. 53-60.

9 Ford, *The March of Literature: From Confucius to Modern Times* (London: George
Allen and Unwin, 1939), p. 839.

10 Generally, nineteenth-century realism can be described as reflecting the social world
while the psychological realism of the early twentieth century focuses on the inner, sub-
jective life of the individual. Even so, the realist novel of the nineteenth century cannot
be summarized by one label any more than the early twentieth-century novel can. Various
designations have been proposed to describe its various forms and shapes, such as 'social
problem novel' or 'condition-of-England novel'; see for example Michael Wheeler, *English
Fiction of the Victorian Period* (London: Longman, 1985), pp. 35-46. 'Condition-of-En-

tion of silence is revealed to be closely connected to the kind of realist aesthetics to which it belongs, especially when it comes to the problem of representation. An examination of the connections between the concept of silence and the representation of mind in all three realist modes indicates that the use of silence to represent the unrepresentable is particularly striking when it comes to the modernist novel.

Beyond the discussion of silence and realisms, this chapter will end with a consideration of the role that silence plays within modernist-novel aesthetics at large, and, more specifically, within the modernist aesthetics of obscurity. By looking at the concerns articulated by modernist writers and critics – in manifestos, essays, and other critical texts – I aim to situate silence within the larger context of the discussion concerning the modernist novel in the early twentieth century.

Realism: Towards the 'Something' Below the Surface

The shift from the high realism of the mid-nineteenth century to the modern psychological novel of the early twentieth century is often described in just two words: 'something happened'.[11] The vagueness of this statement attests to the uncertainties surrounding not only the claim itself but the

gland' novel is a term also used to describe certain novels in the early twentieth century; see for example Baldick, *Modern Movement*, pp. 180-8. Philip Davis defines 'high realism' as the 'domestic novel in the 1860s and 1870s', a novel that 1. makes 'material and social reality the foundation of literature'; 2. has the 'wider moral aim of committing imagination first to realizing, and then to rescuing, the inherent value of ordinary human life on earth; and 3. the questioning 'from within' the novel itself 'what if anything, beyond the reality of biological continuance, could support, explain, or justify the human world's own equivalent ongoing existence'. See *The Victorians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 358-60.

11 For example, Marianne Thormählen writes that '[s]omething happened in the early twentieth century that altered the writing of poetry, and "modernism" is as good a name for it as any other'; 'Modernism and the Georgians', in *Rethinking Modernism*, ed. by Marianne Thormählen (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 77-94 (p. 90). Other examples can be found in Katherine Isobel Baxter, *Joseph Conrad and the Swan Song of Romance* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 9, 12, and David D. Hall, 'A World Turned Upside Down?', *Reviews in American History*, 18.1 (1990), 10-14 (p. 10).

development it describes; although many have offered suggestions, it is not easy to define what the 'something' actually is.[12] The 'something happened' of modernism describes a shift not only in paradigm and aesthetics but in the early twentieth-century *Zeitgeist* itself: modern writers cultivated the idea of change as part of their aesthetic programmes, habitually dissociating themselves from the Victorian novels that Henry James labelled 'large loose baggy monsters' and that Ford Madox Ford referred to as 'nuvvles'.[13] It is this will to newness that is captured so well in Ezra Pound's catchphrase 'Make it new!'.[14]

In contrast with the 'monsters' of the nineteenth century, uncertainty forms the backbone of the modernist novel, which is often defined precisely with reference to its fragmentariness and elusiveness.[15] Silence is a notable

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12 Woolf, who famously argued that 'on or about December 1910 human character changed', offers the changed behaviour of her cook as an example of the 'something'. Whereas the Victorian cook lived in 'the lower depths, formidable, silent, obscure, inscrutable', the Georgian cook is instead 'a creature of sunshine and fresh air' who comes into the drawing room 'to ask advice about a hat'; 'Character in Fiction', *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Andrew McNeillie and others, 6 vols (London: The Hogarth Press, 1986-2011) III: 1919-1924, ed. by Andrew McNeillie (1988), 420-38 (pp. 421, 422). Baldick lists a number of events that occurred in 1910, such as the death of King Edward VII and the accession of King George V, the Post-Impressionist Exhibition, a wave of 'unofficial strikes' in the coal and rail industries, the first violent clash between police and suffragette demonstrators, and two general elections; *Modern Movement*, pp. 6-8.

13 Henry James, Preface to *The Tragic Muse*, in *The Critical Muse: Selected Literary Criticism*, ed. by Roger Gard (London: Penguin Books, 1987), pp. 511-26 (p. 515); Ford Madox Ford, *The English Novel: From the Earliest Days to the Death of Joseph Conrad* (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1997), p.105.

14 Pound apparently took this phrase from the Chinese emperor Cheng Tang, legendary founder of the Shang dynasty; see Jed Rasula, 'Make It New', *Modernism/modernity*, 17.4 (2010), 713-33.

15 Ioan Williams claims that there 'is no doubt that the mid-Victorian novel rested on a massive confidence as to what the nature of Reality actually was'; *The Realist Novel in England: A Study in Development* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1974), p. x. George Levine rightly questions this statement, arguing that a culture 'whose experience included the Romantic poets and the philosophical radicals; Carlyle and Newman attempting to define their faiths […]; the Higher Criticism of the Bible from Germany; Hume, Kant, Goethe, Comte, and Spencer, with their varying systems or antisystems; non-Euclidean geometry and a new anthropology made possible by a morally dubious imperialism; John Stuart Mill urging liberty and women's equality; Darwin, Huxley, and the agnostics; Tennyson

part of this aesthetics of uncertainty, suggesting and representing an unspoken 'something' in many texts.[16] The 'somethingness' of modernist-fiction aesthetics thus refers not to what is present on the page but what is missing; 'something' hovers between the lines – is glimpsed in the background of the setting – but refuses to be captured and defined. In the following discussion, this silent 'something' is considered an essential part of the modernist novel's 'newness' and aesthetics, present both in content and form.

Silence forms part of a solution to the problem of representation and the impossibility of making words represent certain aspects of reality; it repeatedly suggests the presence of that which cannot be expressed in language. Indeed, by making silence part of their literary works, modernist writers were able to circumvent the snares of representation and 'made new' the novel aesthetics of the nineteenth century. Here, five aspects of modern psychological realism that distinguish it from its Victorian counterpart will be briefly considered: 1. The shift in perspective from an (objective) omniscient narrator to the subjective viewpoint of the characters themselves; 2. The removal of running commentary and explanation of the events happening in the narrative (an aspect of the modern novel commonly referred to as 'show, don't tell'); 3. The re-definition of the concept of 'ordinariness'; 4. The shift in focus from the general to the particular and from metonymy to metaphor as the dominant linguistic figure; and

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struggling to reimagine faith; Browning, Arnold, Swinburne, Pater' cannot be understood as based on a general understanding as to the nature of 'Reality' (p. 20). On the modernist novel and fragmentation, see, for example, Sara Haslam, *Fragmenting Modernism: Ford Madox Ford, the Novel, and the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 2-19, 65-83, and Randall Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), pp. 124-51.

16 In fact, the very word 'something' appears with some regularity in modernist fiction, indicating 'something' that cannot be captured with words. This is the case in Richardson's *Pilgrimage*, where Miriam suggests that '[e]verybody is the same really, inside, under all circumstances. There's a dead level of astounding... *something*' (*P* III, p. 146). Ann-Marie Priest discusses similar words as 'placeholders' in an article on Woolf's *Night and Day*, arguing that they are used in Woolf's case to 're-create identity in ways that are not circumscribed by any existing models'; see 'Between Being and Nothingness: The "Astonishing Precipice" of Virginia Woolf's *Night and Day*', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 26 (2003), 66-80 (p. 66).

5. The emphasis on the un-shareable nature of private experience and a resulting fragmentariness in the text.[17]

The first of these aspects, the inward turn, is perhaps the modern novel's best-known trait, and it has been discussed at length.[18] Focusing on the inner realities of its characters instead of trying to be a window on the world, the modernist novel is no longer primarily concerned with making sense of the external world but rather with the sense-making process itself. Thus, it is not the object *per se* but the subject's experience of the object that forms the focus of modernist realism, a realism that does not strive to arrive at a final definition of the 'thing' but to represent the instability and flux of human consciousness. The focus on subjective experience in modernist fiction in a sense prevents – or saves – the modernists from postulating any objective truth in their works. As Linda M. Shires suggests, in modernist fiction – her example is Conrad – 'mystery and uncertainty' serve 'as evidence of secular epistemological fracture', while in the Victorian novel, they constitute 'a puzzle to be solved or an experience of the supernatural and unconscious to be accepted'.[19] In the novel around the turn of the century, truth was increasingly considered to be a relative con-

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17 It should be emphasized that in the following, my discussion of the modernist novel is general and does not cover all of its embodiments; for example, the modernist first-person novel, such as Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier* (1915) or Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1900) and *Lord Jim* (1900), is problematic in relation to the second aspect I discuss. To Baldick, Ford's first-person narration is an 'advantage' as it makes 'the inscrutability of other people an explicit theme of the narrative and a leading principle of its construction'; *Modern Movement*, p. 163.

18 See for example Leon Edel, *The Psychological Novel: 1900-1950* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1955); Robert Humphrey, *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel: A Study of James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, William Faulkner, and Others* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958). For a contrasting view, which reads the representation of mind in the modernist novel in terms of embodied cognition, see David Herman, '1880-1945: Re-Minding Modernism', in *The Emergence of Mind: Representations of Consciousness in Narrative Discourse in English*, ed. by David Herman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), pp. 243-72.

19 Shires, 'The Aesthetics of the Victorian Novel', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel*, ed. by Deirdre David (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 61-76 (p. 64).

cept, and knowledge about the world beyond the self was felt to be inaccessible.[20]

As has frequently been pointed out, realist fiction presents 'domesticated' versions of 'reality'.[21] The emplotment of reality in the novel contradicts the chaotic nature of the 'real'. 'Experience, like history', Tom Lloyd argues, 'is messy, chaotic, and not easily given to organization'.[22] While all realist fiction is subject to emplotment to some degree, the modernist novel is not as burdened by the contradiction between organization and objective presentation as the traditional realist novel, partly owing to the modernist novel's emphasis on subjective experience. The tendency towards chaos and contradiction as guiding principles for a realist aesthetic became prevalent as early as the end of the nineteenth century. It is, for example, noticeable in Henry James's suggestions that 'life' should be represented in fiction '*without* rearrangement', so that readers do not feel that they are 'being put off with a substitute, a compromise and convention'.[23] It is useful here to contrast James's statement with that of the narrator in George Eliot's *Adam Bede* (1859), who also claims 'to give a faithful account of men and things as they have mirrored themselves in [her] mind'.[24] The main difference between these two approaches to realism lies in the role of the narrator; while James's method presents us with an account that has

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20 In recent years, however, the question of modernism and objective reality has been the focus of a number of studies that examine modernists' knowledge of and relation to the debate in contemporary philosophy between 'realists' and 'idealists'. See especially Ann Banfield, *The Phantom Table: Woolf, Fry, Russell and the Epistemology of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), but also Deborah Longworth, 'Subject, Object and the Nature of Reality: Metaphysics in Dorothy Richardson's *Deadlock*', *Pilgrimages: A Journal of Dorothy Richardson Studies*, 2 (2009), 7-38, and S. P. Rosenbaum, *Aspects of Bloomsbury: Studies in Modern English Literary and Intellectual History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 1-36.

21 See for example Tom Lloyd, *Crises of Realism: Representing Experience in the British Novel, 1816-1910* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1997), pp. 9-14; and George Levine, *The Realistic Imagination*, p. 198.

22 Lloyd, p. 11.

23 James, 'The Art of Fiction', in *The Critical Muse: Selected Literary Criticism*, ed. by Roger Gard (London: Penguin, 1987), pp. 186-206 *(*p. 200).

24 Eliot, *Adam Bede*, ed. by Carol A. Martin, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), XVII, pp. 159.

not been 'rearranged' by a narrator, Eliot's mirror is situated in her narra-
tor's mind. If this mirror is 'defective', then 'the outlines will sometimes be
disturbed'.[25] Attempting to avoid such disturbances, the new kind of real-
ism sought to represent the chaos of immediate experience rather than the
imposed structure that comes, in May Sinclair's words, from a 'method of
after-thought, of spectacular reflection'.[26] Often, the act of emplotment
itself becomes the focus of the representation, as the novel traces the pro-
cesses by which its characters attempt to make sense of the world. *How* the
world is understood is of greater interest in the modernist novel than the
nature of reality itself.

A second central aspect of modernist fiction is its strong tendency to
demonstrate rather than describe. It shows; it does not tell. When it comes
to the representation of consciousness, demonstration becomes a question
of the narrative's perspective; whereas traditional realism writes *about* the
mind, modernist realism writes *through* it.[27] Modernist fiction often seeks
to represent the very moment of experience, a trait that Sinclair identifies
as an important aspect of *Pilgrimage*: 'the firsthand, intimate and intense
reality of the happening is in Miriam's mind, and by presenting it thus and
not otherwise Miss Richardson seizes reality alive'.[28] Reality alive – these
two words sum up the modernist novel beautifully, reaching the core of
what many modern writers considered the aim of their writing, namely to
represent an unmediated reality and to reproduce the actual experience of
sensations and impression. 'All art [...] appeals primarily to the senses',
Conrad asserts in his often-quoted Preface to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*
(1897), suggesting that the impressionist novel should not only describe

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25 Eliot, *Adam Bede*, XVII, p. 159.

26 Sinclair, 'The Novels of Dorothy Richardson', *Little Review*, 5 (1918), 3-11 (p. 9).

27 Certainly, there are modernist novels that could be said to be 'about' consciousness,
too; in fact, Dorothy Richardson uses this exact phrase to describe the difference between
Pilgrimage and Proust's À la *recherche*: '[Proust] is not, as has been said, writing through
consciousness, but about consciousness, a vastly different enterprise & one which allows
him to let himself go completely & write, as he wishes'. See *Windows on Modernism: Select-
ed Letters of Dorothy Richardson*, ed. by Gloria G. Fromm (Athens: University of Georgia
Press, 1995), p. 64.

28 Sinclair, 'The Novels of Dorothy Richardson', p. 9.

impressions but actually create them for its readers, who should hear, feel, and see the text-world.[29]

Unlike the high-realist novel, which often seeks to present its characters' inner lives by merely describing the activities of their minds, the modernist novel strives to represent consciousness in the text. Once the perspective moves through consciousness – as Michael Levenson writes about Conrad's *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* – 'no need remains for the painstaking *reconstruction* of subjectivity by means of accumulated detail or evocative metaphor'.[30] The modernist text instead suffuses observation of the external world with the individual perspective of the experiencing subject, meaning that there 'need be no scruples about the text penetrating a consciousness, because the text has become identical with a consciousness'.[31] If the subject of the modernist novel is the human mind, then separating form and content becomes impossible. Form *is* content, as the shape of the text itself not only describes but represents the nature of thought and consciousness.[32]

The equation of mind with text also means that the role of the narrator is considerably reduced in modernist fiction. While the narrator generally plays a central role in the nineteenth-century realist novel – not only as the main voice of the text, but as a presenter and arranger of events – the modernist novel instead attempts to access characters' minds directly, through either free indirect discourse or interior monologue. While there are certainly still narrators in the modernist novel, they tend to be impersonal and mere reflectors of events and mental processes.[33] There was no

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29 Conrad, Preface to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, ed. by Jacques Berthoud (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. xxxvix-xliv, p. xli.

30 Levenson, *Genealogy*, p. 6.

31 Levenson, *Genealogy*, p. 6.

32 Morton P. Levitt defines the modernist novel through its emphasis on perspective; the modernist author's choice of point of view, Levitt claims, lies 'at the heart of the Modernist novel', as it is 'every novelist's first decision in writing a novel'; see *The Rhetoric of Modernist Fiction: From a New Point of View* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2006), p. 8.

33 Peter Brooks writes that the modernist narrator refuses 'to be identified' or to speak in his or her own voice; instead, he or she 'speaks through [the characters] without taking responsibility for what is said'; *Realist Vision* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p.

one else '*there* to *describe* her', Richardson claimed, describing her initial conception of *Pilgrimage*; she alludes to the moment of Miriam's slow ascent up the stairs in the very first lines of *Pointed Roofs*.[34] The statement is symptomatic of Richardson's scepticism towards the idea of having a narrator speak about and for a character in fiction, something which she did not see as compatible with the realistic aesthetics she sought to realize. This also means that events in the narratives will not be explicitly explained to the reader.

This raises the question of the ordinary in modernist fiction, leading to the third central aspect of modernist fiction. Realism as a mode of writing has always focused on the lives of 'ordinary' people, as opposed to the romance, which found the upper classes to be more suitable subjects for literature.[35] While the modernist novel shares the Victorian novel's focus on 'ordinary' people's lives, it also redefines the concept of 'ordinariness' so that it encompasses not only a type of character or setting, but the most everyday aspects of those characters or settings, such as daily lives and chores, seemingly unimportant occurrences like a walk in the park or breakfast at a sunny kitchen table. While there is certainly a narrative, the modernist novel is not necessarily plot-driven, but concentrates instead on the most basic aspects of quotidian human life: the workings of consciousness and how the world is perceived through the lens of one individual

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199. Not all modernist narrators are impersonal, though. For example, the intrusive narrator of *Jacob's Room* brings a surreal element to the novel's representation of reality partly through her dominant presence; the novel is, in the words of Suzanne Raitt, an attempt to 'reflect on the conditions of the narrative voice itself: what it means to speak for the silent other; and whether that speech is inevitably a form of displacement and destruction'. See 'Virginia Woolf's Early Novels', in *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Sue Roe and Susan Sellers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 29-49 (p. 43).

34 Louise Morgan, 'How Writers Work: Dorothy Richardson', *Everyman*, 22 October (1931), 395-400 (p. 400).

35 Levine sees the roots of this development in the Romantic movement (p. 6). Several recent studies have discussed modernism and the ordinary. See for example Liesl Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Bryony Randall, *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); and Lorraine Sim, *Virginia Woolf: The Patterns of Ordinary Experience* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).

mind.[36] The ordinary in modernist fiction is thus redefined so as to include such fundamental human faculties as sense perception, the functions of thought and memory – and, as *Ulysses* demonstrates, the bodily.

The question of the ordinary is connected with the fourth central aspect of modernist fiction: the new focus on the particular instead of the general. The 'ordinary' lives described in the high-realist novel illustrate the general through the particular. For example, the Higginses' suffering in Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* represents a kind of tragedy that is personal but also common as it constitutes circumstances that were real to many of the working poor in mid-nineteenth-century Britain. By representing an individual tragedy, Gaskell draws attention to a general social problem, ultimately aiming at social reform. Following Roman Jakobson, this aspect of the realist novel has often been referred to by the figure of metonymy, where the particular becomes representative of the general: 'the realistic author metonymically digresses from the plot to the atmosphere and from the characters to the setting in space and time. He is fond of synecdochic details'.[37] At the other 'pole' is the figure of metaphor, which does not aim at representing the general through describing the particular, but defines the particular through likening it to something else. As David Lodge argues, all fiction is to some degree metonymic by nature because it 'cannot be displaced towards the metaphoric pole without turning into poetry'; but modernist fiction is *also* metaphorical in that it seeks parallels and similarities.[38] These metaphorical qualities in modernist fiction are

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36 Michael Bell, however, suggests that traditional realism is grounded in 'a narrative model of history' that ceased to dominate in the early twentieth century, and was instead replaced by myth. The consequence was, in a sense, the subversion of the ordinary, as its status was elevated from the humdrum business of the daily to the eternal mechanisms of human experience; 'The Metaphysics of Modernism', in *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*, ed. by Michael Levenson, pp. 9-32 *(*p. 14).

37 Roman Jakobson, 'Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances', in Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle, *Fundamentals of Language* (S. Gravenhage: Mouton, 1956), pp. 53-82 (p. 78).

38 Lodge, 'The Language of Modernist Fiction: Metaphor and Metonomy', in *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890-1930*, ed. by Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane, 2nd edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976; London: Penguin Books, 1991), pp. 481-96 (p. 493). To 'force [the novel] *completely* to the metaphoric pole entails its dissolution as a novel', writes Lodge, using *Finnegans Wake* as an example of a 'novel' where this might

often seen to derive from the influence of symbolism and they are fre-
quently invoked in order to argue for a break between realist and modern-
ist paradigms.[39] While I discuss certain kinds of silence in modernist fiction
precisely as metaphors in the following chapter, I do not consider them
incongruous with the realist paradigm of the modernist novel: they are
part of the doubleness Lodge proposes, and can be read as belonging to
both inner and outer worlds.[40]

The focus on the particular rather than the general in modernist fiction
also correlates to early twentieth-century scepticism about a literature
based on ideas. A central concern for many modernist writers – Richard-
son and Woolf among them – was the particularity of every experience. To
these writers, there is nothing inherently metonymic even in the most
common occurrences of daily life. However repetitive the routines of dai-
ly life may be, each instance of them is unique and the aim of many mod-
ernist writers was to render each breakfast and each walk in the park in
their particularity.

The fifth and final aspect of the early twentieth-century transformation
of the realist paradigm discussed here concerns the idea that personal ex-
perience is to a large extent un-sharable, an idea that is closely associated

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have happened, as it is 'entirely based on the principle of similarity and substitution'.
Lodge argues that 'while it seems true that Modernist fiction belongs to the metaphoric
mode in Jakobson's scheme, this is perfectly compatible with the retention and exploita-
tion of metonymic writing on an extensive scale' (pp. 484, 492-3, emphasis in the original).

39 Clive Scott, for example, differentiates between '[t]hose who value in Modernism
its pursuit of raw experience, its primitivism even, and who see Impressionism as the
common denominator of the movements current round the turn of the century' and '[t]
hose who esteem Modernist literature as a liberation of the text, of the word' and who 'will
probably point to Symbolism as the source of the self-subsistent work that lives among
the multiple privacies of its language'; see 'Symbolism, Decadence and Impressionism', in
Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890-1930, ed. by Malcolm Bradbury and James
McFarlane, 2nd edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976; London: Penguin Books, 1991), pp.
206-27 (p. 206). See also Edmund Wilson, *Axel's Castle: A Study in the Imaginative Litera-
ture of 1870-1930* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931).

40 As Lodge has written elsewhere, 'the novelist should make his spade a spade before he
makes it a symbol'; *The Art of Fiction* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), p. 139.

with the notion of a language crisis. The felt impossibility of communicating human experience was not new to the modernist novel but had developed gradually from the late-Victorian period.[41] Critics disagree about the precise nature of this perceived language crisis. Richard Sheppard, for example, argues that early twentieth-century fiction is characterized by a complete loss of faith in the power of language to express and represent, eventually leading to creative barrenness and death, as in Hugo von Hofmannsthal's 'Ein Brief' (1902), which Sheppard reads as 'an archetypal modern statement'.[42] To turn from Sheppard's version of an early twentieth-century language crisis – whose refrain runs on words like 'aridity', 'imaginative death', 'blackness', 'nothingness', and 'despair' – to Randy Malamud's is like moving from a funeral to the loud clamour of a kindergarten.[43] Malamud, like Sheppard, acknowledges the fact that there was great despondency over language's failure to express and describe modern sentiments and experiences in an adequate manner. Unlike Sheppard, however, Malamud finds that the typical modernist writer did manage to regenerate language to a point where he or she created a whole new language – roughly corresponding to what Sheppard recognizes as 'rebirth' in earlier epochs.[44] Indeed, Malamud's study is based on the idea that 'the creation and [propagation] of a new language' was an 'essential modernist

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41 Steiner posits that a 'crisis of poetic means' occurred in the late nineteenth century (p. 46). Baxter similarly places the 'shift or rift […] with regards to the value of the verbal' and its 'capacity to communicate truth' in the late nineteenth century, 'around the time that Conrad began to write' (p. 9). David G. Riede suggests that the crisis began even earlier, arguing that Matthew Arnold's poetry is the result of 'a tension between his poetic ambition and his doubts about his medium', and that the poet found himself 'constantly struggling, unsuccessfully, to find words that will refer not just to other words, but to *things*, to *reality*'; see *Matthew Arnold and the Betrayal of Language* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1988), pp. 28-9 *et passim*.

42 Sheppard, 'The Crisis of Language', in *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890-1930*, ed. by Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane, 2nd edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976; London: Penguin Books, 1991), pp. 323-36 (p. 324).

43 Sheppard, pp. 324, 330, 332.

44 Sheppard, p. 323.

task'; moreover, it is a task that he recognizes in the works of central modernist writers like Joyce, Woolf, and Eliot, who all, he maintains, managed to express themselves only through transcending 'the inadequate language at hand'.[45] For Malamud, modernism is thus not the period of despair and isolation that it is for Sheppard. Where Sheppard's poets are helpless before the destructive forces that shape their existence, Malamud's writers are active agents who are in control. Their world is not crumbling; they are the ones crumbling it: 'modern artists begin to find their own ways among the morass of modernity by breaking down the inherited tradition into a rubble of fragments'.[46] Both critics manage to make T. S. Eliot's line 'These fragments I have shored against my ruins' argue for their respective position.[47]

With the advent of high modernism, the idea of a language crisis matured from a tendency to an established contention, as most (high-brow) writers questioned the ability of language to express, represent, and communicate. Critics have sought to explain this distrust of language with reference to the context specific to the modern period, such as the political situation,[48] the

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45 Malamud, *The Language of Modernism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Research Press, 1989), pp. 6-7.

46 Malamud, *Language of Modernism*, p. 10.

47 T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, in *The Complete Poems and Plays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969; repr. 2004), pp. 59-75 (p. 75; l. 431); Sheppard, p. 324; Malamud, p. 10.

48 Vincent Sherry suggests that modernist literature has to be understood as a reaction against the empty rhetoric of liberal politics. The liberal 'language of rationalism', he suggests, emptied words of their meaning, thereby providing liberal politicians (among whom Prime Minister H. H. Asquith and Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey are the chief culprits, because of the part they played when England joined the war) with the means of obscuring actual circumstances without, strictly speaking, lying. According to Sherry, the work of the modernists must be understood as a 'struggle' against the control that 'liberal concepts' exert over 'the imaginative language of literature'; See *The Great War and the Language of Modernism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 52. Dora Marsden's professed war against 'words and in their every aspect' seems to fit Sherry's argument; Marsden rages against words because the 'alluring and deceptive function of living sounds are more fundamental than their expository'; 'I Am', *Egoist: An Individualist Review*, 2 (1915), 1-4 (p. 1).

emergence of 'yellow' journalism,[49] and the Great War.[50] The issue is too complex to be explained with reference to such specific phenomena, however; it should probably be understood as a development that appeared gradually over the course of the nineteenth century, relating to complex occurrences in and interchanges between many different aspects of society, such as politics, culture, art, philosophy, science, and religion. A language crisis may also be connected to new areas of literary exploration: the attempts to represent mind and consciousness in modernist fiction constituted a new focus for the novel, and one for which there was no established vocabulary.

As already mentioned, the use of silence in modernist fiction is part of a solution to the challenges that writers with realist ambitions faced in the early twentieth century. The function of silence is closely connected with the question of the inability of words to represent adequately. Beyond metaphorical descriptions of silence, which represent states of mind (discussed briefly above), silence is also present in various nonverbal shapes; the passage from *Orlando* mentioned at the beginning of this chapter is an example of one such graphical silence. Certainly, such typographical representations can be found before the advent of the modernist novel, *Tristram Shandy* being the example that most readily comes to mind. But whereas both Sterne's and Woolf's inclusion of blanks and black pages in

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49 Baxter links the perceived 'instability' of language around the turn of the century to, among other things, contempt for the press, particularly 'their coverage of firstly the Boer War, and later the First World War'; but she also points out that there was nothing new in the fact that the avant-garde expressed contempt for the popular press (p. 9). It should be noted that Baxter's discussion of a language crisis around the turn of the century goes far beyond the supposed involvement of the press, however. Patrick Collier finds that a disdain for journalism was common among most modernist writers, who saw a rift between reality and the 'simplified language' of journalism. This rift grew wider as time passed, and by the 1920s, Collier writes, 'the sense of crisis in British journalism was so widespread that taking a critical stance towards the degradations of the press was the clearest way to signal intellectual seriousness and commitment to art'. According to Collier, Eliot's wish to 'purify the language of the tribe' – a line borrowed from Mallarmé – expresses his disdain for journalism's 'crude and imprecise language', as well as his desire to forge 'new speech'. See *Modernism on Fleet Street* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), pp. 4, 7-8.

50 Haslam connects World War One with a 'wartime linguistic fragmentation' (p. 84). See also Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: The Bodley Head, 1990), pp. 109-19.

Tristram Shandy and *Orlando* is ironic to a large degree – there to make fun of literary practices, or to point to the limits of fiction – such typographical silences in modernist fiction should generally not be understood as ironic but as genuine attempts to represent the unrepresentable. Chapters three and six examine nonverbal features of Richardson's *Pilgrimage* and Woolf's *Jacob's Room*, respectively.

On the Other Side of Silence: Realisms, Representation, Knowledge

The disparities between the traditional realism of the Victorian novel and the psychological realism of the modernist novel become even more pronounced when silence is viewed in the context of representation in various realisms. Here, the different conceptions of silence in Victorian, Edwardian, and modernist literature will be highlighted through passages and scenes where silence plays a prominent part. Starting with a look at silence in George Eliot's *Middlemarch* – a novel often chosen as a prime example of high realism – this subsection continues by discussing silence in John Galsworthy's *The Man of Property* (1906) and Arnold Bennett's *Hilda Lessways* (1911), as examples of Edwardian fiction. After a consideration of Woolf's objections to Bennett's novel and a brief introduction to the silence of her own Mrs Brown, I end with an exploration of the silence in Conrad's *Under Western Eyes* (1911), which exemplifies its function in modernist fiction.

Silence in *Middlemarch* is generally set against 'utterance' and has to do with who knows what.[51] Characters remain ignorant of the inner lives of others – and sometimes of one another's motives – because these are not uttered in words but cloaked in silence, therefore remaining inaccessible. Fred Vincy's disastrous 'horse-dealing', for example, is to a large extent caused by Mr Horrock's 'adequate silence', which has given the veterinarian 'the reputation of an invincible understanding' (XXIII, p. 222). Horrock's silence not only hides his real opinion of the horses involved but

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51 Eliot, *Middlemarch*, ed. by David Carroll (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), XXIII p. 223. Subsequent references are given directly in the text.

becomes a site on which Fred projects his naive hopes for the propitious-ness of the deal. Because he mistakenly apprehends Horrock's silence as 'virtually encouraging', he goes through with the unfortunate purchase (XXIII, p. 224).

Silences like Horrock's might confuse or frustrate the characters in *Middlemarch*, but, the narrator states, silence also protects the individual from knowledge that would do him or her harm.[52] In a scene describing Dorothea's growing disappointment in the weeks following her marriage to Casaubon – a disappointment described as something 'not unusual' to new wives – her disillusionment is presented as an example of those aspects of the individual's fate that in actual life generally remain hidden from others:

> That element of tragedy which lies in the very fact of frequency, has not yet wrought itself into the coarse emotion of mankind; and perhaps our frames could hardly bear much of it. If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence. As it is, the quickest of us walk about well wadded with stupidity. (XX, p. 182)

This often-quoted passage presents silence as a form of ignorance that is not only a blessing but a necessity for survival. Indeed, this silence – which lies as a protective barrier between on the one hand the practical sphere and on the other the excruciating circumstances of truth – is predicated

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52 As J. Hillis Miller points out, Eliot's novella 'The Lifted Veil' (1859) illustrates what too much knowledge would actually encompass; 'The Roar on the Other Side of Silence: Otherness in *Middlemarch*', in *Rereading Texts/Rethinking Critical Presuppositions: Essays in Honour of H. M. Daleski*, edited by Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, Leona Toker, and Shuli Barzilai (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1997), pp. 137-48 (p. 143). Latimer, the protagonist of 'The Lifted Veil', has the ability to hear the thoughts of other people and consequently finds his life poisoned. The language with which this phenomenon is described in the novella also directly prefigures that of *Middlemarch*: 'It was like a preternaturally heightened sense of hearing, making audible to one a roar of sound where others find perfect stillness'; George Eliot, 'The Lifted Veil', in *The Lifted Veil and Brother Jacob*, ed. by Helen Small, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 1-43 (p. 18).

on lack of knowledge. We are saved because we do not know; silence becomes equal to a healthy 'stupidity'.

Stupidity and silence in *Middlemarch* are not always presented as healthy, though, as the characters' lack of knowledge of muted truths evidently causes problems, and sometimes heartbreak. In Dorothea's romantic relationships, for example, silence often signifies miscommunication and lack of understanding. It is perhaps hardly surprising that her marriage to Casaubon would be characterized by silence and ignorance of the other; they both walk around as though they were 'wadded with stupidity' not only against the inner roars of the other but against the slightest hiss. Unmindful of the fact that Casaubon 'was perhaps unusually silent' – a silence that covers his roaring jealousy of Will Ladislaw – Dorothea misguidedly embarks on her proposal that Will should receive half their wealth, eventually having to force out words that '[fall] clear upon the dark silence' (XXXVII, p. 351). If Dorothea remains ignorant of what lies beneath Casaubon's silence beyond the point of his death, her silence is no less confusing to him, who suspects that it covers 'fervid reasons which it was an irritation to think of' (XLII, p. 392). Casaubon's death – described as a 'silence' that 'was never more to be broken' – perpetuates the couple's mutual ignorance of each other; as Dorothea futilely searches through her deceased husband's desk for an 'excuse or explanation', she is only able to ascertain that 'the silence was unbroken' (XLVIII, p. 453; L, p. 464).

By contrast, Dorothea's relationship with Will is characterized by constant efforts to break through a silence. When unable to be completely truthful to each other about their mutual affection and 'those strange particulars of their relation which neither of them could explicitly mention', Dorothea feels that they are 'wasting [their] moments together in wretched silence' (LXII, pp. 593, 594). It is also their shared habit of 'speaking too strongly' that in due course enables them to reveal their 'roars' to each other (LXII, p. 594). While Will discloses that he had 'meant to go away into silence' but found himself unable to do so, Dorothea in her turn finds that 'the flood of her young passion [bears] down all the obstructions which had kept her silent' (LXXXIII, pp. 761, 762). Her exclamation 'Oh, I cannot bear it – my heart will break' connects directly to the narrator's remarks on silence earlier in the novel, but it subverts them (LXXXIII, p.

762). While the narrator suggests that silence protects us because 'our frames could hardly bear much' of the 'coarse emotion of mankind', Dorothea cannot bear the silence between herself and Will. In her case, the protective 'stupidity' is revealed as an 'obstruction', keeping her from the inner roar that would bring her happiness.[53] Breaking through the silence, then, saves Dorothea and Will and establishes their impending marriage as one based on communication and knowledge instead of silence and ignorance.

The passage about the 'roar on the other side of silence' seems to point to a contradiction in the text, as the narrator is apparently warning against too much knowledge of inner lives while simultaneously revealing Dorothea's 'roar' to us.[54] The narrator clearly has a 'keen' enough 'vision' to impart to readers what they are otherwise too dull to hear through the silence. It should be noted, though, that the 'roar on the other side of silence' refers to the 'frequency' in which 'tragedy' occurs in *all* 'ordinary human life', of which Dorothea's individual sorrow would only constitute a small part. The particulars of her personal problems would not constitute more than a faint meow and thus the dangers to the reader might not be so very grave after all.

Moreover, in this passage, and in *Middlemarch* at large, there is an implied difference between fiction and the actual human life that Eliot's fiction aims to represent. It might seem superfluous to point this out, but it is a distinction essential to understanding not only the silence in the above passage but how the passage reflects the realist aesthetics of Eliot's novel. While Eliot's general concern may be said to be how we as human beings function, act, and react in our actual lives, the text itself does not operate under the same premises, since the implied reader is not necessarily includ-

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53 Indeed, soon after the discussion of silence and 'inner roars', the narrator reveals that Dorothea 'had early begun to emerge from' the 'moral stupidity' in which we are all born (XXI, p. 198).

54 Sara Håkansson writes of the discord created through the narrator's claims for the necessity of silence while at the same time '[turning] up the volume on Dorothea's roar', thus stripping 'the reader of his or her "stupid padding"'; *Narratorial Commentary in the Novels of George Eliot* (Lund: Lund Studies in English, 2009), pp. 186-7. Speaking about Eliot's narrative technique in general, Levenson similarly asserts that the 'very narrating voice which denies knowledge has knowledge'; see *Genealogy*, p 8. See also Miller, p. 143.

ed in the narrator's generalizations concerning the need for silence.[55] It would undoubtedly be excruciating to walk around chronically conscious of our fellow human beings' individual heartbreak. To take part in Dorothea's heartbreak in the narrative is something very different, though, and part of the edifying purposes of both the novel and its realist aesthetics; the novel may represent reality, but it does not equal reality. Moreover, the representation might serve the purpose of educating its readers about human conditions and emotions that might be unbearable to partake of if it were not fiction.

The high-realist novel was considered an excellent medium for exploring and conveying knowledge about human nature.[56] Because the silences that the realist novel pierces are not real, the exposed roars do not threaten the way human tragedy does in actual life. Instead, the literary representation of inner worlds produces knowledge about human nature, thus in a sense training the 'vision and feeling' of readers – their capacity for empathy – for the tragedy of real life. To Eliot, the novel provided access to knowledge about human life that would otherwise be inaccessible to our 'coarse emotion'. In a letter to Charles Bray in 1859, she writes that 'the only effect I ardently long to produce by my writings, is that those who read them should be better able to *imagine* and to *feel* the pains and the joys of those who differ from themselves in everything but the broad fact of being struggling erring human creatures'.[57] In an early essay, in words reminiscent of the silence passage from *Middlemarch*, she states that 'every great artist is a teacher' and that the 'higher sensibility' possessed by artists makes them able to bring 'home to [the readers'] coarser senses what would otherwise

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55 As Håkansson writes, narratorial commentary in Eliot's work 'adjusts the reader's distance to the properties of the text in order to shape his or her understanding of particular phenomena. This distance, then, is a measure of the reader's emotional, intellectual or moral involvement in the text which is continually modified along with the narrator's variable commentary' (p. 28).

56 Indeed, Davis reads Eliot's prose as being *about* 'the roar on the other side of silence' – a roar that is present in her writing as a 'low-voiced under-prose' that brings '*forward* the background story to human meaning' (p. 224).

57 Eliot, *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. by Gordon S. Haight, 9 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954-1978), III (1954), p. 111.

be unperceived by [them]'.[58] The artist's gift lies in the ability to reach beyond the silence and to decode inner roars into utterance.

While silence might be a condition of human life, it is not part of Eliot's realist aesthetics. Her characters' roars are knowable unknowns in the text: they are muted rather than silent, and only mute up to the point where the narrator chooses to pierce the veil to translate them to us. Silence is not connected with any problem of representation; it merely covers aspects of the narrative that are, in fact, attainable. The narrator is always able to unveil and define the inner lives of the characters, and in fact does so: it is through the narrator that the reader learns how Horrock's 'deep hands held something else than a young fellow's interest' and what the 'roar' underlying Dorothea's silence actually constitutes (p. 225). Were that omniscient, all-hearing narrator to disappear from the text, what lies on the other side of silence could no longer be represented for the reader. Such undefined silences form absences in the text, absences of which the reader remains unaware. Silence equals ignorance, and if the narrator does not speak, the reader remains unknowing, even of his own ignorance.

Unlike in modernist fiction, then, silence in *Middlemarch* signifies a lack of knowledge about the inner lives of characters. This lack of knowledge has nothing to do with the possibility of representation; clearly, the narrator has the means to inform us about his or her characters' inner turmoil when choosing to do so. Instead, silence is partly a question of economy. The narrator asserts that 'our frames' would not be able to bear the sound of all human tragedy in actual life, were it heard. Likewise, the material frames of *Middlemarch* could hardly bear the inclusion of all its characters' muted roars – the novel would, much like Casaubon's 'key to all mythologies', become impossible in its scope.

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58 Eliot, '*Westward Ho!* and *Constance Herbert*' (1855), reprinted in *Essays of George Eliot*, ed. by Thomas Pinney (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), pp. 123-36 (p. 126). Alicia Christoff has also noted the similarities between the passage from *Middlemarch* and the early essay; see 'The Weariness of the Victorian Novel: *Middlemarch* and the Medium of Feeling', *English Language Notes*, 48.1 (2010), 139-53 (p. 144).

Before moving on to the role of silence in the particular changes that the Edwardians brought to the realist novel, I would like to briefly contrast Eliot's 'roar on the other side of silence' with a passage from Conrad's *Lord Jim*, which expresses similar ideas (I return to Conrad below):[59]

> [The horror of the scene] had the power to drive me out of my conception of existence, out of that shelter each of us makes for himself to creep under in moments of danger as a tortoise withdraws within its shell. For a moment I had a view of a world that seemed to wear a vast and dismal aspect of disorder, while, in truth, thanks to our unwearied efforts, it is as sunny an arrangement of small conveniences as the mind of man can conceive. But still – it was only a moment; I went back into my shell directly. One *must* – don't you know? – though I seemed to have lost all my words in the chaos of dark thoughts I had contemplated for a second or two beyond the pale. These came back too very soon, for words also belong to the sheltering conception of light and order which is our refuge.[60]

The speaker of this passage (Marlow) describes a scenario where he suddenly hears the roar of the other side of silence, though the experience is described in visual terms here: 'a vast and dismal aspect of disorder […] beyond the pale'. Like Eliot's narrator, Marlow insists on the danger inherent in perceiving the turmoil 'beyond the pale' – for one *must* return to the shell – but unlike the situation in *Middlemarch*, there are no words to describe the experience beyond 'disorder' and 'chaos'. Moreover, in *Lord Jim*, the metaphorical shelter or shell that protects is partly made out of language, not silence. Here, no narrator is able to pierce the veil in order to translate the roar into words; indeed, language seems utterly incongruous with the 'chaos' behind the veil. Part of the terror in Marlow's experi-

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59 Besides Levenson – discussed above – Eliot and Conrad are contrasted in Levine's study, also with the idea of tracing changes in how fiction was written. Levine sees traces of the same development in both writers' fiction – a similarity that is, he argues, due to the influence of Darwinian scientific discourse on the realistic novel – but considers the development to be more pronounced in Conrad's texts, although his writing is to some extent 'continuous with hers' (pp. 252-4).

60 Conrad, *Lord Jim*, ed. by J. H. Stape and Ernest W. Sullivan II, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Joseph Conrad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), XXXIII, p. 236

ence of this chaos lies in the impossibility of communicating from the darkness. Words cannot describe the turmoil behind the veil of silence. On the contrary, they constitute the veil.

Conrad, like Henry James, fits awkwardly into any linear description of the realist novel's development, for while human character might have changed overnight in December 1910, the novel certainly did not. Chronologically, Conrad began his career at roughly the same time as the major Edwardian writers, all of whom started writing in the 1890s, and his status as a proto- or early modernist illustrates why such labels as 'Edwardian' and 'modernist' do not describe a continuous progress in the realist novel, but parallel developments.[61] Both genres can be traced to the late-Victorian novel's interest in psychology. It was in the work of Eliot and her immediate successors that the novel became, in the words of Philip Davis, 'the form for dealing with the problems of consciousness'; psychology was increasingly understood as 'a holding ground for raw individual reality'.[62] Individual reality was the continued focus of the realist novel, both in its modernist and in its Edwardian varieties.

In fact, modernist fiction has more in common with the Edwardian novel than with the late-Victorian novel, especially as regards narratorial perspective. Like its modernist counterpart, Edwardian realism deviates from previous realist practices in that there is no longer any strong narrative presence that makes sense of and explains events to the reader. Both the modernist and the Edwardian novel generally limit the narrative's perspective to one or several characters, and they do not provide any knowledge beyond this or these characters' reach. Levenson suggests that George Eliot's realist paradigm, which strove to represent the 'world as it is', developed into attempts to express 'the world as it appears' in the modernist novel.[63] But the 'world as it appears' can equally be described as the paradigm of the Edwardian novel, a fact that has rarely been observed. Because the Edward-

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61 Conrad published his first novel, *Almayer's Folly*, in 1895, the same year that also saw H. G. Wells's first novel, *The Time Machine*. Galsworthy, a close friend of Conrad, published *From the Four Winds* in 1897 (as John Sinjohn), and Arnold Bennett published his first novel, *A Man from the North*, in 1898.

62 Davis, *The Victorians*, pp. 196, 194.

63 Levenson, pp. 115-16.

ian novel is not as formally experimental as its modernist contemporary, its innovations are easily overlooked or misunderstood.[64] Woolf's comments on the Edwardians in her essays are probably the best example of such misconceptions; her supercilious attitude towards Bennett, Wells, and Galsworthy indicates that she failed to recognize the ways in which the Edwardians *did* modernize the novel, probably because that modernization looks very different from the kind of novel Woolf herself advocated.

In the Edwardian novel, silence is still associated with knowledge and with the impossibility of accessing characters' inner lives, but the lack of an omniscient narrator means that all muted roars are kept silent. Consequently, the Edwardian novel exudes a sense of restraint. As in *Middlemarch*, silence is associated with absence rather than with presence, but here silence implies occurrences and experiences that are essentially unintelligible or unreachable. The characters' inner lives are represented by means of free indirect discourse, a narrative mode that represents the focalized characters' thought processes in their own words, but never ventures beyond what they themselves think or know. It is a technique that severely limits the narrator's ability to explain or reveal and the presentation is to a large extent focused on the external text world and on what is known by the characters on whom the narrative is focalized.

A passage from John Galsworthy's *The Man of Property*, the first novel in what was to become the first trilogy of *The Forsyte Saga* (1922), exemplifies how this is achieved:

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64 A number of recent critical studies have engaged with reappraising Edwardian fiction. See for example Anne Fernihough, *Freewomen and Supermen: Edwardian Radicals and Literary Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Ann L. Ardis, *Modernism and Cultural Conflict, 1880-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and Robert L. Caserio, 'Edwardians to Georgians', in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century English Literature*, ed. by Laura Marcus and Peter Nicholls (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 83-99.

> Of all the brothers and sisters James manifested the most emotion. Tears
> rolled down the parallel furrows of his thin face; where he should go now
> to tell his troubles he did not know; Juley was no good, Hester worse than
> useless! He felt Ann's death more than he had ever thought he should; this
> would upset him for weeks![65]

It is typical of a Forsyte that James's chief object of distress is how Ann's
death will upset the practical rituals of his life. More to the point, his
distress is presented through free indirect discourse; the double-voiced
presentation mixes James's own words with the narrator's observations of
the scene. This observational function is typical of narrators in Edwardian
fiction. We learn, for example, how James's emotional reaction is displayed
in the external world: how he of all the older Forsyte generation 'manifest-
ed' most feeling at the death of their sister Ann, tears running down his
cheeks. The word 'manifested' is crucial here, for the reader does not know
if James actually *felt* most of 'all the brothers and sisters', just that he 'man-
ifested the most emotion'. This is an observable fact, described by a narra-
tor only focused on surface. As the narrative in this scene is focalized
through James, we learn of his thoughts and feelings at this moment, but
not of those of his siblings, or of anything concerning James of which he
is not himself aware.

   This combination of material manifestation and limited representation
is characteristic of the Edwardian novel, and the same pattern is repeated
in the works of Arnold Bennett and H. G. Wells. The mind is but rarely
represented directly in the Edwardians' novels and the plot is instead slow-
ly revealed through visual descriptions, outer manifestations, and free in-
direct discourse.[66] When, on the first page of *The Man of Property*, readers
learn that the Forsytes' appearance is 'illustrative of an obscure human
problem', they are also informed about the novel's perspective on the sto-

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65 Galsworthy, *The Forsyte Saga*, ed. by Geoffrey Harvey (Oxford: Oxford University
Press, 1995), I, p. 100. Subsequent references will be given directly in the text.

66 Descriptions of external details, Robert Squillace argues about Bennett, 'do not di-
rectly reveal the inner workings of a particular character; they create different perspectival
contexts in which that character produces very different impressions'; *Modernism, Moder-
nity, and Arnold Bennett* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1997), p. 25.

ry about to unfold: the words 'illustrative' and 'obscure' indicate that the prevalent viewpoint is the visible (p. 15). *The Forsyte Saga* – much like the Forsytes themselves – is chiefly concerned with appearances and things that can be seen, thus limiting the realm of the knowable in the novel sequence. No explanations or interpretations of inner 'roars' will be offered: the reader learns that the 'gift of psychological analysis' is not one valued by the Forsytes as it has no 'monetary value' (p. 15). As *The Man of Property* is exclusively focalized through the Forsytes themselves – and primarily through the male Forsytes, whose psychological insight appears somewhat wanting – readers must not expect to be enlightened as to the 'obscure human problem'. If the Forsytes do not understand, then readers will have to guess.

The use of free indirect discourse to represent the Forsytes' inner lives emphasizes the narrator's limitations in representing their minds and consciousnesses. The presence of the characters' own voices in the narration in a sense prevents the narrator from commenting on or interpreting anything beyond what is obvious to the Forsytes themselves. Moreover, much of what is revealed about the novels' characters is related by the narrator as hearsay and gossip, because 'in this world of Forsytes let no man think himself immune from observation' (p. 118). Consequently, the characters' doings are often uncovered through their relatives' observations of them, related by the narrator through such phrases as '[a] story was undoubtedly told that', 'so she had heard', and '[s]he had quite a reputation for' (pp. 18, 25, 48). In addition, the narration often brings the characters' own lack of knowledge to the surface with lines like 'it is difficult to say' and '[w]ho shall tell of what he was thinking?' (pp. 40, 290).

Silence in *The Man of Property* is an extension of the narrator's limited perspective, and it highlights what is inaccessible to narration. It is often evoked specifically to emphasize the inscrutability of certain characters, most notably Irene, but also Bosinney at times.[67] Throughout the novel, Irene's silence is connected to the 'obscure human problem' that the novel

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67 Galsworthy, in fact, comments on Irene's inscrutability himself in his Preface to *The Forsyte Saga*: 'The figure of Irene, never […] present, except through the senses of other characters' (p. 6).

hints that it is going to illustrate. Her silence is repeatedly evoked, always emphasizing her impenetrability, at least as far as Soames and James Forsyte are concerned: 'She was ever silent'; 'Irene's silence this evening was exceptional'; 'She had answered by a strange silence. An enigma to him from the day that he first saw her, she was an enigma to him still…' (pp. 71, 111). By letting characters central to the narrative remain silent throughout the novel, Galsworthy creates mystery by withholding information – the entire plot hinges on the fact that we do not know what Irene thinks or does. Her silence in the text is thus crucial to the strong sense of suspense and confusion in the novel, and it presents her as unreachable and ungraspable, not only for the Forsytes but also for the reader.[68]

Silence has a similar function in Arnold Bennett's fiction. In *Hilda Lessways*, as in *The Man of Property*, silence indicates unknowability, but in Bennett's novel it is primarily linked to Hilda's failure to understand herself. In fact, Hilda seems strangely uninterested in either exploring or comprehending her own inner life. Even in those instances where silence does seem to suggest inner turmoil on her part, nothing in the text indicates that these silences should be read as representing anything but emotion in the most general sense. For example, when, in the wake of the revelation of George Cannon's bigamy, Hilda feels as 'one who having alone escaped destruction in an earthquake, stands afar off and contemplates the silent, corpse-strewn ruin of a vast city', the silent ruins represent the structure of her material life as it was: her fortune, her prospects, and her marriage.[69] Of Hilda's inner reality we do not learn much, nor does she appear to know much herself. She acknowledges that there are 'obscure grottoes in her soul which she had not the courage to explore candidly', and we are told that she 'did not understand herself. She was not even acquainted with herself' (pp. 147, 31). Thus, while the plot in *Hilda Lessways* is certainly engaging – especially when read beside *Clayhanger* – the portrait of its protagonist is not psychologically realistic, as it is hardly believable that a young wom-

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68 To John Batchelor, however, 'the Irene-Bosinney relationship is a relative failure' precisely *because* 'the reader has no access to the nature of the sexual attraction between them and finds it difficult to imagine' (p. 188).

69 Bennett, *Hilda Lessways* (London: Methuen, 1911; repr. 1928), p. 339. Subsequent references will be given directly in the text.

an would be so obtuse about her own inner life.[70]

The narrator in *Hilda Lessways* is far more conspicuous than the narrator in the typical modernist novel, but he is far from omniscient and – like Galsworthy's narrator – he does not seem able to access any knowledge about characters that is not available to the characters themselves. He cannot explain Hilda to us as Hilda apparently does not understand herself. In a journal entry, Bennett comments on this while affirming that he did not 'seem to be getting near to the personality of Hilda in [his] novel'.[71] '[T]he novelist seldom really *penetrates*', Bennett writes, and here lies the heart of his aesthetics: Bennett's novel is a novel of observation, and, as he noted in another journal entry, observation 'can only be conducted from the outside'.[72] Unlike Eliot's narrator, who can hear through silence and convey the 'roar' to the reader, Bennett's narrators do not penetrate, and thus, as David Trotter suggests, Hilda herself 'is a hollow place, a silence', and anything narrated about her will have to accommodate that silence.[73] The narrator is silent about Hilda's inner reality because of her unawareness of, and lack of interest in, the workings of her mind.[74] Because she is unconcerned with her mind, it is not part of the fiction. Therefore, in *Hilda*

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70 I agree with John Lucas's observation that the Hilda in *Hilda Lessways* is 'an altogether inferior creation' when compared to the Hilda in *Clayhanger*. Bennett has often, and rightly, been criticized for his female characters and for his outdated commentary on women in general. As Lucas asserts, Bennett does not 'often manage to present women without at some stage or another sliding into condescension towards them'; see *Arnold Bennett: A Study of His Fiction* (London: Methuen, 1974), p. 145. Presumably, this is part of the reason why Woolf developed such a strong hostility towards Bennett.

71 Bennett, 11 June, 1910, *The Journals of Arnold Bennett*, ed. by Newman Flower, 3 vols (London: Cassell, 1932), I, 373.

72 Bennett, *The Journals of Arnold Bennett*, p. 373; 24 June, 1898, I, 79.

73 Trotter, *The English Novel in History 1895-1920* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 135.

74 In *Clayhanger*, where Hilda is seen from the outside, through the eyes of Edwin, her mysteriousness and often awkward behaviour make for a more interesting character. Lucas suggests that the problem with *Hilda Lessways* is that Bennett fails to account for that mysteriousness; instead, Hilda 'becomes thoroughly conventional' and thus boring (p. 146). While not necessarily 'conventional', Hilda does come across as a rather half-finished character; she is just as mysterious as in *Clayhanger*, but the mysteriousness is of a very different and not particularly interesting kind. She is, in the words of Oscar Wilde, a sphinx without a secret.

Lessways, silence does not represent experiences in Hilda's mind so much as mute them. Like Galsworthy's, Bennett's aesthetics is firmly situated in the observable and the visible. Although his use of silence is somewhat different from Galsworthy's, it belongs to an aesthetics of surface.

What Woolf attacked in 'Character in Fiction' is precisely this quality. Bennett hoped to suggest depth of character through his focus on surface but to Woolf it is clear that he has failed: 'we cannot hear her mother's voice, or Hilda's voice; we can only hear Mr Bennett's voice telling us facts about rents and freeholds and copyholds and fines'.[75] Bennett's fiction cannot, Woolf asserts, 'make us believe in the reality of Hilda Lessways', because his 'conventions are ruin' and his 'tools are death'.[76] This remark epitomizes Woolf's – as well as many of her contemporaries' – attitude towards the Edwardians: theirs is a fiction that can only be regarded as a superficial realism, because it is too focused on property and not enough on characters and the characters' actual experience of life.

While Woolf's essay has been read as a 'statement of [the] anti-realist position', it in fact proposes a new kind of realism that has its roots in the thing unheard: the unspoken.[77] It is noteworthy that Woolf includes silence as one of the aspects of Mrs Brown that have 'an overwhelming fascination' for her.[78] Indeed, silence plays a large part in how Woolf represents the fictive interchange between Mrs Brown and Mr Smith during the train journey. In the silence that ensues after the narrator enters the rail-carriage and interrupts the intense conversation between the two, it is clear that Mr Smith is annoyed at having been interrupted and that Mrs Brown is relieved. The silence suggests to the narrator that Mrs Brown leads an 'anxious, harried life' and that her business with Mr Smith is an 'unpleasant' one: 'a secret, perhaps sinister business'.[79] Moreover, as Mr Smith starts to speak again 'with uneasy affability', it is precisely from Mrs Brown's 'silence' that the narrator concludes that 'he has some power over

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75 Woolf, 'Character in Fiction', p. 430.

76 Woolf, 'Character in Fiction', pp. 431, 430.

77 Fernihough, p. 72.

78 Woolf, 'Character in Fiction', p. 436.

79 Woolf, 'Character in Fiction', p. 423.

her which he was exerting disagreeably'.[80] In this scene, then, silence represents what the narrator suggests is Mrs Brown's anxiety over her only son 'who, as likely as not, was by this time beginning to go to the bad'.[81]

The anxiety represented by the silence in the rail-carriage permeates the scene that Woolf imagines. The vague but strong emotion conveyed through the silence – a silence that is at once metaphorical and part of the text's soundscape – is typical of the realist aesthetics associated with modernist fiction; indeed, Woolf centres on Mrs Brown's silence because to her it constitutes part of what is 'new' about modernist fiction. Interestingly, almost everything the narrator imagines about the two characters in the rail-carriage stems from this silence – a silence that is not only suggestive of an entire life, but a representation of that life.

I end the present discussion with a consideration of Conrad's *Under Western Eyes* as a further example of the form and function of silence in modernist fiction. Silence is a conspicuous presence in much of Conrad's writing, and his many silent settings often convey a sense of horror. *Lord Jim* represents Jim's compunction through a dreadful silence, which permeates both sea and sky after he has abandoned ship: 'A silence of the sea, of the sky, merged into one indefinite immensity still as death around these saved, palpitating lives. [...] Only a night; only a silence'.[82] In 'Heart of Darkness', as Marlow '[penetrates] deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness' with growing unease, he finds that it is 'very quiet there'.[83] In *Nostromo*, Decoud thinks of 'the silence of the gulf like a tense, thin cord to which he hung suspended', a cord that he subsequently 'began to wish [...] would snap'.[84] In 'The Return', Alvan perceives the silence in his room

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80 Woolf, 'Character in Fiction', p. 424.

81 Woolf, 'Character in Fiction', p. 423.

82 Conrad, *Lord Jim*, pp. 90-1.

83 Conrad, 'Heart of Darkness', in *Youth, Heart of Darkness, The End of the Tether*, ed. by Owen Knowles, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Joseph Conrad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 43-126 (p. 79). Elsewhere, I explore the silence in 'Heart of Darkness' at some length; see '"It Was Very Quiet There": The Contaminating Soundscapes of *Heart of Darkness*', in *The Conradian*, 39.2 (2014), 44-60.

84 Conrad, *Nostromo* (London: Dent, 1947), pp. 498-9. This passage is highly reminiscent of L. N. Andreyev's short story 'Silence' (1900), in which the protagonist, Father Ignaty, experiences a similar silence: 'It was as though the silence were a torture to itself,

as 'absolute' and fears that 'he had in a moment grown completely deaf as well as dim-eyed', indicating his emotional collapse following the breakdown of his marriage.[85] All these examples illustrate how silence is used to represent different forms of distress in Conrad's works.

There is also a connection between the function of silence in Conrad's texts and his struggle with the insuffiency of language, a struggle he repeatedly referred to and lamented. As Katarzyna Sokołowska writes, silence in Conrad's works 'is frequently equated with a failure to communicate the many shades of inner experiences'.[86] Sokołowska traces Conrad's concern with the unsayable to his romantic heritage, which, she argues, 'made [him] particularly sensitive to the limitations of language'.[87] By contrast, Martin Ray reads Conrad's silences in relation to Carlyle, whom he considers 'the foremost representative and disseminator of a certain school of thought, namely that silence was benign and consoling'.[88] Both Sokołowska and Ray primarily discuss Conrad's silences as the unsayable, however, while my own discussion of *Under Western Eyes* also considers silence as part of the novel's setting, a silence that is repeatedly used to represent Razumov's state of mind.

Indeed, silence in *Under Western Eyes* is especially linked to Razumov's anxiety after his betrayal of Haldin. One of the first things Razumov no-

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and as though it longed passionately to pass into speech, but that something strong and dull as a machine, held it motionless, and stretched it like a wire. And then somewhere in the far distance, the wire began to vibrate and emit a soft, timid, pitiful sound'. See 'Silence', in *The Little Angel and Other Stories*, trans. by W. H. Lowe (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915), pp. 121-47 (p. 132). It is unclear to what extent Conrad was familiar with Andreyev's works, however.

85 Conrad, 'The Return', in *Tales of Unrest*, ed. by Allan H. Simmons and J. H. Stape, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Joseph Conrad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 101-52 (p. 118).

86 Sokołowska, *Conrad and Turgenev: Towards the Real* (Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 2011), p. 48. John M. Picker argues that *Heart of Darkness* 'explores the untranslatability of sound as it bears on the limits of vision', but does not discuss silence; his exploration of Conrad's novella focuses on speech and its relation to the phonograph; see *Victorian Soundscapes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 137-41 (p. 140).

87 Sokołowska, p. 61.

88 Ray, 'Language and Silence in the Novels of Joseph Conrad', *Conradiana*, 16 (1984), 19-40 (p. 20).

tices as he enters General T——'s room – where he is to reveal the particulars of Haldin's plans after his crime – is its silence: 'the silence of the room was like the silence of the grave; perfect, measureless, for even the clock on the mantelpiece made no sound'.[89] Razumov returns several times to the 'grave-like' nature of the silence in this room, a silence that not only indicates the pressure he experiences during the meeting but his changed prospects and circumstances (cf. I, ii, pp. 42, 44). Several things about this silence relate to Razumov's particular situation and state of mind. For example, its 'perfection' contrasts with Razumov's stress and the painful circumstances of the meeting. That the silence is 'perfect' might simply mean that it is complete but the word also leads the reader's thoughts to something that is ideal or flawless. These associations implicitly contrast the wretchedness of Razumov's position against the threatening and complete power of the state.

The 'measurelessness' of the silence in the General's room relates to the interplay between silence and sound that appears throughout *Under Western Eyes* and to which I return shortly. To be able to measure a silence it must be understood in relation to the sounds that surround it, and thus in a sense define it, in a way similar to how the depth of a well can be measured by throwing in a stone. That there is no sound in the General's room to reveal the depth or breadth of the silence creates an atmosphere of unreality as well as a sense of infinity, for sound does not only map the quality of a silence but also its temporal boundaries, as is suggested by the fact that the sound emphasized as missing in the room is that of the clock. Unmeasurable and indefinable, this silence represents a terror that is all the worse for not having any clear limits: 'The silence of the room resembled now the silence of a deep dungeon, where time does not count, and a suspect person is sometimes forgotten for ever' (I, ii, p. 44). There is nothing for Razumov to hold on to: he is falling, and nothing indicates when, where, or how the fall will end.

The horrific qualities of the silence in the General's room do not only

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89 Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, ed. by Roger Osborne and Paul Eggert, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Joseph Conrad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), I, ii, p. 40. Subsequent references are given directly in the text, by part, chapter, and page-number.

threaten Razumov with an imminent punishment ('grave-like') but in fact suggest the embodiment of an internal punishment already in play. While helping Haldin would have put Razumov at great risk, betraying him means accepting the responsibility for his death; the consequences of either alternative are not clear to Razumov at the moment of action, when he operates instinctively to save his vague prospects for the future without realizing that they are already lost. The grave-like silence in the General's room – perfect and measureless – represents the existential void he enters as the new premise of his life. This silence and the many that follow are indicative of a life with no clear boundaries and no certainties to adjust to but also a life where no change is possible.[90]

If the complete absence of sound makes Razumov unable to measure the silence in General T——'s room, this is not the case in *Under Western Eyes* in general, as the metaphorical qualities of its silences become clearer when they are contrasted against sound. Returning to his room – where Haldin waits for him – Razumov concludes that the 'sense of life's continuity depended on trifling bodily impressions' and that the 'trivialities of daily existence were an armour for the soul' (I, ii, p. 48). Although this thought reinforces his 'inward quietness' – strongly suggesting that Razumov has indeed lost his armour and all sense of continuity – he appears optimistic about the idea that such 'material contacts' will allow ordinariness to prevail over the 'exceptional' (I, ii, p. 48). Such hopes are contradicted not only by Razumov's 'inward quietness' but by the 'profound' silence he encounters as he opens his door: 'There was not a sound' (I, ii, p. 40).

Moreover, at the moment of his flight, Haldin becomes associated with sound, suggesting that he and his destiny in some sense represent the ordinary life Razumov has lost. Haldin's departure is marked by 'a faint rustling' and 'the feeble click of a bolt drawn back lightly' (I, ii, p. 55). As Haldin leaves, Razumov hears the 'faint sounds of some town clock tolling the hour', connecting the moment not only to sound but also to time (I, ii, p. 55). By way of contrast with the 'measureless' silence of General T——'s

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90 The notion that no change is possible is reinforced by a comment Razumov later makes to Haldin: 'Eternity, of course. I too can't very well represent it to myself…. I imagine it however as something quiet and dull. There would be nothing unexpected – don't you see? The element of time would be wanting' (I, ii, p. 52).

office, this passage implies that Razumov has made the wrong decision: helping Haldin would have made Razumov's existence more tolerable than betraying him. Indeed, as Haldin leaves for what he thinks will be his salvation, Razumov's ears follow him down the stairs: 'he traced by ear the rapid spiral descent of somebody running down the stairs on tiptoe. It was a light swift pattering sound, that sank away from him into the depths: a fleeting shadow passed over the glimmer – a wink of the tiny flame. Then stillness' (I, ii, p. 55). The sound of Haldin disappearing marks the beginning of Razumov's new existence: measureless, infinite, and silent.

At the end of the novel, it is only by accepting his guilt that Razumov can achieve some form of redemption. This redemption is represented through a perpetuation of the silence that has pursued him since his first meeting with the authorities in St Petersburg: as a response to Razumov's confession, the revolutionaries make him deaf. Razumov's deafness strongly emphasizes the connection between his state of mind and the silence he has experienced so intensely. Before his confession to the revolutionaries, silence represents Razumov's state of mind – the inner torment that he is unable to share with anyone – but with his deafness, silence becomes a physical condition, apparent to anyone who would interact with him. The three last words that Razumov expresses in the novel – '*Je suis sourd*' – somewhat ironically indicate the relief of his torment, for he no longer suffers the infinite and measureless terror of the silence that has pursued him (IV, iv, p. 281).[91] Instead, his deafness constitutes something concrete and finite, delimiting his experience of the world. He might not hear anything but neither does he expect to hear anything. Moreover, we are informed that the deterioration of Razumov's general health means that he will not survive for long (IV, v, p. 283). While certainly a horrible ending, the fact that there is an ending at all must also make the situation more tolerable.

Razumov's story is introduced on the very first page with reference to

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91 Daniel C. Melnick, who writes of the contrast between silence and speech in *Under Western Eyes*, considers Razumov's deafness to '[enact] the moral and societal silence already present in his life', making 'manifest its actual condition: all previous hearing and speech have been invalidated by the lies within himself and the world he inhabited'. See '*Under Western Eyes* and Silence', *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 45.2 (2001), 231-42 (pp. 234, 237).

the unreliability of words and their incapability of representing reality.[92] Not only does the narrator – the teacher of languages – profess to lack 'those high gifts of imagination and expression which would have enabled [his] pen to create for the reader the personality' of Razumov, but he states that words 'as is well known are the great foes of reality' (I, p. 11). While denying language the ability to capture his subject properly, the teacher of languages does admit to possessing some insight into Razumov's 'personality', an insight that comes from the Russian's journal, on which the teacher largely bases his narrative. While he first describes Razumov's account as one of 'fullness and precision', he quickly changes his description of the journal to 'a tumult of thoughts' that 'went on in an endless and weary turmoil': 'the faithful reflection of the state of his feelings' (I, ii, pp. 26-7). The 'fullness' of Razumov's journal might thus simply refer to the lengthy account it gives of events and to the Russian's tendency to repeat himself. It might also refer to the general emotion conveyed by the 'tumult of thoughts' represented there, for a chaotic account might be a full and precise representation of chaos itself.[93] Indeed, the narrator goes on to present the emotional state of his main character as chaotic and confused. 'No rational determination had any part in his exertions', he writes, claiming that Razumov turned towards 'spectral ideas and disembodied aspirations' (I, ii, pp. 28, 33). Unable to represent the turmoil of Razumov's emotions with any fuller precision, the narrator harps on turmoil itself as the essence of the experience. Such vague but captivating descriptions are typical not only of Conrad's novels but of modernist fiction at large.

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92 As Allon White argues, the obscurity of Conrad's fiction arises from the implication 'that its true meaning is elsewhere: yet this 'elsewhere' is never located, it is a lost domain of symbolic resonance and enigmatic suggestion always glimpsed just beyond knowledge'; *The Uses of Obscurity: The Fiction of Early Modernism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 109. Beyond the narrator's descriptions of events, Jeremy Hawthorn also recognizes a 'complex pattern of bodily communication in the novel that serves as complement and contrast to written accounts'; 'Introduction' to *Under Western Eyes*, Oxford World's Classics, ed. by Jeremy Hawthorn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. xi-xxx (p. xxvii).

93 Early on, the narrator in fact suggests that Razumov had written down the account in order to heal this turmoil of emotion: 'There must be a wonderful soothing power in mere words since so many men have used them for self-communion' (p. 4).

Modernist Fiction and the Aesthetics of Obscurity

So far, silence in modernist fiction has mainly been discussed by means of contrasting it and the aesthetics to which it belongs with earlier realist paradigms. This comparative perspective will briefly remain as the discussion shifts to the role that silence played within modernist-novel aesthetics at large. Here, I am primarily interested in tracing silence in the debate over the novel's function, form, and future in early twentieth-century criticism. Beyond the frequent attacks on the Edwardians, an aesthetics of obscurity emerges in these writings.[94] Silence is part of this aesthetics and is one of several methods of indirection in the modernist novel.

   In their critical writings, modernists tended to define their literary projects by positioning themselves against their predecessors or more traditional contemporaries, thereby emphasizing the newness of their own writing.[95] Woolf's commentary on early twentieth-century fiction is an illustrative example, for she launched her period of more experimental writing with an attack on what she first named 'materialists' and later referred to as 'Edwardians'.[96] Through the series of essays Woolf wrote on

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94 For a discussion of modernism and obscurity, see White, *The Uses of Obscurity*.

95 For a general overview of the critical discussion about the novel in the period, see Jesse Matz, 'Impressionism, Naturalism, and Aestheticism: Novel Theory, 1880-1914', in *The Reinvention of the British and Irish Novel 1880-1940*, ed. by Patrick Parrinder and Andrzej Gąsiorek (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 539-54.

96 While she often focused specifically on Arnold Bennett, the troika that embodies the Edwardians for Woolf also included John Galsworthy and H. G. Wells. Conversely, the 'Georgians' – the opposing group of writers, in which Woolf included herself – consisted of E. M. Forster, D. H. Lawrence, Lytton Strachey, James Joyce, and the poet T. S. Eliot. The exclusion of Dorothy Richardson and Katherine Mansfield from Woolf's list of 'Georgians' is noteworthy and, perhaps, revealing of her hostility and/or jealousy towards them. Also missing from the list is Conrad, who is excluded from Woolf's discussion of modern fiction on the ground that he is 'a Pole; which sets him apart, and makes him, however admirable, not very helpful'; 'Character in Fiction', *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, III, 420-38 (p. 44). In the earlier essay 'Modern Novels', Woolf does mention Conrad, as well as Thomas Hardy and W. H. Hudson, as writers who deserve their contemporaries' 'unconditional gratitude', as opposed to the Edwardians; in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, III, 30-7 (p. 31). Many names are missing from Woolf's list of Edwardians as well – in fact,

the modern novel, she constantly defined her own writing by contrasting it against the Edwardians, and more specifically against Arnold Bennett.[97] The Edwardians, writes Woolf, 'have excited so many hopes and disappointed them so persistently that our gratitude largely takes the form of thanking them for having shown us what it is that we certainly could not do, but as certainly, perhaps, do not wish to do'.[98] Though 'Modern Novels' was written at a time when Woolf began to seriously reconsider her writing, it is noteworthy that this first sustained attack on Bennett and company appeared shortly after the publication of *Night and Day*, which is generally agreed to be Woolf's most conventional novel.[99]

Woolf was certainly not alone in her disapproval of Edwardian fiction, and when reading early twentieth-century critical commentary on the novel it is easy to form the impression that the modernist novel sprang from a deep discontent with its immediate predecessor. From Henry James to

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her reiterated mantra of Bennett, Wells, and Galsworthy as *the* Edwardians, in this essay and others, makes it seem as no other writers were active during the first decade of the twentieth century. As Carola M. Kaplan and Anne B. Simpson observe, it is particularly noteworthy that Woolf excludes women from this list; 'Introduction', in *Seeing Double: Revisioning Edwardian and Modernist Literature* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), pp. VII-XII (p. X). 'Modern Novels' was published in the *TLS*, 10 April 1919, and then revised and published as 'Modern Fiction' in *The Common Reader* (1925). Beyond these two essays, Woolf also wrote a short essay entitled 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown', published in *Nation and Athenaeum*, 1 December, 1923, later revised and much developed into 'Character in Fiction' in 1924, first delivered as a lecture to the Cambridge Heretics on 18 May, then published in the *Criterion* in July. This longer, revised essay was subsequently republished by the Hogarth Press as 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' in October the same year.

97 For a discussion of the Woolf-Bennett feud, largely in Bennett's favour, see Hynes, *Edwardian Occasions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 24-38. John Baxendale describes the feud as an 'onslaught of the highbrows' on the 'middlebrow'; see 'Popular Fiction and the Critique of Mass Culture', in *The Reinvention of the British and Irish Novel 1880-1940* (see Matz above), pp. 555-70 (p. 567). For other defences of Bennett, see John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880-1939* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), pp. 152-181, and Squillace, pp. 15-35.

98 Woolf, 'Modern Novels', p. 31.

99 *Night and Day* was rather unfavourably received by Woolf's contemporaries, and while 'Modern Novels' might reflect the turn her writing was about to take, it surely also reflects her disappointment over the reactions to her second novel. Hermione Lee contends that it was in 1920, with the short story 'An Unwritten Novel', that Woolf 'turned […] into a modernist'; *Virginia Woolf* (London: Vintage, 1996), p. 407.

Wyndham Lewis, modernist writers defined their literary projects by positioning themselves against what they were not. Before Woolf, Storm Jameson described the Edwardians as a 'sickly tribe' and as 'bastards […] among the muses': 'Of such is that misshapen thing, a latter-day realism. A kitchen art, concerned with the habits and emotions of an onion *quâ* onion'.[100] In 'The New Novel', Henry James stops himself in the midst of his discussion of Wells and Bennett to ask: 'Yes, yes – but is this *all*? These are the circumstances of the interest – we see, we see; but where is the interest itself, where and what is its centre, and how are we to measure it in relation to *that*?'[101] The 'prophets of Domestic Comfort, Shaw, Wells and Bennett' had sold the 'experience of the human race' for 'a few patent bathtaps', the poet Roy Campbell asserts, and Arnold Bennett makes D. H. Lawrence feel the need for a bath.[102] Far from all modernists felt adversity against the Edwardians, although Richardson alone seems intent on defending Bennett, to whom she refers in her 1938 Foreword to *Pilgrimage* as 'the first English follower' of Balzac, and, moreover, as the first English writer to whose work realism could be applied 'as a useful label'.[103] In Bennett, Richardson recognizes the first instance in English literature of 'the turning of the human spirit upon itself', i.e. the inward turn in the novel that has come to be associated with Bennett's predecessors.[104] It is noteworthy, moreover, that *Little Review* published in its very first issue a letter from John Galsworthy, bidding the magazine 'good speed'.[105] In the same issue, Margaret Anderson herself writes that 'you revise your list of friends on a basis of their attitude toward Galsworthy'; clearly, Anderson's and Woolf's was not a friendship written in the stars.[106]

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100 Jameson, 'England's Nest of Singing Birds', *Egoist*, 2.11 (1915), 175-6 (p. 175).

101 James, 'The New Novel', in *The Critical Muse: Selected Literary Criticism*, ed. by Roger Gard (London: Penguin Books, 1987), pp. 595-614 (p. 601).

102 Roy Campbell, 'Contemporary Poetry', in *Scrutinies*, ed. by Edgell Rickword, 2 vols (London: Wishart & Company, 1928), I, 162-79 (p. 169); D. H. Lawrence, *Selected Letters*, ed. by James T. Boulton (Richmond: Oneworld Classics, 2008), p. 47.

103 Richardson, 'Foreword' in *Pilgrimage*, 4 vols (London: Virago, 1979), I, 9-12 (p. 9).

104 Richardson, 'Foreword', p. 9.

105 'A Letter from Galsworthy', *Little Review* 1 (1914), p. 3.

106 Anderson, '"The Dark Flower" and the "Moralists"', *Little Review* 1 (1914), p. 5. On this issue, see also Eric Homberger, 'Modernists and Edwardians', in *Ezra Pound the Lon-*

At the heart of the modern writers' attack on the Edwardians lies the question of the 'real'. The world described by the Edwardians, it was generally felt, did not constitute a truthful representation of the experience of life. Consequently, the modernist novel arose out of a serious questioning of where the novel's focus ought to be. In order to represent life as truthfully as possible, what should the novel be and how should it be written? Unlike Wells and Bennett, who championed a novel whose function was essentially social and moral, James, Conrad, Ford, and later Woolf, Sinclair, and Richardson – to name a few – rethought realism and came to advocate a novel that represented the idiosyncrasies of the particular. In 'The Contemporary Novel' (1911), Wells argued that the novel was needed in society because it 'is the only medium through which we can discuss the great majority of the problems which are being raised in such bristling multitude by our contemporary social development'.[107] He ends the essay with the grand declaration that '[b]efore we have done, we will have all life within the scope of the novel'.[108] The modernists questioned the possibility of such a scope. 'The Edwardian novelists [...] give us a vast sense of things in general; but a very vague one of things in particular', Woolf contends, for example, a sentiment that echoes Conrad's and Ford's impressionist manifestos.[109] Wyndham Lewis in 'Inferior Religions' wants characters in fiction to

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don Years: 1908-1920, ed. by Philip Grover (New York: Ams Press, 1978), pp. 1-14. It should be noted, however, that the focus in Homberger's essay is poetry.

107 Reprinted in *H. G. Wells's Literary Criticism*, ed. by Patrick Parrinder and Robert M. Philmus (Brighton: The Harvester Press; Totowa: Barnes & Noble Books, 1980), pp. 201.

108 Wells, p. 205. Bennett contends in his essay 'The Progress of the Novel' that '[s]eeing life' does not begin or end with 'seeing the individual': 'Particular and unsystematised observation cannot go on for ever, aimless, formless'. Instead, the realist writer should focus on 'the phenomena of organisation', that is, how individuals form themselves into social groups; the writer 'will insist on the variations from type due to that grouping'. See *The Authors Craft* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1914), p. 33. Moreover, Bennett confesses to not being able to finish Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* 'because I could not discover what it was really about, what was its direction and what Mrs Woolf intended to demonstrate by it'. He sums up this experience as his failure 'to discern what was its moral basis'; 'Books and Persons', in *Evening Standard*, 2 December, 1926, p. 5; quoted in Hynes, p. 33.

109 Woolf, 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown', *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, III, 384-9 (pp. 386-7).

constitute 'violent individualities, and nothing stereotyped'.[110] Richardson describes the realist novel in the early 1910s as one consisting largely of 'explicit satire and protest', referring to her own project as stemming from a wish to 'produce a feminine equivalent of the current masculine realism', which in turn presents an 'independently assertive reality'.[111]

Many modern writers testify to the problems of arriving at this new conception of the 'real' through language. '[L]ife is invisible', Wyndham Lewis writes, and '[m]oments of vision are blurred rapidly and the poet sinks into the rhetoric of the will'.[112] Richardson describes how she was 'tormented' by what she perceived as her initial 'failure' to make her perception of reality 'adequately to appear within the text'.[113] Only 'for an evanescent instant' may 'the light of magic suggestiveness' play 'over the commonplace surface of words: of the old, old words, worn thin, defaced by ages of careless usage', Conrad laments.[114] To make a call for a new kind of realism is one thing; to use language to represent what is an essentially non-linguistic experience is another.

The new psychological realism presented problems not only to writers who struggled with the (in)elasticity of language, but also to readers who did not understand how to approach the new kind of novel. May Sinclair testifies to this difficulty, arguing that criticism has to be rethought, too, in order to be able to address the new fiction: 'Only a live criticism can deal appropriately with a live art. [...] it is absurd to go on talking about realism and idealism, or subjective and objective art, as if the philosophies were sticking where they stood in the eighties'.[115] Terms like 'objective' and 'subjective', Sinclair maintains, have not only lost their importance; they cause problems in the early twentieth century because they 'obscure the issues'.[116]

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110 Lewis, 'Inferior Religions', *Little Review*, 4 (1917), 3-8 (p. 5).

111 Richardson, Foreword to *Pilgrimage*, p. 9.

112 Lewis, 'Inferior Religions', 7.

113 Richardson, foreword to *Pilgrimage*, p. 10. George H. Thomson connects this statement to Miriam's many frustrated complaints of the failure of words to 'express several things simultaneously' (*P*, IV, p. 164); 'Dorothy Richardson's Foreword to *Pilgrimage*', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 42.3 (1996), 344-59 (p. 349).

114 Conrad, Preface to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, p. xli.

115 Sinclair, 'The Novels of Dorothy Richardson', p. 3.

116 Sinclair, 'The Novels of Dorothy Richardson', p. 4.

If Sinclair was troubled by how conventional critical terms obscured the issues of the new fiction, other critics found the fiction itself obscure. The modernists might have attacked the Edwardians but they were just as often attacked themselves. An unnamed review of *Pointed Roofs*, for example, describes Richardson's debut as 'a charted dissection of an unsound mind' that 'lays bare the workings of a sick imagination'.[117] While maintaining that James Joyce is a great writer, John Carruthers still contends that *Ulysses* is 'a colossal failure to be the masterpiece of our day and generation': Joyce 'believes so unreservedly in chaos that he tries to represent it, whereas, if art means anything at all, it means the resolution of chaos into order'.[118] Elizabeth A. Drew voices, at some length, her scepticism towards the psychological novel in general and D. H. Lawrence and Richardson in particular (she is somewhat more favourably disposed towards Woolf):

> It is clear then, I think, that this extreme Unconscious-egocentric position is almost a negation of artistic creation. Certain writers of the present have attempted through it to set up a new realm of literature in the underworld of being, to make the creation of novels almost a kind of 'automatic writing,' to give the subconscious a fountain pen and see what happens. The result has been a literature whose creators seem to be in a continual condition of tragic intensity, or torturing themselves to impart something which is only *just* audible to themselves, but which they feel convinced is of immense significance. They are confident that self-fulfilment will be attained by exploring the amorphous instincts latent in these hidden mysteries of being, but the result seems to prove that 'self-expression' does not follow from the obvious course of sinking into self.[119]

To Drew, literature is 'much jollier' when it is invested 'with some sort of grandeur' – a grandeur that she finds wanting in experimental early twen-

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117 Anon., 'An Original Book', *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art*, 16 October, 1915, pp. vi-viii (p. vi).

118 Carruthers, *Scheherazade or The Future of the English Novel* (London: Kegan Paul, 1928), pp. 65-6.

119 Drew, *The Modern Novel: Some Aspects of Contemporary Fiction* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1926), pp. 82-3.

tieth-century fiction.[120] Her critique often touches on aspects that are now considered central to the modernist novel but that to her make the works unintelligible. For example, Drew's description of how modern writers torture themselves to convey something '*just* audible to themselves' is closely connected with the modernists' struggle to put into words experiences that are essentially ineffable.[121] Drew, apparently, cannot hear the faint sounds that her modern writers have attempted to represent in their novels, nor does she have any patience with the remaining silence.

In sharp contrast to the Edwardian focus on material surface, Woolf names the 'dark places of psychology' as the main 'point of interest' for modern writers.[122] These unknown places constitute a large part of the modernist novelists' territory of literary exploration. Their darkness is suggestive of their obscurity as well as of the inherent difficulty in exploring and representing them linguistically. The 'elusiveness' of the life within, Woolf asserts, is the only subject for the writer who wants to depict life as it actually appears to the individual mind. 'Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit', she famously asks.[123] Many other modernist writers testify to – and sometimes complain about – the vagueness and elusiveness of their writing as well as that of others. Henry James suggests that Flaubert's novels present life as

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120 Drew, pp. 85, 82.

121 Indeed, Drew complains at some length of how 'burrowing in the "unanalyzable, indefinable, inconceivable" is death to the artist' because '[h]e simply gets lost there', using as an example Lawrence's later novels, where, according to Drew, 'the reader's mind and imagination get blurred and befogged by a constant effort to follow argument about what cannot be argued, statement about what cannot be stated, and by a constant reiteration of such words as "inchoate," "darkness," "apartness," "aloneness," "the living unutterable," "the forever unrevealed"' (pp. 81-2).

122 Woolf, 'Modern Fiction', *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, IV: 1925-1928, ed. by Andrew McNeillie (1994), 157-65 (p. 162). In the original version of the essay ('Modern Novels'), Woolf refers instead to the 'dark region of psychology': *The Essays*, III, 35.

123 Woolf, 'Modern Fiction', p. 160. In 'Modern Novels', this question is instead phrased so that it proposes that it is the 'incessantly varying spirit' the novelist should focus on, conveying 'whatever stress or sudden deviation it may display' (*The Essays*, III, 33). The revision is revealing and suggests that Woolf came to regard the obscurity of the human mind as the central challenge and emphasis for the modern novelist, rather than the mind's haphazardness.

'a spectacle, a thing to be looked at, seen, apprehended, enjoyed with the eyes', but that the novels therefore miss something 'beneath and behind, that belongs to the realm of vagueness and uncertainty'.[124] Joyce wanted his readers 'to understand always through suggestion rather than direct statement'.[125] Conrad claimed that he chose to write in English instead of French, because he 'would have been afraid to attempt expression in a language so perfectly "crystallized"'.[126]

The elusiveness that these writers refer to correlates with the aesthetics of obscurity that characterizes the modernist novel. Obscurity in the modernist text, Allon White asserts,

> is a multiform, functioning element of language which, according to its relationship with more accessible parts of the text, will alter its significance. Its meaning is never purely formal, it is contextual, and therefore never falls outside of representation however opaque or arcane it may appear to be. Like the symptom or the metaphor, it simultaneously reveals and conceals. It 'signifies'. Even when (or often, because) things are unclear or imprecise, they become a source of significance.[127]

By deliberately opting for vagueness, modernist authors circumscribed what they wanted to describe, a method that proved especially valuable for representations of consciousness. As Megan Quigley asserts, '[r]ather than attempting to eliminate vagueness, modernist fiction probes vagueness as the best way to examine psychological depth'.[128] For modernist writers, obscurity and vagueness became a possibility to probe the complexities of

124 James, 'Charles de Bernard and Gustave Flaubert: The Minor French Novelists', in *Henry James: Literary Criticism*, ed. by Leon Edel, 2 vols (New York: Viking Press, 1984), II, pp. 159-83 (p. 170). James's essay was first published in 1876.

125 Frank Budgen, *James Joyce and the Making of* Ulysses*, and Other Writings* (London: Grayson and Grayson, 1934; repr. London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 21.

126 Conrad, 'Author's Note', in *A Personal Record*, ed. by Zdzisław Najder and J. H. Stape, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Joseph Conrad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 3-8 (p. 4).

127 White, p. 2.

128 Quigley, 'Modern Novels and Vagueness', *Modernism/modernity*, 15.1 (2008), 101-29 (p. 105).

the human mind without ever having to affirm or postulate.

Silence is part of the aesthetics of obscurity that characterizes the modernist novel. Like other obscure elements in modernist fiction, it attracts readers' attention because of its vagueness: it both 'reveals and conceals'. Through the power of suggestion, silence 'signifies': it represents 'something'. This 'something' may be more or less concrete, but the fact that it escapes precise definition makes it one of the more challenging aspects of the modernist text.

<div align="center">♦</div>

In this chapter, I have argued that the modernist novel stems from a crisis in literary realism that occurred around the turn of the century. As writers began to question the possibility of representing human experience in words, they developed new and ground-breaking ways to describe life in their fiction. Modernist realism is built on an aesthetics of obscurity; through suggestion and ambiguity, it hints at that which it cannot represent directly. Silence is a central element of modernist obscurity and it is present on the pages of the modernist novel in many different ways. In the following chapters, I explore these ways more concretely by examining the form and function of silence in the works of Richardson, Joyce, and Woolf. Their silences are often part of the modernist soundscape but also representations of consciousness and various emotional states and, sometimes, graphical features on the material page. In all these embodiments, silence relates to the unsayable and to 'something' vague and elusive that is discernible between the lines.

Chapter 2
Dorothy Richardson and the
Sounds of Silence

'Silence is reality. Life ought to be lived on a basis of silence, where truth blossoms. Why isn't such an urgent thing known?'

<div align="right">(III, p. 188)</div>

It may seem ironic that a novel verbose enough to cover over two thousand pages should have silence as one of its central themes. In Dorothy Richardson's thirteen-volume novel *Pilgrimage*, however, silence is a constant presence. It is essential to Miriam Henderson's explorations of the spiritual, religious, and literary conditions of her life, both as a means to discover her inner self and as an expression of that inner self. In its efforts to portray those sides of human experience that resist verbal representation, the novel repeatedly positions itself perilously close to the limits of language, making the question of how to capture the ineffable and the silent in words an acute dilemma, which is frequently addressed directly in the text itself. Thus, when Miriam asserts in *Revolving Lights* that '[r]eal speech can only come from complete silence', her statement reads like a literary creed or a poetics, defining the central role played by silence in Richardson's novel-sequence (III, p. 389). If we take Miriam's statement at face value, silence should be the focus of our attention when we approach Richardson's work.

Since Richardson frequently uses the word 'silence' to describe spaces and atmospheres that are revealed as quite the opposite to what is usually meant by the word – that is, a state characterized by an absence of sound – the concept must be understood by how it is used in and relates to *Pil-*

grimage as a whole rather than according to its encyclopaedic definition. Indeed, silence in Richardson's work is often used to represent consciousness and various states of mind. It is linked in complex patterns to light and darkness, stillness and movement. The premise of the two chapters in this section is that silence is central to an understanding of Richardson's work; it is present in *Pilgrimage* both as one of the major themes of the novel – relating directly to and uniting Miriam's spiritual, religious, and literary 'pilgrimages' – and as part of its form, concretely represented, I argue, on the pages of Richardson's novel in the form of ellipses, gaps, and blank spaces.

Silence is an aspect of Richardson's writing that has received increasing attention in recent years, which indicates the importance and richness of the topic. As early as 1959, Shiv K. Kumar noted in passing that if '"silence, exile and cunning" are for Stephen Dedalus the prerequisites of creative composition, "silence" alone could define the tone and spirit of Dorothy Richardson's entire work'.[1] In *A Pathway to Reality: Visual and Aural Concepts in Dorothy Richardson's* Pilgrimage, David Stamm offers an introductory survey of silence as a theme in *Pilgrimage*, exploring, among other things, the relationship between silence and mysticism in the novel.[2] Stamm, however, largely construes silence as an absence of sound, whereas the present study also contrasts it to language and the effable. Following in Stamm's footsteps, Francesca Frigerio discusses silence in connection to Miriam's relationships and to her affiliation with mysticism, but also in relation to Richardson's film writing and the aesthetics of silent film.[3] Si-

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1 Kumar, 'Dorothy Richardson and the Dilemma of "Being versus Becoming"', *Modern Language Notes* 74 (1959), 494-501 (p. 501*n*27).

2 See Stamm, *A Pathway to Reality: Visual and Aural Concepts in Dorothy Richardson's* Pilgrimage (Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag, 2000), pp. 173-211. Sam Halliday, similarly, notes the 'unifying silence' in *Pilgrimage*, linking it to Quakerism and to Miriam's relationships; *Sonic Modernity: Representing Sound in Literature, Culture and the Arts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), pp. 57, 167. On Miriam's mystical experiences in relation to ineffability, see also Susan Gevirtz, *Narrative's Journey: The Fiction and Film Writing of Dorothy Richardson* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), pp. 108-203.

3 Frigerio, *Quando le parole cantano: la scrittura musicale di Dorothy Richardson*, Donne nel novecento, ed. by Antonella Cagnolati, volume 5 (Rome: Aracne Editrice, 2010), pp. 269-302. Jenelle Troxell also revisits some issues related to silence and silent film in Rich-

lence in *Pilgrimage* has also been read in relation to specific theoretical approaches, most commonly feminist and queer theory.[4] Claire Drewery's discussion of silence in Richardson's short fiction – in which she links it to 'death, incoherence […], madness and alienation' – is the only study that I am aware of that presents silence in Richardson's work as something essentially undesirable.[5] Indeed, the critical consensus on silence in Richardson's writing is that it is celebrated in her work and, moreover, often used as an alternative language, conveying that which cannot be spoken.

As Miriam herself notes in *Revolving Lights*, 'there are so many kinds of silence'; to examine *all* the silences in *Pilgrimage* thoroughly would be a topic for a full-length study, if not several (III, p. 389). In fact, Richardson's novel is so rich in silence(s) that selecting illustrative examples for the arguments I pursue in this and the following chapter has been an exasperating task, simply because there are so many apt passages to choose from. Not being able to discuss all moments of silence in the novel, I have done my best to choose examples that illustrate general tendencies. Moreover, it has to be said that my discussion will by no means touch on all aspects of silence in *Pilgrimage*. In this section – as in the following sections on Joyce and Woolf – silence is primarily examined as a representation of consciousness and various states of mind, and in relation to problems of representing those states of mind in a literary work. My reading of Richardson is thus largely focused on the connection between silence as soundscape and silence as the unsayable; I am interested in how silence relates to a novel aesthetics where the ineffable plays a significant role. Other as-

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ardson's work; see 'Shock and "Perfect Contemplation": Dorothy Richardson's Mystical Cinematic Consciousness', *Modernism/modernity*, 21.1 (2014), 51-70 (pp. 63-4).

4 Arianne Burford, for example, considers silence 'not merely as a space or emptiness but rather as a counter-hegemonic disruption' in 'Communities of Silence and Music in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* and Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*', in *Virginia Woolf and Communities: Selected Papers from the Eighth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Jeanette McVicker and Laura Davis (New York: Pace University Press, 1999), pp. 269-75 (p. 270). Joanne Winning explores silence in *Pilgrimage* as a 'signifier' in which an 'embedded lesbian sub-text' may be found; see *The Pilgrimage of Dorothy Richardson* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), pp. 121, 133.

5 Drewery, *Modernist Short Fiction by Women: The Liminal in Katherine Mansfield, Dorothy Richardson, May Sinclair and Virginia Woolf* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 4.

pects of Richardson's silence, such as, for example, its political dimensions or its presence in the narrative structure of *Pilgrimage* in the form of gaps, will hence not be considered at any length.[6]

The present chapter explores silence as both an external and an internal phenomenon in *Pilgrimage*, that is, both as something comprising aspects of the sound settings in the novel – those silent spaces that Miriam actively seeks, especially in the first three quarters of the novel-sequence – and as an internalized mood, a state of mind representing Miriam's explorations of her 'Being' and her temperament: her non-moving, non-changing inmost core. In exploring these aspects of the novel, I argue that silence, as conceptualized in *Pilgrimage*, is connected to Richardson's (and Miriam's) encounter with the Society of Friends, as well as to philosophers of silence read and referred to by Miriam in the novel, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and William Wordsworth. It should be stressed, though, that Miriam does not find her way to the powers of silence through these thinkers, nor through the Quaker faith; rather, they provide her with words and forms for thoughts and experiences present in her life from the first pages of *Pointed Roofs*. In the following, silence is first discussed in relation to the Society of Friends, a faith with which Richardson became involved in the early 1900s. Two different subsections examine Miriam's moments of silence at some length, discussing them first in relation to her

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6 One such aspect is the gendered nature of silence; both Richardson and Woolf thought of silence as feminine, in contrast to structured language, which they considered masculine. For discussions of silence as feminine, see Troxell, p. 64, Gevirtz, *Narrative's Journey*, pp. 108-10 *et passim*, Burford, pp. 270-4, Frigerio, pp. 270-302, and Laura Marcus, *The Tenth Muse: Writing about Cinema in the Modernist Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 406. There are plenty of gaps in the narration of *Pilgrimage*, mostly relating to traumatic experiences in Miriam's life, such as her mother's suicide and the guilt surrounding this experience, her sister's Eve's sudden death – mentioned only in passing at the end of *The Trap* – and Miriam's supposed miscarriage in *Clear Horizon*. Such silences will only be discussed here in those instances where the 'something' of Miriam's silences appears to relate to her memories of these experiences. For a discussion about Miriam's mother's suicide as a narrative gap in *Pilgrimage*, see Gevirtz, *Narrative's Journey*, pp. 159-85. Stacey Fox discusses Miriam's supposed breakdown at the end of *The Trap* as a similar narrative gap, where critics have '[mapped] Richardson's life onto *Pilgrimage*'s narrative'; see '"I shall go away but I don't promise to rest": Dorothy Richardson and Diagnosis', *Pilgrimages: A Journal of Dorothy Richardson Studies* 1 (2008), 74-94 (p. 86).

conceptions of reality and consciousness, and, second, in relation to Miriam's engagement with nature, during which her moments of silence are at their most intense. This subsection also takes some of Richardson's short fiction into consideration. The chapter concludes with a discussion of Miriam's relationships with other people, which increasingly come to rely on silence.

The second chapter on Richardson argues that there are parallels between how Miriam uses silence as a means of spiritual exploration and the poetics that she comes to develop over the course of the novel-sequence, a poetics that culminates in her beginning to write in the two final instalments of *Pilgrimage*. It also explores how silence is concretely embodied on the pages of *Pilgrimage*, through Richardson's idiosyncratic punctuation and her use of blank spaces; I argue that the visual aspects of the novel should be understood in relation to Richardson's ideas of reader/writer collaboration.

Dorothy Richardson and the Sounds of Silence

In 1914, Dorothy Richardson published a short piece of fiction in the *Saturday Review* called 'Dusk', describing the end of the harvest season at a farm and how the 'well-scrubbed shelves' of a storage room are filled up with apples and pickles.[7] Before it was published, the text appears to have fallen into the hands of a meddling editor, for there are several discrepancies between the published text and Richardson's own typescript. Each of these discrepancies has been crossed over in Richardson's copy of the published version, her original choice of word being jotted down in the margin, which strongly suggests her disapproval of the changes.[8] Two of the changes made in the published version are of particular importance to an understanding of Richardson's conception of silence. The first is situated

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7 Richardson, 'Dusk', *Saturday Review*, 118 (1914), 392-3 (p. 392).

8 Both the typescript and Richardson's copy of the published piece are held as part of the Dorothy Richardson Collection, General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. The typescript can be found in box 8, folder 147, and the clip from the *Saturday Review* in box 10, folder 232.

at the very end of the piece, where the unnamed narrator enters a house and acknowledges the approach of winter: 'somewhere deep within you was woven the memory of the perfect indoor gift of yet another winter – a warm silence – black-spun spaces tunnelling away into the fathomless blossoming caverns of the wood-fire'.[9] In the printed version, the word 'glooming' has been added before the word 'silence', turning the phrase into 'a warm glooming silence'. The addition darkens the atmosphere of the scene and the associations surrounding the concept of silence.

Richardson's deletion of this word draws attention to an important aspect of silence in her work, already suggested by the adjective 'warm'. Far from being something dark and depressing, silence in Richardson's writing generally belongs in scenes of tranquillity, beauty, insight, and light. The word 'glooming' is hard to reconcile with the description of winter stillness in the piece, named as a 'sweetness of rest' and a 'quiet companion'.[10] Here, as in much of Richardson's writing, silence and stillness are connected to harmony and repose, indicating a state of mind constantly sought by Richardson's main characters, in *Pilgrimage* and the short fiction alike.

In a second example from 'Dusk', the text's 'you' achieves such a state of mind by directly delving into the silence surrounding him or her:

> Presently, pausing a moment from your quiet work, standing erect without raising your eyes, resting your brow against the cool stillness, you are aware of a deep tranquillity… one of those gleaming spaces where all the scattered things of life meet and die in one full beat that presses forward.[11]

Again, the editor appears to have interfered with the text, adding the word 'throbbing' before 'stillness', subsequently crossed out in Richardson's saved clip. The word 'throbbing' sits oddly in a phrase that describes the amalgamation of disparate things into 'one full beat'; the moment of still-

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9 Richardson, 'Dusk', typescript.
10 Richardson, 'Dusk', typescript.
11 Richardson, 'Dusk', typescript.

ness is also a moment of wholeness. The crossing-out of this word only serves to emphasize the stillness in the scene described, which engulfs both silence and sound and opens the self to what appears to be an inner space of 'deep tranquillity'. If there is movement, it is inward and downward. The beat 'presses forward', but there is no indication that anything actually moves; indeed, the words 'stillness' and 'tranquillity' suggest otherwise. The scene introduces a common pattern in Richardson's writing, where solitude, stillness, and silence are linked to inner experiences. Silence in Richardson's work should not be understood as 'glooming', then, but rather as 'gleaming': countless passages throughout *Pilgrimage* describe scenes similar to the one in 'Dusk', where silence and stillness lead inwards, to a 'space' seemingly unrelated to the material world.

The increasing frequency of such silent moments in Richardson's novel-sequence emphasizes how Miriam's development – from a young and insecure 'pupil-teacher' in *Pointed Roofs* to a beginner writer in the last novel-chapters – is dependent on stillness and introspection, for it is only in silence that Miriam can fully reach and realize herself. To read *Pilgrimage* through its various silences is thus to chart Miriam's pilgrimage toward her own self. This pilgrimage is conducted at first mainly by seeking external silences, that is, silent spaces in the outer world, but as Miriam learns to internalize her silence – to achieve inner tranquillity amid the noise of her London life, or in the presence of others – she also manages to reach her inmost core when she chooses to, and not only because external circumstances happen to coincide with her mood. This development in her exploration of silence – from external to internal – will be explored more fully below. In this subsection, I focus on external silence – that is, on the silent settings and spaces of which there are so many in Richardson's writing – and on the relationship between silence, sound, and language in *Pilgrimage*.

Throughout *Pilgrimage*, silence is linked to thought and contemplation. By actively turning away from sound, Miriam finds that she functions differently and that she can reach parts of herself that are not available to her when in the company of others. In the very first paragraph of *Pointed Roofs*, Miriam's need for silence in order to be able to think is stressed:

> Miriam left the gaslit hall and went slowly upstairs. The March twilight
> lay upon the landings, but the staircase was almost dark. The top landing
> was quite dark and silent. There was no one about. It would be quiet in
> her room. She could sit by the fire and be quiet and think things over
> until Eve and Harriett came back with the parcels. She would have time
> to think about the journey and decide what she was going to say to the
> Fräulein. (I, p. 15)[12]

The words 'silent' and 'quiet' are repeated three times in these short lines,
and the absence of sound is clearly linked to the fact that Miriam is by
herself. Not only is the room quiet, but Miriam, too, can 'be quiet', and,
being so, she can 'think things over'. As Stamm points out, the emphasis
on silence in this scene underlines its importance as a theme in the se-
quence; however, what seems crucial here is not, as Stamm suggests, the
absence of sound per se, but the fact that Miriam does not need to
speak.[13] While silence is later contrasted against all use of language, in this
scene it primarily stands opposed to spoken language, in the sense of con-
versation or chit-chat. Not having to talk, or listen to others talking, Mir-
iam is free to focus her mind on whatever she wishes.

This passage introduces two lines of thought that are central to the
early volumes of *Pilgrimage*: first, Miriam's need for silence in order to
think, and, second, the association of language with social situations that
are often – although not necessarily in this scene – uncomfortable for
Miriam and in which she frequently feels that she has to perform.[14] Indeed,

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12 This passage bears several noteworthy resemblances to the short story 'Dusk', dis-
cussed above; Richardson completed *Pointed Roofs* in the spring of 1913, the year before
she wrote 'Dusk', which was published in October 1914. In both texts, silence is linked
to warmth and fire, and to contemplation. While Miriam in *Pointed Roofs* moves towards
the fire to 'think things over', the unnamed speaker in 'Dusk' imagines the silence by the
fire as 'black-spun spaces tunnelling away into the fathomless blossoming caverns of the
wood-fire' (p. 93).

13 Stamm, p. 177.

14 Although Miriam is with her sisters later in this scene from *Pointed Roofs*, it is clear,
from this scene as well as from the pages that follow, that the relationship between them
has never been easy. Miriam seems to need to withdraw from her family to think clearly,
and the sisters' conversation mostly seems to circle around 'safe' topics. Miriam is rebuffed,

what Miriam is thinking about in the dark, silent room is actually what she is going to say to Fräulein Pfaff when she arrives in Germany; she is preparing for her first performance as a teacher. The contrast between scenes of silent solitude and those in which Miriam is forced to interact with others is distinct in the first novel-chapters. The inner tranquillity that Miriam is able to experience in solitude and through silence remains distant in social situations, which are instead marked by a strong sense of unease and failure. The same idea is repeated throughout the first half of the sequence. Early on in *Deadlock*, for example, Miriam despondently concludes that she has 'no mind of her own' because of her difficulties in pursuing an intelligent discussion with Michael: 'It [her mind] seemed to be there when she was alone; only because there was no need to express anything' (III, p. 76-7). *Pilgrimage* often presents contemplation as wordless by nature, whereas social interaction is linked to performance and language, often in uncomfortable ways.

The need to find silent spaces is a pressing concern for Miriam in the first novel-chapters of the sequence, the more so as she has no space to call her own. In the Henderson home, she shares a room with her sister Harriett, and during her time in Hanover and at the Wordsworth school respectively, she is forced to share rooms with other teachers and students. There is thus little solitude for Miriam in these schools. In Hanover, the moments she enjoys the most are those when she can play the piano by herself in an empty bedroom or the *Saal*, and the Saturday-afternoon letter-writing, marked by an 'almost unbroken silence' (I, p. 65). Miriam loves 'the atmosphere of these Saturday afternoons' because of 'the sense of this room full of quietly occupied girls' (I, pp. 65-6). Instead of writing home, she spends one of these afternoons scribbling down what she can remember of a poem, contemplating its meaning, all the while aware that she must 'pretend to be writing letters or someone might speak to her', because she 'would hate any one who challenged her at this moment' (I, p. 67). Finding a silent space at Fräulein Pfaff's school is not easy, and so

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for example, when she touches on the dangerous subjects of the family's economic situation or their mother's mental health: 'Don't, Mim' (I, p. 18). However, her impending departure seems to make the sisters more intimate. Eve tells her sister that she 'seem[s] to know [her] all at once so much better' (I, p. 20).

Miriam treasures those few moments when she is liberated from the pressure of having to find something appropriate to say to the other girls.

Silence in scenes such as these does not necessarily entail the absence of sound, but the absence of speech – the letter-writing scene in *Pointed Roofs* is marked by small sounds, like Minna's mutterings under her breath and pens scratching against paper. Instead, silence relates to a nonverbal frame of mind, accessible only at moments when there is no risk of disturbance from any other person present or, preferably, in complete solitude. The most important prerequisite for Miriam to access this silent state of mind is thus the absence of spoken language. Silence creates a space for Miriam in which her thoughts can move around, and in which she can take the time to seek answers and pursue insights.

Through much of *Pilgrimage*, Miriam explores the relationship between identity and language. Her constant interest in words and dialects, witnessed not least by the frequent onomatopoeic representations of pronunciation on the page, indicates a heightened sensitivity to the spoken word. For the Miriam of the early novel-chapters, what a person says and how it is said generally amount to a personality. Consequently, she is frequently preoccupied with what to say herself. Unlike Kerstin Fest, who argues that identity in *Pilgrimage* is 'something the subject can influence and even construct rather than something innate and essential', I see Miriam's identity as gradually revealed to be something both innate and essential.[15] It is the inmost core she is constantly pursuing, referred to on several occasions as an essential part of her self.[16]

It is in her silent spaces that Miriam discovers a way to be differently, and where she first notices that she can apprehend the world surrounding her in a more comprehensive way than when she is forced to interact with others. Such is the case in a scene rather late in *Pointed Roofs*, in which

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15 Fest, *And All Women Mere Players?: Performance and Identity in Dorothy Richardson, Jean Rhys and Radclyffe Hall* (Vienna: Braumüller, 2009), p. 49.

16 In the scene discussed below, for example, where Miriam in *Pointed Roofs* is slowly waking up in the bedroom in Hanover, she seems to reach such a core ('It's me, she said, and smiled'), but generally such experiences occur later in the sequence, especially after Miriam has begun writing. Her inmost core is then described as a 'centre of being', and as 'that centre where everything is seen in perspective; serenely' (IV, pp. 609, 619).

Miriam remains in bed while Emma and Ulrica, with whom she shares the room, are forced to get up for chores. Alone, slowly emerging from sleep, Miriam finds herself in her silent space, resisting the temptation to put words to her sensations, even for herself: 'Two separate, sudden and re-sounding garglings almost startled her to thought, but she resisted' (I, p. 149). While she remains in her bed in silence, everything appears clearer to her, even her own self:

> She could feel the shape and weight of each limb; sounds came to her with perfect distinctness; the sounds downstairs and a low-voiced conversation across the landing, little faint marks that human beings were making on the great wide stillness, the stillness that brooded along her white ceiling and all round her and right out through the world; the faint scent of her soap-tablet reached her from the distant washstand. She felt that her short sleep must have been perfect, that it had carried her down and down into the heart of tranquillity where she still lay awake, and drinking as if at a source. Cool streams seemed to be flowing in her brain, through her heart, through every vein, her breath was like a live cool stream flowing through her. (I, p. 149)

The moments of silence are linked to what Miriam perceives to be her self in a fundamental sense: only in silence can she access that core.[17] Indeed, in this scene, as in many of the early instalments, silence needs to be ex-ternal before it can become internal; it is because of the absence of Emma and Ulrica that Miriam can delve into her inner tranquillity. The ensuing sense of harmony, of experiencing herself at one with the world, and of being able to reach deep into herself, 'into the heart of tranquillity', is unusual for Miriam at this early stage in the sequence. It is a fragile state of mind, threatened not only by the gargling but by the possibility of anyone entering, or even by Miriam's own movements: 'She knew that if she even moved she would be changed' (I, p. 150).

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17 As Stamm points out, Miriam needs an 'atmosphere of quiet intimacy' to experience 'essential knowledge' (p. 184). Elisabeth Bronfen, too, perceives a separate reality 'beneath the surface' that is recognizable only in silence, and that constitutes 'a permanent, con-tinual essence'; *Dorothy Richardson's Art of Memory: Space, Identity, Text*, trans. by Victoria Applebee (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 148-9.

Miriam's first real room of her own – not counting the room in which she sleeps as a governess in *Honeycomb* and where she never feels at ease – is the room she rents at Mrs Bailey's in *The Tunnel*, and where she then remains for several novel-chapters. This room means freedom for Miriam, and it offers a constant possibility of solitary contemplation.[18] Entering the room for the first time as its sole occupant, Miriam immediately feels that the space becomes an extension of her self, a place where she can move in and outside of herself without ever having to worry about being interrupted, as she previously had been. The whole house seems suffused by a promising silence: 'a small silent afternoon brightness', '[s]ilence flooded up from the lower darkness', '[s]ilence came in from the landing' (II, pp. 12, 13-14). Even during her first moments in the room, Miriam seems to locate an essential part of herself in it:

> Twenty-one and only one room to hold the richly renewed consciousness, and a living to earn, but the self that was with her in the room was the untouched tireless self of her seventeenth year and all the earlier time. The familiar light moved within the twilight, the old light…. (II, p. 16).

In this room, Miriam is free to be herself, without the pressure of any company. It is this lack of social pressure that has renewed her consciousness, and has allowed her to access a part of herself lost during the hard years of teaching and worrying about her mother's mental health. The freedom Miriam finds in this silent, solitary space releases a long train of thoughts and memories that have to be processed. 'I can *think* about it all, here, and not mind', Miriam concludes, revealing something of the safety she feels when removed from the pressure of socializing (II, p. 18, emphasis in the original). The room on Tansley Street is hence a good example of the effect that external silence has on Miriam throughout most of *Pilgrimage*; it is a solitary, quiet space, where she is free from having to arrange herself into phrases.[19]

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18 For a further discussion of Miriam's spaces in relation to solitude, see Bronfen, pp. 18-20, 27.

19 The scene is echoed in the passage describing Miriam's enthusiastic first visit to the apartment at Flaxman's Court, in *The Trap*. Here, the mere sound of the knocker leaves 'a

Paradoxically, sound at times creates a more profound stillness than does silence. While the novel generally represents silence in glowing – if not gleaming – terms, there are times when certain kinds of silence are presented as glooming: numbing and claustrophobic. The oppressive quality of such silences mainly arises through a feeling of being shut in, a feeling that occasionally, ironically, comes from the exclusion of all sound. During one of the first nights in the apartment she shares with Miss Holland at Flaxman Court, for example, Miriam finds that a 'rattling window' creates a 'sound that made a stillness in the room and in the street' (III, p. 432). When Miss Holland ventures to end the rattling, Miriam experiences an 'immense discomfort', caused by the silence that follows:

> There was something of the atmosphere of the sick-room in this awful calm. […] For it was not the quiet of a still night, the kind of night in which you listen to the expanse of space. It was a stillness filled with the coiling emanation of a humanity recognizing only itself, intent only on its own circlings. (III, p. 432)

The same discomfort returns at several points when Miriam experiences stifling silences that do not offer any possibility of 'expansion'. Silence, it appears, must bring with it a sense of 'life' in order for Miriam to be able to access her core (II, p. 453). The kind of deadening silence experienced repeatedly at Flaxman Court instead 'filled the room with the sense of death and the end' (III, p. 500).

Miriam's reactions to the aural aspects of her surroundings reveal and represent her state of mind, which makes it important to discuss not only silence but also sound in relation to her experience of her self and the world.[20] Important, too, is the relationship *between* silence and sound, and

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stillness into which flowed her own tremulous stillness', and she finds that '[t]he thing she loved was there' as she watches the 'light quietly falling' (III, pp. 400, 403).

20 Several critics have noted the importance of sound to *Pilgrimage*. Angela Frattarola argues that Richardson's narrative is 'auditory not just in its ubiquitous representation of music and voice but, more importantly, in its often negative representation of vision and the weight it gives to audition in Miriam's stream of consciousness'; see 'Auditory Narrative in the Modernist Novel: Prosody, Music, and the Subversion of Vision in Dorothy

the sporadic amalgamation of the two. If silence in *Pilgrimage* is generally related to contemplation and tranquillity – and predominantly to solitude – then sound and listening are, by contrast, associated with merging, as in becoming one with the surrounding world. It should be noted that by sound here I do not mean spoken language but rather the general soundscape transmitted from the outer world. By turning her ear outwards, away from her inner silence, Miriam appears to leave her sense of individuality behind, if only momentarily. As in Woolf's fiction, it is especially the sounds of London that fill Miriam with a sense of being integrated into something bigger, of being part of a wholeness. Miriam's city-life in the British capital is often represented through sounds, as for example in *Revolving Lights*, where Miriam returns to London after a day's holiday in the countryside: 'And then *London* came, opening suddenly before me as I rode out alone from under a dark archway into the noise and glare of a gaslit Saturday night' (III, p. 272, emphasis in the original). By acknowledging the presence of the city through its sounds, Miriam loses her sense of individuality, becoming one with the streets as if with a lover: the buildings are 'almost unendurably wonderful […] when they moved with her movement, a maze of shapes, flowing, tilting into each other, in endless patterns, sharp against the light; sharing her joy in the changing same same song of the London traffic' (III, pp. 85-6).[21] Sound, then, enables a form of merging, erasing the boundaries between Miriam's self and the surrounding space.

Richardson's *Pilgrimage*', *Genre*, 44.1 (2011), 5-27 (p. 18). Elsewhere, Frattarola has argued that Richardson is 'always concerned with the sound of a moment and how sound influences the consciousness of her central character'; see 'Developing an Ear for the Modernist Novel', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 33.1 (2009), 132-53 (p. 143). Halliday also finds that *Pilgrimage* privileges sound over vision, which in his view 'resides in the fact that [sound] may occupy both sides of a shut door' (p. 54). Stamm, however, sees ear and eye as equally important to Miriam, and argues that 'polysensory perception and synaesthesia' function as 'a special form of perception' in *Pilgrimage*, where 'the synchronized sensation of sound and vision' are represented in scenes of 'extreme perceptory intensity' (pp. 5-6).

21 In *Revolving Lights*, Miriam does refer to London as a lover: 'What lover did she want? No one in the world would oust this mighty lover, always receiving her back without words, engulfing and leaving her untouched, liberated and expanding to the whole range of her being' (III, p. 272).

In some ways, scenes describing Miriam's merging with the cityscape resemble the scenes of silent attention where she reaches towards her inmost core (discussed below). The city itself seems to become Miriam's embodiment, as she describes her nocturnal wanderings around its streets:

> She would travel further than the longest journey, swifter than the most rapid flight, down and down into an oblivion deeper than sleep; and drop off at the centre, on to the deserted grey pavements, with the high quiet houses standing all about her in air sweetened by the evening breath of the trees, stealing down the street from either end; the sound of her footsteps awakening her again to the single fact of her incredible presence within the vast surrounding presence. Then […] she would break into the shuttered house and gain her room and lie, till she suddenly slept, tingling to the spread of London all about her, herself one with it, feeling her life flow outwards, north, south, east, and west, to all its margins. (III, pp. 272-3)

If silence allows Miriam to journey to the centre of her self, this passage describes how sound establishes her 'incredible presence' in the external world, as her footsteps echo against the 'quiet houses', not only situating her in the cityscape but making her part of it. Merging with London means an expansion of her self to the point where she loses her distinctness, as she experiences her 'life flow[ing] outwards'.

Several scenes that describe Miriam listening also portray her as losing the sense of her body, sometimes even leaving it. One example is the scene in *Interim* where a melody wakes her up in the middle of the night during her visit to the Brooms over Christmas, and where she seems to follow the sound of the tune out on to the street while still remaining in her bed: 'into the quiet neighbourhood', and into 'the gardens at the backs of the rows of little silent dark houses' (II, p. 301). There is something almost unreal about this music and its effect on Miriam, whose body remains in her bed while her 'heart' rushes up and out of the window, seemingly present among the buildings in the street (II, p. 301). Such scenes emphasize the idea of merging with a whole; by giving up her body, Miriam joins something bigger and becomes one with her surroundings.

Language can also be apprehended as mere sound, and Miriam often relates more strongly to the atmosphere and feelings created by the sound

of someone's voice than to what they are actually saying.[22] The sound of eighteen Americans at breakfast at Mrs Bailey's attracts Miriam only because of the noise they create: 'If you listened without trying to distinguish anything it was *marvellous*, in the bright sunshine at breakfast. It sent you up and up, into the sky, the morning stars singing together' (III, p. 123, emphasis in the original). And when she first comes to know Michael Shatov, it is the sound of his voice that appears to affect her the most: 'The strange thing that had touched her was somewhere within the voice; the sound of Russia' (III, p. 43). That the images of Russia that accompany this sound are connected to silence conveys the intimacy of the communion between Miriam and Michael:

> a strip of silent sunlit snow, just below Finland, St Petersburg in the midst of it [...] low sledges smoothly gliding, drawn by three horses, bell-spanned, running wildly abreast, along the silent streets or out into the deeper silence of dark, snow-clad wolf-haunted forests that stretched indefinitely down the map. (III, p. 43)

This is a good example of a passage in *Pilgrimage* where the mere word 'silence' indicates an intimate connection, suggestive of Miriam's inner experiences. Indeed, what she draws from the sound of Michael's voice is acknowledged as similar to her own moments of silence: 'There was no barrier between the life in it and the sense of life that came from within' (III, p. 43). In the sound of Michael's voice, then, there is something similar to what Miriam experiences by herself, in silence. In fact, she later suggests that this 'something' is directly related to silence: 'Russians understand silence and are not afraid of it? Kindly silence comes out of their speech, and lies behind it, leaving things the same whatever has been said?' (III, p. 67). The question-marks in these sentences should not be understood as indicating that Miriam is posing definite questions; they rather

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22 Frattarola suggests that 'prosody and sound are integral to Miriam's subjectivity and create a continuity in her life, just as, according to Richardson, music creates continuity in film'; 'Auditory Narrative', p. 18. For Frattarola's discussion of Miriam's constant focus on prosody and dialect, see 'Auditory Narrative', pp. 11-15, and 'Developing an Ear for the Modernist Novel', pp. 141-2.

indicate an uncertainty about the thoughts she is expressing, or, possibly, the words she is using to express them.

If the sounds of London represent a feeling of belonging and of merging with the surroundings, sounds heard at a distance instead suggest alienation, as though Miriam is deliberately or involuntarily placed outside a space of togetherness. That her focus in these scenes is on the distant sounds in the background, and not on the comparative stillness of her room, signals that she is aware of a sense of non-involvement. Instead of searching for her inmost core in the silence of her room, her mind presses against the boundaries of the outside world, which she can hear but with which she cannot merge at that moment. In *Revolving Lights*, for example, just after and apparently because of her final break with Michael Shatov, Miriam experiences the 'stillness creeping out from the corners of the room' as an 'opening of a lifetime of loneliness'; her feeling of alienation from the world is emphasized by her noting the far-away sounds of the city-life from which she feels barred: 'She resisted, pitting against [the silence] the sound of London. But in the distant voice there was a new note; careless dismissal. The busy sound seemed very far away; like an echo of itself' (III, p. 320). While the negative quality of the silence in the beginning of the scene is indicative of Miriam's despondency at the end of her relationship with Michael, it is also suggestive of an absence in their intimacy; that Miriam should come to conceive of any silence as undesirable strongly implies an inability to connect to herself. Her responses to silence and sound in such scenes emphasize their role in mapping out the boundaries between her two selves, and between the external world and the world of her inner self.

Related to sound and the act of listening is Miriam's passionate relationship to music.[23] Music – notably her own piano-playing – allows Miriam

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23 On Richardson and music, see for example Frigerio, pp. 25-71; Stamm, pp. 119-72; Thomas Fahy, 'The Cultivation of Incompatibility: Music as a Leitmotif in Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*', *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 29.2 (2010), 131-47; Cecilia Björkén-Nyberg, 'Roll Out Beethoven: The Player Piano and Musical Waste in Edwardian England', *European Journal of English Studies*, 15.1 (2011), 7-17 (pp. 13-15), and '"Listening, listening": Music and Gender in *Howards End*, *Sinister Street* and *Pilgrimage*', in *Literature and Music*, ed. by M. J. Meyer (Rodopi: Amsterdam, 2002), pp. 89-115; Bur-

to connect to the world and to the people around her, in ways similar to how sound represents her merging with the world around her. Even so, there is a difference between the kind of general sounds described elsewhere in *Pilgrimage* and Miriam's intense relationship with music, in that she does not lose her sense of self through her playing or listening. On the contrary, music evokes a strong sense of individuality in Miriam, and endows her with the possibility to communicate that individuality without having to take recourse to language: it allows her to experience what Stamm refers to as 'the irreconcilable presence of both her interior and exterior worlds' simultaneously.[24] This communicative function of music is present in *Pilgrimage* from the very beginning. For example, Miriam in *Pointed Roofs* feels that she has 'confessed herself' after having played at Waldstrasse for the first time: 'just that minor chord… any one hearing it would know more than she could ever tell them… her whole being beat out the rhythm as she waited for the end of the phrase to insist on what already had been said' (I, p. 57). If the merging sounds of London offer Miriam an escape from her sense of self, music instead appears as a form of self-realization. Music also holds the unifying qualities of general sound, obvious during the Lycurgan dance that Miriam attends in *The Trap*, where all the guests join together to sing 'Auld Lang Syne': 'To stand thus linked and singing was to lose the weight of individuality and keep its essence, its queer power of being one with every one alive' (III, p. 496).[25] Listening to music thus enables Miriam to experience wholeness and individuality simultaneously, giving her a sense of self experienced not as a burden but as a strength.

Beyond the communicative facet of music, there are several parallels between how Miriam reacts to music and how she responds to silence. For

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ford, pp. 269-75; and Susan Reid, 'In Parts: Bodies, Feelings, Music in Long Modernist Novels by D. H. Lawrence and Dorothy Richardson', *Pilgrimages*, 7 (2015), 7-29.

24 Stamm, p. 124. Fahy argues, however, that the musical leitmotif in *Pilgrimage* gives the novel a 'symbolic and temporal unity' that reinforces 'the protagonist's failed attempts to achieve autonomy and social communion' (p. 143).

25 In one of her columns on film, Richardson similarly notes how the 'aim' of the music accompanying the silent film is 'to unify'; see 'Continuous Performance 2: Musical Accompaniment', *Close-Up*, 1 (1927), 58-62; repr. in *Close Up 1927-1933: Cinema and Modernism*, ed. by James Donald, Anne Friedberg, and Laura Marcus (London: Cassell, 1998), pp. 162-3 (p. 163).

example, intense experiences of listening to music sometimes entail the loss of all awareness of the world around her, as in the scene in *Backwater* where Miriam attends a garden concert: 'After a while, everything was dissolved, past and future and present and she was nothing but an ear, intent on the meditative harmony which stole out into the garden' (I, p. 205). Moreover, the insights she receives during her intense experiences of silence sometimes also appear when she hears music: 'all that is said by the music of Bach […]: stillness, dailiness, the quiet, blissful insight whose price is composure. The deep quiet sense of *being* […] was more, even to these protesting people, than all of which they were raving and shrieking' (IV, p. 172, emphasis in the original). The boundaries between music and silence are indistinct here, indicating that music shares some of the essential properties of Miriam's silence.

Such blurring between silence and musical sound reappears frequently in *Pilgrimage*, both in descriptions of Miriam listening to music and in her moments of silent attention, emphasizing the similar functions that silence and music have in her life. In *Oberland*, for example, 'the sound of a piano, crisply and gently touched' does not 'break the stillness', but instead 're-veal[s] what lay within it' (IV, p. 35). A similar blurring between sound and silence can be noted in the many cases where silence is described as a sound: 'silent echoes'; 'the sound of the stillness and its touch, a cool breath'; 'the noise of the silence without'; 'There was sound, if only one could hear it, in this still, signalling light' (III, pp. 130, 165, 210; IV, p. 30). These descriptions of silence as sound convey the idea that the silences in question have something to communicate; they describe how the silence *speaks* to Miriam, or rather how she, in the silence, can hear a sound emanating from deep within herself. This aspect of silence will be explored in more detail below.

Clearly, then, silence in Richardson's work is rarely soundless. The silence and solitude that Miriam pursues – driven by a desire to escape from language and to find a state where she does not have to worry about being disturbed – lead her to an inner space characterized by a different kind of being. To understand how silence operates in Richardson's works, it is necessary to examine those moments of 'silent attention' that Miriam experiences and actively seeks, moments that appear in Richardson's writing

from the very start of her career as a writer, in the sketches she wrote for the *Saturday Review*. To grasp the representation of silence, mind, and consciousness in these scenes, it is first necessary to look at those who influenced Richardson's conception of silence as it is presented in her fiction and embodied in the character of Miriam.

'A Friend in All but Name': Dorothy Richardson and the Society of Friends

Richardson's ideas about silence have several affinities with the silence that is practiced by the Quakers, a faith with which she was thoroughly familiar. Her association with the Society of Friends started in 1901 when her friend Benjamin Grad – Michael Shatov's real-life counterpart – brought her to the Quaker Meeting House in St Martin's Lane, where she first participated in a Meeting.[26] The experience seems to have affected her deeply. In a letter to John Cowper Powys dated 1939, she writes that this meeting constituted an 'astonishing revelation' for her, being 'a central experience I can never forget'.[27] But it was not until 1908 that the Quakers

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26 On Richardson and the Quakers, see Howard Finn, '"In the Quicksands of Disintegrating Faiths": Dorothy Richardson and the Quakers', *Literature and Theology*, 19.1 (2005), 34-46; Eva Tucker, 'Dorothy Richardson and the Quakers', *Pilgrimages* 1 (2008), 124-31; Randall, *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 73-5, and 'Work, Writing, Vocation and the Quakers in Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*', *Pilgrimages* 2 (2009), 39-60; Gevirtz, *Narrative's Journey*, pp. 133-4; Frigerio, pp. 280-8; and Stamm, pp. 197-211.

27 Dorothy Richardson, *Windows on Modernism: Selected Letters of Dorothy Richardson*, ed. by Gloria G. Fromm (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), p. 368. Richardson, it should be noted, was far from the only intellectual of the period who became fascinated by the Quakers' fervent beliefs about the individual's integrity and responsibilities, and about everyone's equal abilities to have mystical experiences. The early twentieth century witnessed a marked increase in interest in mysticism. A. J. P. Taylor calls the new century's first decade 'the greatest period of influence for what were then called the "Free Churches", since the time of Cromwell'; 'Prologue: The Year 1906', in *Edwardian England*, ed. by Donald Read (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1982), pp. 1-13 (p. 4). The Quakers' emphasis on testimony – which for Friends means bearing witness to your faith through, for example, actions of goodwill in everyday life and non-violent resistance against social injustice – encourages members to engage actively in social issues, and the Quakers are often associated with their involvement in the anti-slavery movement

came to occupy a more central role in Richardson's life. To recuperate from a breakdown, she went to stay with a Quaker family in Sussex, the Penroses, with whom she remained until 1911.[28] It is noteworthy that it was during this period of intense involvement with the Quakers that Richardson started to write fiction. While still in Sussex, she wrote 'middles', a series of short-fiction pieces, most of which describe an atmosphere or some event in the daily life on a farm. Many of these pieces were subsequently published in the *Saturday Review*. Following her long period of rest in Sussex, Richardson, who had quit her position as a Harley Street dental secretary before leaving London, began a serious attempt at writing. Her first novel, *Pointed Roofs*, was completed in 1913. At the same time, she wrote about the Quakers themselves; in February 1914, *Quakers Past and Present* was published – a slim volume of just under one hundred pages where Richardson introduces the Quakers and their faith, largely focusing on the influence of founder George Fox but also touching on subjects such as women's role within Quakerism, which was an important issue for her – followed in May by *Gleanings from the Works of George Fox*, a short collection of texts by Fox that Richardson introduced and edited.[29]

Richardson was deeply affected by the Quakers' practice of silence, which is one of the faith's most distinctive characteristics. Friends' meetings of worship are conducted without clergy; the congregation meets in silence, allowing members to share their experiences and thoughts when they are moved to do so. In the letter to John Cowper Powys quoted above,

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in America and with a general pacifist agenda. By the time Richardson became involved with their faith and practices, the Quakers had, in Finn's words, 'an established reputation as radically progressive in the social sphere and in their principled adherence to ideals of tolerance, pacifism, liberty and equality'; 'Dorothy Richardson and the Quakers', p. 38. As Finn points out, a number of the social and political groups associated with this period attracted the same members, and there was a convergence of thought between several of these movements. It is therefore not surprising to find that the same people who were interested in the Quakers also became involved with the Fabians – as did Richardson – and with the Women's Rights Movement.

28 See Gloria G. Fromm, *Dorothy Richardson: A Biography* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), pp. 54-6.

29 Richardson, *The Quakers Past and Present* (London: Constable, 1914); *Gleanings from the Works of George Fox* (London: Headley, 1914). *Pointed Roofs* was not published until 1915.

Richardson goes on to describe her first overwhelming experience of the Quaker silence:

> As an outsider, admitted at the request of Quaker friends, I had to sit, on a sweltering midsummer evening, in a sloping gallery almost under the roof. The place was packed. Before the preliminary silence was settled down to, during the initial formalities – for this is the great 'business' meeting of the year I wondered how long I should endure without fainting or apoplexy. A few minutes after these massed Friends had gathered themselves into stillness, I felt, physically, coming up from that sea of humanity, boxed in that old, ill-ventilated building, packed together & certainly sweating, of that evening of 'debate', as Quakers understand it, my head remained clear & cool & the air in the 'stifling' gallery pure & fresh.[30]

Quaker silence is characterized by a deep focus, what Richardson calls 'silent attention', enabling religious experience as well as a deeper form of connection with the self: 'The "thing" which has had the power of so arresting us, of making a breach in the normal, unnoticed rhythm of the senses, allows our "real self" – our larger and deeper being, to which so many names have been given – to flow up and flood the whole field of the surface intelligence'.[31] According to the Friends, silence thus enables individuals to come into contact with themselves in a more fundamental sense. While attempting to undermine notions of logic and sense – 'surface intelligence' – as a basis for knowledge, Quakers instead believe that this state of mind, this deeper focus, opens the self to an intuitive knowledge of reality. As Richardson suggests, to 'journey to the heart of reality', one must break 'through the veil of sense', and silence offers a possibility of doing so: 'Silence, bodily and mental, is necessarily the first step in this direction. There is no other way of entering upon the difficult enterprise of transcending the rhythms of sense, and this, and nothing else, has been invariably the first step taken by the mystic upon his pilgrimage'.[32] Silence is clearly presented here as a method for spiritual exploration.

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30 Richardson, *Windows on Modernism*, p. 368.
31 Richardson, *Quakers Past and Present*, pp. 33-4.
32 Richardson, *Quakers Past and Present*, pp. 35-6.

Richardson's focus on the mystical aspects of the faith is symptomatic of the age in which she was writing. The faith that she (and Miriam) encountered in the beginning of the twentieth century had recently taken a liberal turn. This modern version of Quakerism – sometimes referred to as Liberal Quakerism – apparently imagined that it was returning to the faith's origins, but, according to the theologian Pink Dandelion, it constituted 'the biggest departure […] to date' from traditional Quakerism.[33] One of the central tenets of Liberal Quakerism asserts the authority of personal experience over Scripture.[34] The idea that all humans share an equal ability to experience God directly, without the involvement of church authority, attracted Richardson, who in *Quakers Past and Present* writes about 'the direct communication of truth to a man's own soul: the presence, in other words, of a "seed of God" in every man'.[35] The faculty that allows one and all to come into direct contact with God is referred to by modern Quakers as the 'Inner Light', which in turn is described by Richardson as 'an immediate pathway to reality within the man himself', representing a 'perfect realization of the fusion of human and divine' that previously had only been ascribed to those 'giants […] of human civilization' referred to as 'mystics'.[36]

In Richardson's presentation of the Quakers, the focus on the self as the basis of spiritual experience – and the responsibility placed on individuals to advance God's cause in the world as they themselves understand it – relates directly to Liberal Quakerism, which is apparent partly through her choice of words. For example, Richardson's references to the 'Inner Light' instead of the older, more traditional Quaker concept of the 'Inward Light' demonstrate her affiliation with the modernized faith, which held that there was an essential difference between the two:[37] where 'Inward' would imply that the Light came 'from beyond, as if through a keyhole', 'Inner' instead emphasizes the role of the individual and can thus, according to

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33 Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p.130. See also Finn, 'Dorothy Richardson and the Quakers', pp. 37-8.

34 Dandelion, pp. 129-30. See also Pink Dandelion, *A Sociological Analysis of the Theology of Quakers: The Silent Revolution* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1996), pp. xix-xx, 12.

35 Richardson, *Quakers Past and Present*, p. 41.

36 Richardson, *Quakers Past and Present*, p. 13.

37 Richardson, *Quakers Past and Present*, p. 19 *et passim*.

Dandelion, 'be used to accommodate more monist interpretations of how God works with humanity'.[38] In Richardson's version, the experiencing subject is thus given a more central position.

Liberal Quakerism also emphasizes the limitations of language, believing words to be insufficient to describe – and therefore demeaning to – religious experience.[39] This strand of thought does relate to the faith's earliest beliefs, where silence was construed as a spiritual state, partly achieved through the practice of abstinence from language. Along with the early Puritan movement, the first generation of Friends sought to reform language, attempting to scour off any influence of ornate rhetoric.[40] Both Quakers and Puritans instead advocated what they referred to as the 'plain' style of speaking and avoided excessive verbiage, with reference to Ecclesiastes 5.2: 'let your words be few'. George Fox makes a distinction between 'carnal' and 'spiritual' talk, where 'carnal' relates to any use of language that does not stem from a spiritual source; according to Fox, the 'divine Word of wisdom' – the spiritual word – can only be heard through a return to the 'state in which Adam was before he fell'.[41] Abstinence from speech was a form of self-suppression linked to other restraints; to be silent is thus also connected with refraining from, for example, giving in to carnal lusts. In early Quaker faith, it was believed that 'carnal' talk should be limited to solving practicalities of daily life, and that members should remain silent as far as possible. Silence was not an end in itself, but a means to achieve spiritual experiences: the voice of God, which is understood as wordless, can only be heard within those who practise silence.[42] This is also how Richardson presents silence in *Quakers Past and Present*.

If Quakers disdain the spoken word, they are even more sceptical towards the written word, which is often given a position of authority, a position Friends refuse any individual expression. This is especially relevant when it comes to the status of the Bible within the faith. Quakers believe

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38 Dandelion, *Quakerism*, p. 132.

39 Dandelion, *Quakerism*, pp. 136-42.

40 See Richard Bauman, *Let Your Words Be Few: Symbolism of Speaking and Silence among Seventeenth-Century Quakers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 2.

41 Bauman, p. 21.

42 Bauman, p. 23.

that the Scriptures do not represent God's will and command, but are only an early record of individual experiences of the Divine. Liberal Quakers especially stressed this aspect of the Bible, sometimes even claiming that new revelations should have an authority over old ones.[43] God's word is silent in the sense that it cannot be apprehended in the same way as natural language; it cannot, claims Fox, 'be heard or read with the natural external senses, as the Scriptures can'.[44] All written words should be regarded with similar scepticism and should never be accepted as unquestionable truth.[45]

It is interesting to consider *Pilgrimage* from this perspective. As a work of fiction, it would not meet with the Quakers' approval.[46] But the fact that Richardson chose to write about her own life, and that she did so because it was the only thing she felt she knew well enough to write about, corresponds to the Quakers' view of language and the self. By claiming Miriam's thoughts and experiences (carnal and spiritual) as her own, Richardson gives them the same status as the Quakers grant the Scriptures.[47] *Pilgrimage* could thus be read as a kind of testimony, in that it constitutes

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43 This idea is called 'progressivism'; see Dandelion, *Quakerism*, p. 130.

44 Quoted in Bauman, p. 26.

45 Similar thoughts can be found in *Pilgrimage*. In *Revolving Lights*, for example, Miriam questions her right to make use of knowledge acquired by other people, suggesting the supremacy of the individual's own insight: 'She was grasping at incompatible things, sacrificing the bliss of her own uninfluenced life to the temptation of gathering things that had been offered by another mind. Things to which she had no right' (III, p. 236). 'Bliss' to Miriam apparently means to avoid actively seeking knowledge, letting it arrive by its own accord, 'unsought', 'so that [the relevant insights] seemed not only her rightful property, but also in some way, herself' (III, p. 236).

46 Especially the early Quakers were sceptical towards all forms of make-believe, believing that play-acting, for example, harmed the wholeness of an individual through the attempt at representing something that was not true according to that individual's spirit. Literary works by Quakers are sparse, and poetic works seem to outnumber fiction. Among the most renowned Quaker authors can be found the poets Basil Bunting and John Greenleaf Whittier, and the novelist Charles Brockden Brown. Brown came to develop ideas that were at odds with Quakerism, however, and he was at times shut out of Meetings.

47 Richardson commented on the autobiographical nature of *Pilgrimage* on many occasions. While admitting that Miriam was only 'in part myself' to her interviewer Vincent Brome, Richardson still claimed that *Pilgrimage* 'was distinctly autobiographical'; 'A Last Meeting with Dorothy Richardson', *London Magazine*, June, 1959, 26-32 (p. 28).

Richardson's revelations and records of her attempts to examine her own Inner Light, although she does not refer to it by that term. Her habit of putting the letters 'I.R.' – meaning 'imperfectly realized' – in the margins of her published novels when she felt that she had failed to represent a scene faithfully, compared with how she actually experienced it, reveals how she aimed for truth measured by her own experience.[48]

Miriam's interest in silence predates her first encounter with the Society of Friends in *Pilgrimage*, which is described in *Revolving Lights* as a glowing memory of being brought to a Meeting in St Martin's Lane by one of Mrs Bailey's boarders. It is unclear exactly when this event takes place in the chronology of the narrative, but as Michael Shatov is also present, it cannot be long before it is described. Already before the Meeting, Miriam's experiences of silence have acquired a suggestion of religious discovery, at times suggesting that the truth available to her during her silent moments is an experience of God: 'some day, he [Michael] would meet, along a pathway unknown to her and in a vision different from her own, the same truth…. What truth? God?' (III, p. 307). While the encounter with the Quaker faith does not introduce Miriam to the power of silence, it does appear to confirm her own intuitive explorations of her self in stillness, providing her with a form and method for deepening her explorations. 'Startling not to have remembered them in all these years of hoping to meet someone who understood silence', Miriam states, testifying to the relief she feels in having encountered the Friends' culture of silence (III, p. 326).

Miriam's engagement with the Quakers deepens in *Dimple Hill* – the penultimate novel-chapter – as she withdraws into the countryside to recuperate from a breakdown, staying with a Quaker family of farmers. Her exploration of silence and her 'zone of being' is at its most intense in this volume, which can be described as a celebration of the powers of silence:

> [h]ere, too, as in every human activity there seemed to be, was a concrete spiritual rhythm; so many wing-beats of the out-turned consciousness on its journey towards stillness, a moment's immersion within its pulsating depths, and the return. To a serenity flooding her being and surrounding

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48 See Gillian E. Hanscombe, Introduction to *Pilgrimage*, in *Pilgrimage*, vol. 1 (London: Virago, 1979), pp. 1-7 (p. 7).

it, far richer than the same kind of serenity achieved in solitude. […] From herself, too, a measure of this glad radiance must be flowing, proving her no longer an outsider, but one who had come to them already qualified, by kindred experience, for membership of this small unit of the company of believers. (IV, pp. 469-70)

Miriam's time with the Roscorlas in *Dimple Hill* enables her to explore what a life of silence entails; it also brings her closer to the idea of a life in closer proximity to nature. In addition, her time among the Quakers emphasizes the religious quality of her silent attention, as the presence often referred to during her moments of solitude is increasingly presented as divine.

Miriam's spiritual awakening constitutes a central part of *Pilgrimage* and Richardson's choice of title is significant in this context, as has often been pointed out. Unlike Jean Radford – who argues that Miriam's pilgrimage has no ending, no 'final destination within the text, it is not only as long as life itself, it *is* life itself' – I maintain that Miriam's pilgrimage in fact has a destination, defined in the novel as her 'centre of being', which she is able to reach through her moments of silent attention.[49] While Miriam's moments of being serve various functions for her at different times, in some of the last novel-chapters they often have affinities with religious worship. My contention is that there is not only a strong spiritual component to Miriam's moments of silent attention but also a religious one, as she repeatedly returns to the notion of a divine presence inside her – reminiscent of the Friends' idea of God that can be heard inside, through silence. Her deep sense of the divine at times also

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49 Radford, *Dorothy Richardson* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 28. Radford discusses the importance of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* for *Pilgrimage*, underlining the novel's use of 'extended metaphors of life as a journey', a metaphor with 'specific religious or spiritual reference which only the word "pilgrimage" could provide' (p. 25; see pp 25-43 for her discussion of the pilgrimage motif). Gevirtz, like Radford, links *Pilgrimage* to Bunyan, but also to other writers of 'pilgrimage narratives' that are referenced throughout the novel: George Fox, Chaucer, Dante, and Goethe; *Narrative's Journey*, p. 111. Janet Fouli discusses the pilgrimage motif mostly in relation to Miriam's travelling; see *Structure and Identity: The Creative Imagination in Dorothy Richardson's* Pilgrimage (Tunis: Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de la Manouba, 1995), pp. 23-42. See also María Francisca Llantada Díaz, *Form and Meaning in Dorothy M. Richardson's* Pilgrimage (Heidelberg: Winter, 2007), pp. 93-4.

materializes outside her – in *Dimple Hill*, for example, she appears to meet Jesus at one point, discussed below. While her religious awakening is subsequently followed by writing (discussed in the next chapter), it remains a central part of *Pilgrimage*, a part that has so far not received a lot of critical attention.[50]

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50 The religious thread that is perceptible throughout *Pilgrimage* concerns not only Miriam's spiritual development but also her attitude to the issue of the existence of a Christian God. The question of Miriam's faith is addressed already in the first pages of *Pointed Roofs*, where we learn from her sister Eve that Miriam is apparently a non-believer (I, p. 19). In *Backwater*, Miriam describes faith as 'an abnormal condition of the mind with fanaticism at one end and agnosticism at the other' (I, p. 259). But in *Honeycomb*, while still claiming to be 'an unbeliever', Miriam contends that even 'if there is some confusion and squabbling about Christ there must be something in it if the things that show are so beautiful' (I, pp. 381, 386), and in *The Tunnel*, she defines herself as an 'agnostic' (II, p. 24). In the same scene, Miriam's religious scepticism is contrasted with that of her sisters, who have stopped attending church simply because they have no interest, a reason that troubles Miriam: 'This was disquieting. It was one thing to be the agnostic of the family – but Eve and Harriett […]. She wondered whether she ought to say something about Unitarianism. But after all there might not be anything in it, and they might not feel the relief of the way it cleared up the trouble about Christ' (II, p. 24). The 'trouble about Christ' referred to here is presumably the question about whether or not Jesus was the son of God, a question that preoccupies Miriam in *Backwater* (I, p. 259). The Unitarian faith has 'cleared up' Miriam's problem by its stance on Jesus; Unitarians do not believe in the Holy Trinity, and they deny that Jesus was God's son, claiming instead that he was 'only' a great man and a prophet. Miriam's thoughts demonstrate that she has sought and found an answer to what for her is a serious religious dilemma, revealing her not as someone who is uninterested in religion as such, but as someone troubled by religious questions. The 'relief' she has found indicates that the question must have bothered her a great deal. A closer look at the criticism Miriam directs towards institutionalized Christianity reveals that it is not, in fact, primarily the question of God's existence that has laid the ground for her religious doubt. Her main problem with the Christian faith seems to concern the church itself, and its traditions as practiced by its clergymen. It is not primarily God that she doubts, but the preaching people do in his name: 'Listening to sermons was wrong… people ought to refuse to be preached at by these men. Trying to listen to them made her more furious than anything she could think of […]. The services might be lovely if you did not listen to the words; and then the man got up and went on and on from unsound premises until your brain was sick' (I, p. 73). What Miriam seeks is more independence in relation to her faith. As early as *Backwater*, the issue of *how* to practise religious worship arises as her central religious problem; a person's faith, she contends, should be practised, not according to anybody else's decree, but according to conscience (I, p. 258).

Towards 'the tireless unchanging centre': Inside the Moment of Silence

In *Revolving Lights*, when Miriam returns to her room in Tansley Street after her break with Michael, she experiences a silence emblematic of loneliness and alienation, discussed above. As the scene progresses, however, this silence changes character, as Miriam begins to rediscover the 'extraordinary wealth of going on being alive': 'Going back into the room she found that her movement about it had all its old quality; she was once more in that zone of her being where all the past was with her unobstructed' (III, p. 322). Instead of mourning the loss of the intimate friendship she shared with Michael, Miriam experiences a sense of liberation, of returning to a part of herself, those 'strange wide spaces within the darkness' that she had found in the 'old days of solitude' (III, p. 321). The scene provides an explanation for Miriam's having come to the conclusion that she cannot marry Michael: while with him, she has apparently not been able to disappear into silence, to explore her inner self in private moments of solitude.

As the silent moment of this scene progresses, something else is revealed in vague terms: the memory of Miriam's first visit to a Meeting is surprisingly mentioned as the 'most powerful' of all her memories: 'It was. The strange faint radiance in which it had shone cast a soft grey light within the darkness concealing the future….' (III, p. 324). Alone in her room in Tansley Street, what she suddenly remembers so forcefully of the Meeting is 'the quality of the silence' and its rich sense of fulfilment, of being:

> Dr M'Taggart said pure being was nothing. But there is no such thing as nothing… being in the silence was being in something alive and positive; at the centre of existence; being there with others made the sense of it stronger than when it was experienced alone. Like lonely silence, it drove away the sense of enclosure. There had been no stuffiness of congregated humanity; the air, breathed in, had held within it a freshness, spreading coolness and strength through the secret passage of the nerves. (III, p. 327)

Possibly because she has already come to associate her private moments of stillness with deep happiness and intimate communication, the silence

during the Quaker meeting overwhelms Miriam with a feeling of belonging, with a 'homesickness for daily life with these people who lived from the centre' (III, p. 327). That she revisits the memory of the powerful experience just after her break with Michael suggests a wish to return to a life based on such moments of stillness: 'the escape into the tireless unchanging centre […] The truth was forced upon her, wafted through her by this air that washed away all the circumstances of her life' (III, p. 330). If poor Michael is washed away as one of Miriam's 'circumstances', the 'truth' of her own 'unchanging centre' confirms that she was right to break with him.

In this section, the nature of Miriam's moments of silence will be examined in further detail, focusing on their connection to insight on the one hand and, on the other, on how they come to suggest a divine presence *inside* her. The significance of Miriam's memory of the Quakers in the scene discussed above lies in how it suggests the possibility of a life based on silence and solitude instead of marriage, or even just a romantic relationship. In fact, in one sense, silence becomes a way for Miriam to pursue a relationship with herself – it constitutes an intense form of self-communion and an access to parts of the self not otherwise available. The powerful memory emphasizes the importance of silence in Miriam's life and the often religious nature of her moments of silence. The scene also signals a transition in the narrative: from this moment in the sequence onwards, Miriam actively lives in pursuit of self-fulfilment through silence rather than through social acceptance.

Pilgrimage has repeatedly been described as a quest: for life, for experience, for self-realization, for expression.[51] It is noteworthy that Miriam's silent moments appear to unify all the other quests with which she is as-

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51 For example, Radford argues that Miriam's quest is for the 'inexpressible, the spirit of "life itself"' (p. 40). Gevirtz suggests that Miriam's quest is for 'spiritual development', achieved through writing; *Narrative's Journey*, pp. 14-15. Several other critics discuss *Pilgrimage* as a quest narrative without any certain aim, blurring the distinction between 'quest' and 'pilgrimage'; for example, Fouli does not directly state what Miriam's quest is for, but notes that it is 'psychological rather than physical' (p. 11). See also Díaz, '*Pointed Roofs*: Initiating *Pilgrimage* as Quest Narrative', *Pilgrimages: A Journal of Dorothy Richardson Studies*, 3 (2010), 53-74.

sociated. Indeed, silence in *Pilgrimage* is revealed precisely as life, experience, self-realization, and expression. In more than one sense, *Pilgrimage* reads as a quest for silence – a constant striving towards the inner stillness that appears with increasing frequency as the novel progresses, and that becomes both the way to the goal and the goal itself. Ironically, this quest – a concept usually connected to movement, journey, and adventure – can only be fulfilled in stillness, by journeying inwards. Earlier in this chapter, I discussed this inward journeying as an act of contemplation associated with external silence and stillness. As the sequence continues, however, these silent moments depend less on external circumstances, ultimately allowing Miriam to contemplate the world through a mood of silence also in the presence of others and in non-silent spaces.

The experience of silence hence develops into a mental attitude, referred to in the following discussion as 'silent attention', borrowing Richardson's term for the deep focus she associates with Quaker silence: a wordless, insightful perspective on life, which allows Miriam to perceive the world and her place within it as a wholeness. Silent attention increasingly becomes Miriam's standard perspective on her surroundings, allowing her not only to access her inmost core momentarily, but continually to live *from* it. Her way of internalizing silence is obvious, for example, in the opening chapters of *Dawn's Left Hand*, after her return from Oberland. In the intense pages describing her 'restored' health, Miriam finds herself 'glowing with a radiance that was different from the radiance of the surrounding sunlight', and she expresses a wish to communicate only with the 'unlocated being' of the people surrounding her: 'she must remain here, balanced between return to her customary life and the way of being she had entered a moment ago and that could be, she now realized with sober astonishment, her chosen way till death' (IV, pp. 149, 150, 141, 151). After her strong experiences of silence, light, and being in Oberland, she refers to people that she perceives as sharing her outlook on life as 'Oberlanders', describing their unacknowledged but shared existence as 'the world-wide Oberland' (cf. IV, pp. 132, 147, 157, 159; p. 157). In *March Moonlight*, Miriam's silence has become internalized to such an extent that when her friend Richard enters the room where she sits writing, she can remain in her inmost core, pen poised, without his presence disturbing her:

> I am as calm, as steady, as if I were alone. I am myself, my own. Can go
> on writing, or stop writing, concentrate my attention upon discovery and
> still appear to be far away […] Silent, devoid of words that in their mere
> sounding bring all humanity into the room, we share a piteous smallness,
> seem alone in the universe, threatened, vulnerable. Yet drawing strength
> from each other. (IV, pp. 619-620)

Far from a disruption, Miriam eventually acknowledges Richard's compa-
ny as a powerful addition to her own silence, making it more intense.
While conscious of his presence in the room, she only acknowledges it
through their shared silence, led by the stillness of her inner being.

The notion of the self as something still is essential to the moment of
silence in *Pilgrimage*. As Shirley Rose persuasively argues in an oft-quoted
article, the reason Richardson disapproved of the term 'stream-of-con-
sciousness' was that it construed consciousness as something moving; the
term thus stands fundamentally opposed to Richardson's conception of
mind and consciousness as essentially still.[52] Rose suggests that we should
regard Richardson's conception of consciousness as spatial, 'without the
usual correlative of time'.[53] The metaphors Richardson herself suggested
for consciousness – for example a pool or an ocean – indeed emphasize the
spatial dimension and suggest that consciousness is something one can
move through.[54] The notion of depth seems central to Richardson's con-

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[52] Rose, 'The Unmoving Center: Consciousness in Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrim-
age*', *Contemporary Literature*, 10.3 (1969), 366-82. No paraphrase can capture Richardson's
dislike of the term 'stream-of-consciousness' better than her own words: 'What do I think
of the term "Stream of Consciousness" as applied, in England, to the work of several
modern novelists? Just this: that amongst the company of useful labels devised to meet the
exigencies of literary criticism it stands alone, isolated by its perfect imbecility'; quoted in
Twentieth-Century Authors: A Biographical Dictionary of Modern Literature, ed. by Stanley
J. Kunitz and Howard Haycraft (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1942), p. 1169.
As Rose notes, however, the term 'stream-of-consciousness' has come to be associated with
a certain kind of writing, and less with the actual nature of thought, which is Richardson's
topic in her remark, quoted above (p. 369).

[53] Rose, 'The Unmoving Center', p. 369.

[54] 'Stream of consciousness is a muddle-headed phrase. It's not a stream, it's a pool, a
sea, an ocean'; quoted in Brome, p. 29. Bronfen discusses Miriam's contemplation as a
'movement through immeasurable inner space and as the individual's concentration on his

ception of consciousness as described both in her own comments on the mind – '[i]t has depth and greater depth and when you think you have reached its bottom there is nothing there, and when you give yourself up to one current you are suddenly possessed by another' – and in *Pilgrimage*: 'I […] eagerly face the strange journey down and down to the centre of being' (IV, p. 609).[55] This apparent contradiction – between consciousness as something still and the idea of contemplation as a kind of movement – is in fact not contradictory at all, for contemplation is to Richardson not equated with consciousness itself. Contemplation is the act – described in *Pilgrimage* at times as a form of 'journeying' – of reaching the deeper layers of consciousness, of travelling downwards towards the core, which constitutes an 'unmoving center': a still and stable wholeness.[56]

It seems strange that Richardson never mentioned silence in connection to consciousness in her sparse comments on her own writing. Possibly, it is because her conception of silence was highly idiosyncratic, or because silence seemed too abstract to usefully describe any aspect of consciousness. Throughout *Pilgrimage*, however, no other words are used as frequently as 'silence' or 'silent' to represent various states of mind, if not consciousness itself. Silence and stillness are continuously associated with occurrences below the surface of the social self: 'the words belonging to the underlying things were far away, only to be found in long silences'; 'the quality of their silence would reveal to her what lay behind their unrelaxed capacity for association'; 'the lovely world of lovely things seen in silence and tranquillity'; 'her alternating states of talkative concentration and silent happy expansion'; 'Nothing could touch the vision that rose and the confessions that were made within its silence', 'Eternity stating itself in the stillness', 'now the strange something was growing clearer. Their prolonged silence was speaking. Of course… "*C'est dans le silence que les âmes se révèlent*"'; 'the deepening twilight, the sudden silence, the deep-toned bell, the instant of seeing, from within its far sound, the strangeness of human life and its incompleteness'; 'Everything in the room had a quiet reality'

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or her own unchanging essence' (p. 183).
   55 Quoted in Brome, p. 29.
   56 Rose, 'The Unmoving Center', p. 376.

(III, pp. 181, 191, 208, 246, 271, 365, 430; IV, p. 176). Silence often describes movement in consciousness – the act of contemplation itself – but it also relates to certain states of mind associated with the 'centre of being', such as silent attention, and with the inmost core, which is silent because inexpressible.

However, Richardson's general dislike of metaphors suggests that silence might not be used as a metaphor for consciousness in *Pilgrimage*, but instead as its direct representation.[57] Part of her general distrust of language (discussed further in the following chapter), Richardson's scepticism towards figurative language relates to her own realist aesthetics and her aim to represent reality as closely as she can to how it is experienced.[58] Her suspicion of metaphors has to do with their evasiveness, and their function in a literary aesthetics that chooses detour over directness. To Richardson, metaphors never arrive at the thing itself, but only at its likeness; while delightful in themselves, they deflect attention from exactness and realism, as Richardson suggests in a letter to Henry Savage: 'Oh the helplessness surrounding the helpfulness and manifold uses of speech, the dangers within the delights of metaphor'.[59] The problem is precisely that language for Richardson is never just for its own sake – or at least should not be for its own sake – but constantly reaches towards the actual, real world. While it might not reach this something – speech is 'helpless' rather than 'helpful' – it should strive towards it directly, without any flourish.[60]

Miriam expresses a similar sentiment in *Clear Horizon*, as she contem-

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57 On Richardson and metaphor, see Radford, pp. 122-3, and Bronfen, pp. 3, 167-8, 176-7.

58 Finn, however, suggests that it is 'always the case in *Pilgrimage*' that 'the particular and concrete […] become general and metaphorical'; '*Oberland*: "A Charming Light Interlude"?', *Pilgrimages* 1 (2008), 97-123 (p. 121).

59 Letter to Henry Savage, March 23, 1951, *Windows on Modernism*, p. 661.

60 Bronfen – whose study of Richardson is based on a reading of what she sees as the text's spatial metaphors – argues that the 'appeal of metaphor [for Richardson] derives from the way in which it captures the essence of a particular thing precisely by skirting around it and refusing to name it directly', which she sees as part of a more general aesthetics of 'indirectness' and 'ambiguity' in *Pilgrimage*. While I agree that Richardson was drawn to ambiguous words – 'silence' certainly being one of them – I see her comments on metaphors as expressing a genuine distrust about their ability to arrive at the essence of the thing; see Bronfen, pp. 1-3.

plates an experience of 'hanging, suspended and motionless, high in the sky' – representing her suspicion that she might be pregnant – and the possibility of describing both the experience and the news to Hypo: 'What she had just set down, he would take for metaphor' (IV, p. 281). She rejects the idea of explaining the rapturous moment of flight to Hypo, because to him, the description would not be of anything actual, but only a likeness: 'There were no words which would prove to him that this experience was as real as the crowded roadways converging within her sight as she looked through the window, as real as the calm grey church across the way and the group of poplars presiding over the cab-shelter' (IV, p. 282). In *Dimple Hill*, she repeats her claim for the reality of her inner experiences, describing them as perceivable phenomena: 'How can't there be direct perception of ultimate reality? How could we perceive even ourselves, if we did not somehow precede what we are?' (IV, p. 419). Accepting that she will not be able to share these experiences in a meaningful way – with Hypo or anyone – Miriam concludes that there is no point in even trying: 'To insist, against sceptical opposition, would be to lose, fruitlessly, something of the essence of the experience' (IV, p. 283). By not attempting to express the experience in 'revealing, misleading words', Miriam describes the opposite of doing so precisely as *silence*: 'And then silence, indefinitely. An indefinite space for realization, free of the time-moving distractions of *plans*' (IV, p. 283, emphasis in the original). Silence thus represents the ineffability of the experience – the impossibility of putting it into meaningful words – but, essentially, also the *experience itself*. By defining silence as a 'space for realization', Miriam construes it as a mental space from which she can explore and experience her self, 'indefinitely'. Silence not only describes what is happening in her consciousness, but is frequently the very representation of consciousness.[61]

At times, silence instead appears to be equated with what is usually referred to as 'thought'. Miriam repeatedly rejects the idea of thinking in words, as it is the wrong path for arriving at the core of being. Here, too,

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61 Radford similarly argues that Miriam, like Richardson, comes to the realization that there 'can be no "literal" account' of her inner experiences because 'there may strictly speaking be no "literal" language at all' (p. 122).

the question of metaphor is essential, because – as Miriam suggests in *March Moonlight* – the nature of thought is intricately attached to the metaphors used to describe it:

> I must remember to tell Jean about thought. About the way its nature depends upon the source of one's metaphors. We all live under a Metaphorocrasy. Tell her I'm giving up thinking in words. She will understand. Will agree that thought is cessation, cutting one off from the central essence, bearing an element of calculation. (IV, p. 607)[62]

Thought becomes shaped according to the metaphors used to describe it, Miriam suggests.[63] Moreover, by shaping thought through our descriptions, we imprison it and make it unable to reach the core of being. Thought should ideally be wordless, as Miriam repeatedly advocates in *Pilgrimage*. In *The Tunnel*, for example, she tells Jan and Mag that they 'ought not to think in words', encouraging them instead to 'imagine [themselves] going on and on through it, endless space', thus repeating her idea of consciousness as space and contemplation as movement (II, p. 93). For Miriam, putting thoughts into language is connected to socializing, a preparing for performance, whereas real thought, or contemplation, is intuitive by nature, and moves beyond language. As the word 'thought' is so often mentioned in negative terms in *Pilgrimage* – 'Thought is prejudice'; 'Thought is a secondary human faculty, and can't *lead, anyone, anywhere*' – it certainly does not seem the best word to describe Miriam's kind of intuitive contemplation, which leads to insight and harmony (III, p. 312).

Instead, the word 'silence' comes to denote the state of mind associated with contemplation and movement towards the inmost core, when Miriam is focused but wordless. Contemplation should be conducted without language; the inner centre Miriam strives towards is ineffable, not only in

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62 In the letter to Henry Savage, already quoted above, Richardson writes: 'By their metaphors ye shall know them. Metaphorocracy, that is what nearly all thought lives under, all the philosophies' (*Windows on Modernism*, p. 661).

63 In the unpublished essay 'The Rampant Metaphor', Richardson writes that the 'thought-life of man if it is to maintain itself alive must go warily along a thread thrown forward across an abyss of metaphors'; quoted in Radford, p. 122.

the sense that it cannot be described through words, but also in that it cannot be accessed unless she avoids all verbal expressions. Words undermine any effort to achieve a moment of silent attention. In the scene from *Pointed Roofs* discussed above, when Miriam remains in bed while the others get up, she is described as resisting thought, suggesting that the silent inmost core she has reached at this moment would be disturbed by putting thoughts into words. Miriam thus rejects thought-as-words, choosing silence instead, which, it is implied, is a state of mind associated with freedom and movement. Silence is a way to delve 'deeper' into the self, whereas thought-as-words is 'cessation'.

Related to the idea of silence as a form of intuitive thought is the 'something' Miriam often finds during her moments of silence. In her memory of the Friends' Meeting in *Revolving Lights*, quoted above, Miriam emphasizes the 'somethingness' of the shared silence, how it is not 'nothing', but 'something' alive (III, p. 327). Throughout *Pilgrimage*, silence often comes to be used as a representation of this 'something', clearly relating the concept to thought, or at least to certain aspects of thought.

The 'something' is often referred to by means of concrete shapes, patterns, and 'things' appearing in Miriam's mind during her moments of silence: 'Flickering far away was something to be found behind all this, some silent thing she would find by herself' (II, p. 434). The 'underlying thing', the concrete shape, is suggestive of a wordless thought – it is, after all, a *silent* thing – seemingly arriving in her mind from somewhere out of her own self, and subsequently becoming the focus of her contemplation (III, p. 77). These 'real things of solitude' embody Miriam's intuitive thought process, which is silent because it is indescribable (III, p. 208). In the following discussion, these 'things' will be referred to as 'thought-shapes'.

The 'thingness' of Miriam's silence also affects the ways in which she perceives material objects in her surroundings. After her intense experiences of silence in *Oberland*, she claims to have the ability to 'see *into* things' (IV, p. 149). Already before this winter vacation, though, various objects appear animated with a life-force in her descriptions. Chairs, books, spaces, and windows are named as silent and vibrating, as though they spoke to her personally. 'Everything in the room had a quiet reality', Miriam

notes in *Dawn's Left Hand* (IV, p. 186). Whether the objects around her have, in fact, a soul of their own – perceivable to her when in her mood of silence – or whether they constitute a projection of the speaking shapes within her remains unclear. The scenes where silence and stillness are used to describe and represent inner events are so numerous that the mere mentioning of words like 'silence' and 'stillness' comes to denote certain states of mind as *Pilgrimage* progresses. Brief descriptions like '[t]he wide thoroughfare into which they emerged was still and serene', and 'the quiet radiance flowing from the speaker', bring with them all the force of the longer, more detailed descriptions of Miriam's silent moments, suggestive of an atmosphere of stillness and contemplation (III, p. 125; IV, p. 341).

In Miriam's most intense moments of silence, the things and patterns that she retrieves from within herself become associated with the notion of understanding something essential about human existence – of grasping knowledge not otherwise available to her, and never available to her through the mediation of anyone else. This knowledge relates both to her inner 'zone of being' and to the nature of reality in a more general sense. The two are often conflated, though, because the 'things' that Miriam discovers deep inside her self are frequently connected to an inner reality that is universal: 'visions like her own, making them true, the common possession of all who would be still'; 'Everybody is the same really, inside, under all circumstances. There's a dead level of astounding... *something*' (III. pp. 114, 146). When she chooses silence over Michael at the end of *Revolving Lights*, it is not necessarily a choice of solitude over companionship, but rather one of truth over emptiness: 'These seconds of knowing, of being told, afresh, by things speaking silently, make up for the pain of failing to find out what I ought to be doing' (III, p. 233). While she might sacrifice certain experiences in her life to achieve these moments of insight, she comes to feel that the knowledge that she finds inside herself is the only kind of life that is worthwhile to her.

Miriam's thought-shapes are mostly described as coming from somewhere within herself, but at times they are presented as given to her, suggestive of a divine presence in the silent moment – or even as a representation of the divine presence itself:

And then hearing her own voice, like a whisper in the immensity, thrilled with the sense of a presented truth, coming *given*, suddenly, from nowhere, the glad sense of a shape whose denial would be death, and bringing, as she dreamily followed its prompting, a willingness to suffer in its service. (III, p. 251)

The shapes are associated with a form of divine message – 'the perpetual rising up, amongst the varying seasons and days, of a single unvarying shape' – that moves beyond anything that Miriam has experienced in church: the 'sermon […] could not […] revive the morning strength of the challenging shape' (III, p. 267). Shortly thereafter, she describes this 'shape' as 'the inside pattern of life', noting that it 'is so obvious that everything is arranged' (III, p 282). Silence, truth, and the inner thought-shapes all become connected to one another, and are all highly suggestive of the often religious quality of Miriam's silent moments in the second half of *Pilgrimage*.

Elsewhere, Miriam describes her experience of God as a triangle, through which humans can connect – not only to the divine, but also to each other: 'People can meet only in God? The shape – she took her spoon and began on her soup, swiftly, rhythmically, seeing upon the tablecloth in front her the shape – a triangle. Woman and man at either end of the base, the apex: God' (IV, p. 224). The shape of the triangle reappears later in the same volume as Miriam, through a mirror, watches three birds in the sky, in 'the form of an elongated triangle' (IV, p. 259). As the birds move out of the mirror frame, she feels as though 'she were transparent' and the sight of them 'had smitten through her', leaving her 'thrilled from head to foot with the sense of having shared their swift and silent flight' (IV, p. 259). While the connection between these two passages is noteworthy, it is also puzzling. The shape of the triangle evokes the idea of the Holy Trinity – but the first passage defines this trinity, not as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but as woman, man, and God, suggestive of the egalitarian character of Miriam's beliefs, where human beings constitute something holy in themselves.[64] In the second passage, however, the flying birds are sug-

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64 Elsewhere in *Pilgrimage*, Miriam rejects the Trinitarian idea, opting instead for the

gestive precisely of the Holy Ghost, commonly associated with the dove. While there is nothing else in the scene that implies a religious revelation, the birds' flight as a triangle – experienced as flying *through* her, *thrilling* her – suggests that Miriam is not so much 'in God' as God is in her.[65]

Beyond triangles, Miriam's wordless thoughts are also represented through intense experiences of light. These often occur during her moments of silence and are indicative of silent attention. Several critics have noted the strong emphasis on light in *Pilgrimage*. Laura Marcus, for example, reads *Pilgrimage* as 'a celebration of light', arguing that consciousness in the novel 'is described primarily through shifting patterns of light and darkness', linked to the idea of a 'cinematic consciousness'.[66] Stamm suggests that 'the reflection of light in Miriam's silent spaces becomes 'the projected vision of her own illumination': a reflection of 'the "secret" of her inmost self' and a 'supporting guide on her *pathway* to the mystical perception of the secret of life'.[67] Like Stamm, I read the presence of light as indicative of some sort of illumination, and it is noteworthy that light in *Pilgrimage* appears to relate primarily to Miriam's inner reality and to her moments of silence. While there are many instances where it is unclear if light is an inner or outer phenomenon, it is often mentioned specifically in relation to Miriam's thought-shapes, suggesting not only their interconnectedness but that light in these instances represents the act of contemplation or the very core of being: 'the dulled expiring thread showed suddenly glowing, looping forward into an endless bright pattern interminably animated by the changing lights of fresh inflowing thoughts' (III, p. 141). Miriam's experiences of light consistently indicate understanding and

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Unitarian explanation, which construes God as one being (II, p. 24); see footnote 50 for a further discussion.

65 The shape of the triangle is introduced already in *Oberland*, where it is given vague religious connotations. Out in the winter landscape, Miriam notices that '[h]ere and there, clear of the pine woods, and looking perilously high and desolate, a single chalet made a triangular warm blot upon the dazzling snow' (IV, p. 58). These triangular houses are part of a larger experience of snow and 'this miracle of light', which ends with Miriam turning 'to bless the well-placed little hotel' (IV, pp. 49, 58).

66 Marcus, 'Introduction', in *Close Up 1927-1933: Cinema and Modernism*, ed. by James Donald, Anne Friedberg and Laura Marcus (London: Cassell, 1998), pp. 150-9 (p. 154).

67 Stamm, pp. 182-3 (emphasis in the original).

illumination of a kind that moves beyond words, suggestive of an ineffable experience of her inner reality: 'the lovely world of lovely things seen in silence and tranquillity, the coming and going of the light, the myriad indescribable things of which day and night, in solitude, were full, at every moment' (III, p. 208). The interplay between light and darkness reveals the transitory nature of this knowledge, so hard to grasp and so hard to hold on to. Escaping direct treatment in words, 'light and darkness and darkness and light' is an appropriate designation both for the experience of this knowledge and for the effect of silence on Miriam.

Beyond the general suggestion of insight, light has strong religious connotations in *Pilgrimage*, suggestive of the Quaker notion of the 'Inner Light', discussed above. This aspect of light is especially prominent in those cases where it is represented solely as an *inner* phenomenon – 'the coming and going of the light' – but also in references to it as part of her constitution: 'What, after all, had changed? Not herself, that was clear. Walking in fevered darkness had not destroyed the light'; 'clear in her mind […] it spread fresh light, in all directions, tempering the golden light of the street; showing, beyond the outer darkness of the night, the white radiance of the distant future' (III, pp. 210, 237). In *Quakers Past and Present*, Richardson described the 'Inner Light' as a 'perfect realization of the fusion of human and divine', and it is exactly this fusion that becomes prominent in the more intense scenes involving silence and light in *Pilgrimage*.[68] The light indicates a divine presence, at once *surrounding* Miriam, *inside* her, and *of* her.

The associations between light and divinity are at their most intense in *Oberland*. Here, Miriam's experiences of light are ecstatic, speaking strongly of religious communion: 'she awoke in light that seemed for a moment to be beyond the confines of earth. It was as if all her life she had travelled towards this radiance, and was now within it, clear of the past, at an ultimate destination' (IV, p. 49). As discussed further below, the boundaries between inner and outer realities become blurred during Miriam's most intense moments of silence, which is evident in how these lines describe the light as an external phenomenon – she wakes up in it – and simulta-

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68 Richardson, *Quakers Past and Present*, p. 13.

neously as something relating to her and her past, personally. During such ecstatic moments, a divine presence can often be concretely perceived: 'There was an answer, a personal answer and assurance somewhere within the deeps of this living air [...] It was a touch. It conveyed the touch of a living, conscious being. [...] The silent light, sharply signalling amongst the mountains, had been a message' (IV, p. 213). As an 'ultimate destination', the 'miracle of light' represents Miriam's arrival at her core of being, where she merges with her surroundings and with the divinity she senses inside her, into that wholeness connected to her most forceful moments of silence (IV, p. 49).

There are many such moments in *Oberland*; Miriam – who travels to Switzerland to recuperate from fatigue – regains her strength through the silent light: 'her health that was restored for evermore since she had seen the light on the mountains' (IV, p. 149). It is not only her physical health that Miriam regains during her vacation, however – the light also holds redemptive powers for her as she finds 'absolution' in it (IV, p. 96). During her two weeks in the Swiss Alps, Miriam comes to recognize a new person emerging from within herself. This becomes obvious to her when she realizes that the disparaging Guerini, with whom she briefly socializes, appeals 'from the first to a person who no longer existed, to a loneliness that during the past years had been moving away from her life' (IV, p. 123). The light and the silence in *Oberland* thus in a sense heal Miriam, and she returns to London no longer 'lonely and resourceless', but full of that silent attention that now becomes her regular mode for engaging with the world.

Beyond the suggestion of the Quaker 'Inner Light', the focus on light in *Pilgrimage* also implies an influence from Ralph Waldo Emerson, who is referenced repeatedly in the novel-sequence and whom Richardson herself referred to as her 'earliest close friend'.[69] In 'Nature' (1836/1849), for example, Emerson writes of light as 'the first of painters' and a prerequisite for beauty, and as an instance that communicates truths about the essence

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69 Letter to Ferner Nuhn, July 24, 1950; *Windows on Modernism*, p. 647. For previous discussions of Richardson and Emerson, see Deborah Longworth, 'Subject, Object and the Nature of Reality: Metaphysics in Dorothy Richardson's *Deadlock*', *Pilgrimages* 2 (2009), 7-38 (pp. 20-4); and Valentina Paradisi, *Dorothy Richardson e il Romanzo del Novecento* (Rome: Vecchiarelli Editore, 2010), pp. 30-1, 48-9, 70-1.

of nature: 'We know more from nature than we can at will communicate. Its light flows into the mind evermore, and we forget its presence'.[70] Elsewhere, in lines highly reminiscent of light in *Pilgrimage*, Emerson argues that the human soul 'is not a faculty, but a light': 'From within or from behind, a light shines through us upon things, and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all'.[71] Emerson's light, too, has religious connotations. It also relates to Miriam's mode of silent attention, which can be likened to a light shining through her 'upon things', making her apprehend them differently and see them as relating to a wholeness of which she, too, is a part.

Emerson's influence is apparent not only when it comes to the representation of light in *Pilgrimage* but precisely in this apprehension of reality as a wholeness, encompassing all of existence: 'that Unity, that Over-Soul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other'.[72] This wholeness – notably referred to as a 'wise silence' – is only momentarily graspable for the individual, but those instants stand out: 'there is a depth in those brief moments, which constrains us to ascribe more reality to them than to all other experiences'.[73] These words echo throughout *Pilgrimage*, where the silent moment repeatedly provides access to 'that reality of life that withdrew at the sounding of a human voice', construed precisely as a space with unlimited depth (IV, p. 126).

The association between Miriam's moments of silent attention and a knowledge that is otherwise inaccessible relates strongly to the idea of the epiphany, often mentioned as one of the cornerstones of modernist fiction.[74] The definition of epiphany as a sudden, evanescent insight does not fit Miriam's moments of silent attention, however, as these are never sudden but appear gradually and cannot be described as delicate, constituting instead a stable, never-changing core in her existence. Most importantly,

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70 Emerson, 'Nature', in *Emerson's Prose and Poetry*, ed. by Joel Porte and Saundra Morris (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), pp. 27-55 (pp. 31, 37).

71 Emerson, 'The Over-Soul' (1841), in *Emerson's Prose and Poetry*, pp. 163-74 (p. 164).

72 Emerson, 'The Over-Soul', p. 163.

73 Emerson, 'The Over-Soul', pp. 164, 163.

74 For a discussion of *Pilgrimage* and epiphanies, see Paradisi, *Romanzo del Novecento*, pp. 127-63.

her silent moments are not caused by any outside thing that happens to come her way, but arise from within herself. They represent an accessible, permanent level of human experience associated with contemplation: something almost always there should she want it, and not something that descends on her as a sudden gift of insight. Whatever knowledge she might discover in her zone of being, it comes from deep inside herself, and is there to be found and re-found.[75]

Miriam's exploration of her inner self and of reality is closely related to the two modes of existing that Miriam refers to as 'being' and 'becoming' on numerous occasions in *Pilgrimage*. These two concepts have been the focus of much attention in Richardson studies, and they have been discussed from many perspectives. After Shirley Rose's rebuttal of Shiv K. Kumar's claim that *Pilgrimage* should be read as 'a true symbol of that imperceptible process of eternal becoming that marks our ceaseless reactions to phenomena', the concepts are no longer believed to relate directly to Bergson.[76] Bryony Randall suggests that instead of Bergson – whose definitions of 'being' and 'becoming' are actually opposed to the way Miriam uses them in *Pilgrimage* – Richardson might rather have been influenced by contemporary works such as Evelyn Underhill's *Mysticism* (1911), which is focused on 'Being' rather than 'Doing'.[77]

While Miriam uses both words almost from the beginning of the sequence – but predominantly 'being', and then almost always in relation to her moments of silence – it is not until the final volumes that she expresses any general thoughts on these twin concepts, and on their relation to her philosophy of silence. 'Being' is then presented as what Miriam herself calls the immovable consciousness, that inmost part of herself that is only accessible through silent meditation, whereas 'becoming' is its surface

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75 Miriam's experiences of a divine presence might be related to the original definition of the concept, as a manifestation of God. Emerson uses the word 'Revelation' to describe those moments when the soul manifests 'its own nature', regarding it as 'influx of the Divine mind into our mind'; 'The Over-Soul', p. 168.

76 Shiv K. Kumar, *Bergson and the Stream of Consciousness Novel* (London: Blackie & Son, 1962), pp. 41, 42. Rose's response can be found in 'The Unmoving Center', pp. 370-7.

77 Randall, *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life*, p. 64. The terms 'Being' and 'Becoming' have a much longer history, of course, dating back to Plato.

counterpart, that aspect of identity that is changeable and linked to language:

> Being versus becoming. Becoming versus being. Look after the being and the becoming will look after itself. Look after the becoming and the being will look after itself? Not so certain. Therefore it is certain that becoming depends upon being. Man carries his bourne within himself and is there already, or he would not even know that he exists. (IV, p. 362)

'Being' is also referred to in terms of a 'central peace' at the 'heart of her being', which allows Miriam to become 'fully possessed by that something within her that was more than herself' (IV, p. 219). The term thus refers to Miriam's experience of her inmost core, that never-changing centre that constitutes her self in the most essential sense.

'Becoming', on the other hand, is associated with the social world, and with achievements. It is a kind of existence repeatedly linked to Hypo Wilson in *Pilgrimage*: 'A man achieving, becoming, driving forward to unpredictable becomings, delighting in the process, devoting himself, compelling himself […] to a ceaseless becoming, ceaseless assimilating of anything that promised to serve the interests of a ceaseless becoming for life as he saw it' (IV, p. 220).[78] The 'ceaselessness' repeated in these lines presents 'becoming' as a movement, relating to the flux of experience, and to a goal-oriented kind of life, which seeks to incorporate 'anything' that can be built upon in order to arrive at that allusive something by the edge of the horizon.

Over the course of *Pilgrimage*, Miriam comes to cherish her moments of silent attention as forming the most desirable kind of existence – they become the centre of her life, and are partly the reason why she will not commit herself to anyone or anything else. It is easy to connect Rachel Mary's account of Miriam in *Dimple Hill* as 'a Friend in all but name' – referring to her close affiliation with the Quakers – to Miriam's general

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78 Indeed, Miriam characterizes Hypo as fundamentally against silence: 'You hate silence and you hate opposition. You always think people's minds are blank when they are silent. It's just the other way round' (III, p. 389).

aversion to becoming anything 'in name' (IV, p. 540). Throughout *Pilgrim-age*, Miriam contemplates becoming, among other things, a teacher, a socialist, a suffragette, a Quaker, as well as the wife of many different men, but in all instances, she remains an outsider and an observer.[79] The only thing she truly commits herself to is the moment of silent attention: 'the way of being […] that could be, she now realized with sober astonishment, her chosen way till death' (IV, p. 151). That she remains unaffiliated to the end of the novel suggests that she considers independence a necessary condition of being able to reach her silent core. As demonstrated in the passage discussed above, where Miriam finds that she can return to her own self only after letting Michael go, a life based on solitude and inner exploration is not compatible with companionship (like marriage) or close affiliation with any creed or social grouping. This is presumably also why Miriam does not become a Friend in the end – while the Quakers' silence-based faith speaks strongly and intimately to her, she ultimately needs the constant freedom of being able to explore that silence all on her own, without forms imposed on her by someone or something else.

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79 A 'pilgrimage' can also refer to 'a period of travelling or wandering from place to place', which relates to this aspect of the journey motif in *Pilgrimage*: Miriam travels from place to place, and moves not only between concrete places but also between different ideas and beliefs, and social groups and societies; see 'pilgrimage, *n*', in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, <http://www.oed.com> [accessed 15 January, 2014].

As 'quiet as thought': Nature, Silence, and the Unity of Being

Pilgrimage has largely become associated with Miriam's city-life.[80] It is not strange that this should be the case; Miriam's years in London dominate the sequence and constitute the most colourful parts of the novel. By contrast, the novel-chapters set in nature – *Oberland* and *Dimple Hill*, primarily – are slower in tempo and contain less dialogue. Howard Finn even suggests that *Oberland* is considered 'problematic' by readers today because it is not set in London, 'as if the book lacks the requisite downbeat London ambience that is the authentic mark of *Pilgrimage*'.[81] The nature-volumes are largely focused on Miriam's explorations of her inmost self and on her engagement with the natural world surrounding her, the two often being tied closely together. Indeed, the natural settings in these two volumes present Miriam with an ideal milieu for her experience of silence, where inner and outer worlds blend to the point where it becomes impossible for her to distinguish boundaries between herself and the nature around her. The trips to the Swiss Alps and the Sussex farm that the narrative describes become representations of *inside* journeys. Experiencing silence in nature, Miriam comes to perceive all of existence as one wholeness: landscape becomes mindscape.

The effects of nature on Miriam are not restricted to *Oberland* and

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80 For example, Longworth suggests that Richardson 'both describes and displays her identity as an urban […] writer' in *Pilgrimage*; *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 99. Carol Watts argues that *Pilgrimage* is 'about the impact of modernity upon an ordinary life', and she sees 'the city landscape' as the 'powerful precondition for this new woman's freedom'; *Dorothy Richardson* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1995), pp. 56, 40. Radford argues that Richardson 'uses the city of London to represent the mind and the body of a woman' (p. 44). Jane Garrity takes Radford's reading one step further when she argues that Richardson '[constructs] a feminized London' as a 'homoerotic object': the British capital, to Garrity, is represented as 'a giant female body' that becomes Miriam's 'lover', apparently aligning lesbianism with Englishness; see *Step-Daughters of England: British Women Modernists and the National Imaginary* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 86, 126. Fromm suggests that for Richardson, 'the evocation of London is less an end in itself than a means by which her theme of self-discovery is carried forward' (p. 127).

81 Finn, '*Oberland*', p. 97.

Dimple Hill, however; the association between silence and nature is also present in the city-chapters of *Pilgrimage*, as Miriam is often drawn to parks and gardens, seeking moments of solitude.[82] In the short chapter VIII of *The Trap*, she enthusiastically describes spring's arrival in London: 'Suddenly a mist of green on the trees, as quiet as thought. Small leaves in broad daylight, magic reality, silent at midday amidst the noise of traffic' (III, p. 498). The green of the trees changes Miriam's focus from the noise of the traffic to the silent 'magic reality' of the leaves, and it holds her 'life still' in a manner reminiscent of her silent moments. Such passages reveal the powerful effects nature has on Miriam and it is therefore not surprising that she, towards the end of the novel-sequence, actively seeks the countryside, as a way to intensifying her communion with her self as well as the experience of oneness with the world surrounding her.

An association between silence and nature is present in Richardson's fiction from the beginning. Many of the so-called 'middles' – i.e. short fiction pieces – that she started to write and publish in 1908, while staying with Quakers in Sussex, describe pastoral scenes where silence predominates. In 'August' (1911), for example, 'intimate' woodlands are described as '[s]hut away in the cool green stillness', welcoming the speaker to 'step at any moment from the dusty highway into a tender silence'.[83] 'December' (1909) describes a walk in nature, where the '[d]rip, drip, drip' of raindrops from branches constitutes the only sound in the 'immense stillness' of a little wood.[84] In 'The Conflict' (1911), a 'faint moonlight' is 'pouring so steadily' into the 'midnight stillness' that the speaker becomes aware of 'the shape of the leaves lingering round [the] window', suggestive of a 'sign' left by the 'waiting night'.[85] In 'Dusk' (1914) – discussed at the beginning of this chapter – the speaker becomes aware of a 'deep tranquillity… one of those gleaming spaces'.[86] The pastoral background in almost all of the early pieces reveals nature not only as an important setting in Richardson's

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82 The garden, and specifically Miriam's memories of her childhood garden, has received considerable critical attention. See for example Watts, pp. 23-38, and Stamm, pp. 50-118.

83 Richardson, 'August', *Saturday Review*, 114 (1912), 142 (p. 142).

84 Richardson, 'December', *Saturday Review*, 108 (1909), 785-6 (p. 786).

85 Richardson, 'The Conflict', *Saturday Review*, 112 (1911), 674 (p. 674).

86 Richardson, 'Dusk', *Saturday Review*, 118 (1914), 392-3 (p. 393).

fiction at large, but also as a significant theme. Moreover, the constant juxtaposition of silence/stillness and nature in the early pieces presents a pattern that reappears not only in the nature-volumes of *Pilgrimage*, but also in brief descriptions of gardens, parks, or even just individual trees. In all these cases, the experience of silence in nature – or the experience of silence as an essential part of nature – leads to intense silent moments, and often to a feeling of being one with the surrounding world.

In *Pilgrimage*, nature is repeatedly endowed with therapeutic qualities, and it is associated with healing for Miriam; the journeys undertaken in *Oberland* and *Dimple Hill* are both prompted by illness and a need to recuperate away from London. At several points in *Pilgrimage*, Miriam expresses her longing for a 'green peace' – a life of solitude and silence in a pastoral setting – which becomes a life-style that she actively seeks in the last novel-chapters.[87] Her almost desperate longing to leave her stressful city-life behind her makes her assign healing properties even to the muddy lane behind the Brooms' village-house at the beginning of *Dimple Hill* – a lane described as 'an actively benevolent hospice', whose mud is 'a healing salve beneath her feet of mingled earth and rain' and whose air 'was a tangible substance, in-pouring, presently to steady her footsteps and bring poise to her body' (IV, p. 414). As Miriam breathes in the medicinal air she opens herself up to the landscape, inviting it to build her up. Her search for a pastoral setting to recuperate in thus also means choosing a landscape of which she wants to become part.

Indeed, the idea of merging with the landscape is an essential aspect of nature in Richardson's fiction. Imagining the kind of setting she would wish to repose in, Miriam sees before her mind's eye 'vast echoing woodlands, their green alleys and sunlit clearings traversed by streams with flowery banks and, in between, green open country, unfenced and uninhabited, beneath high blue skies' (IV, pp. 413-14). This inner image accompanies her for weeks before she leaves London, 'richly reflected into the

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87 Hypo Wilson's comment that what Miriam needs to realize herself – and to be able to start writing – is 'a *green solitude*' and '[a]n infant' has been ridiculed by some critics, however, who see in his advice his need to 'suppress women's writing' (IV, p. 238, emphasis in the original); see for example Lyn Pykett, *Engendering Fictions: The English Novel in the Early Twentieth Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1995), p. 82.

inner twilight of her being' (IV, p. 413). What she seeks is a realization of this reflection 'of her being'. If this idea of nature has shaped part of her mind, she discovers that nature in turn mirrors that mind, as it reflects her inner shape. Just like the 'mist of green on the trees' of London is 'quiet as thought', so Miriam perceives her own thoughts in nature, searching there not only for her restored health, but for part of herself.

Frequently, Miriam's experience of nature is represented as a form of homecoming: a recognition of the self in the external world. During such moments, the natural landscape enables the kind of communion with the surrounding world that is associated with Miriam's moments of silence, here experienced at their fullest:

> And then, with the suddenness of a rapid river, her coming freedom flowed in upon her, carrying her outside this pleasant enclosure towards all that could be felt to the full only in solitude amongst things whose being was complete, towards that reality of life that withdrew at the sounding of a human voice. (IV, p. 126)

In nature, then – and primarily in the wilderness – Miriam encounters 'things whose being was complete', and a life that can only exist in silence, beyond the constrictions of human civilization, and certainly beyond the means of human communication. It is noteworthy that it is in nature that Miriam experiences her deepest sense of completeness, and not in the intense city-life that dominates a large part of *Pilgrimage*. If London at an earlier point in the sequence signifies liberation and self-exploration for Miriam, the ending of *Pilgrimage* instead suggests an escape, not only from her city-life, but from modernity itself.

Nature thus offers Miriam a possibility to encounter herself, and the described landscapes are increasingly presented as embodying her consciousness. This is especially the case with the wilderness in *Oberland*, where the majestic mountains elicit a much stronger response than the pastoral idyll of *Dimple Hill*. The wholeness she experiences in and with the wilderness – her sense of merging with the natural world surrounding her – is represented through a blurring between self and world. In *Oberland*, for example, she regards the Alps with a 'leap of recognition, un-

knowing between the mountains and herself which was which' (IV, p. 21). Such blurring between self and nature occurs frequently towards the end of the sequence, in a manner suggestive of Miriam's intense involvement with the landscape:

> spired pines marching symmetrically by, narrowed to a winding path that took her in amongst them, into their strange close fellowship that left each one a perfect thing apart [...]. It was their secret, pine-breath, that brought a sense of warm life [...]. And very secret; here thought was sheltered as in a quiet room.
>   Out in the immense landscape, in the down-pouring brilliance of pure light, thought was visible. (IV, p. 72)

The comparison between the open air and the 'quiet room' suggests a moment of silence, but the passage describes something beyond the usual configuration of Miriam's experiences of silence. The shapes and patterns sometimes encountered during those moments are now embodied in the landscape, as the 'spired pines' and 'winding landscape' grow descriptive of landscape and inner occurrences alike. They are 'visible thought', and thus not merely part of the external world.

Later in *Oberland*, a passage describing similar 'thought-shapes' connects Miriam's vision of the external landscape to the shapes and patterns she sometimes 'sees' in her inmost core during her moments of silence: 'A pattern world, life flowing in bright set patterns under a slowly gathering cloud [...]. The bright pattern was flowing into a fresh shape, flowing forward in its way, heedless of clouds, heedless of the rising tide' (IV, p. 106). If at other times Miriam recognizes her self in the forms of nature, here her 'thought-shapes' appear to concretely materialize before her eyes, as though the sky were a mind-screen. Moreover, the manifestation of her 'thought-shapes' in nature suggests a connection between the inner 'truth' retrievable through silent attention and the shape of the landscape, the implication being that the knowledge Miriam gains during such moments brings her closer to the idea of an existential wholeness, recognizable as a pattern that encompasses all of existence.

The awe-inspiring presence of the Alps in *Oberland* at times causes over-

powering emotions that appear to relate to an idea of the sublime.[88] This is the case when Miriam feels that watching the glorious vista alone, 'there was too heavy a burden of feeling in the speechless company of this suddenly revealed magnificence' (IV, p. 101). But such overwhelming moments are rare in *Pilgrimage*, and Miriam's engagement with the wilderness generally engenders identification rather than awe.[89] When Miriam's encounter with the mountains in *Oberland* is compared with that of the speaker in Shelley's 'Mont Blanc' (1816), the distinction between identification and sublimity becomes clear, especially when considered in relation to silence. In 'Mont Blanc', silence is linked to sublimity and to an inability to make sense of the external world; it circumscribes those moments where the speaker has trouble connecting properly with the external world, which is presented as ungraspable and mysterious. The poem's famous last lines emphasize the link between silence and the sublime:

> And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,
> If to the human mind's imaginings
> Silence and solitude were vacancy? (ll. 142-4)[90]

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88 Finn sees the Alp setting as connected to 'the continuing cult of the sublime' in the early twentieth century: 'the Alps were seen as the greatest site of pure natural beauty in Europe if not the world, close to Heaven and God, a place for the individual to enter into direct relation with nature and therefore the human soul, or, in Richardsonian terms, being and existence' ('*Oberland*', p. 112). Melinda Harvey argues that *Oberland* presents a 'distinctly modernist sublime' that is 'thoroughly delineated by two timely forces – rapid transport and mass tourism'; see 'Moving, Movies and the Sublime: Modernity and the Alpine Scene in Dorothy Richardson's *Oberland*', *Colloquy* 4 (2000), n.p.

89 Cf. Philip Shaw's distinction between the 'beautiful' and the 'sublime': 'The sublime is greater than the beautiful; the sublime is dark, profound, and overwhelming and implicitly masculine, whereas the beautiful is light, fleeting, and charming and implicitly feminine. Where the sublime is a divisive force, encouraging feelings of difference and deference, the beautiful encourages a spirit of unity and harmony'. While Miriam's experiences of the Alps are not, perhaps, 'light' or 'fleeting', they do bring about intense moments of unity with nature. Shaw's distinction between the sublime as masculine on the one hand and the beautiful as feminine on the other also resonates with Miriam's conception of silence as predominantly feminine. See *The Sublime* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 9.

90 Shelley, 'Mont Blanc: Lines Written in the Vale of Chamouni', Version A, in *The Major Works including Poetry, Prose, and Drama*, ed. by Zachary Leader and Michael O'Neill, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 120-4.

If the poem fails to provide a direct answer to the question asked by the last lines, there is an implied answer in the question itself: *if* silence were vacancy to the imagination, how then would the mountain – the 'thou' addressed by the speaker – appear to the viewer? As the experience of the mountain is described in the poem as both an awe-inspiring *and* a silent one, clearly silence is *not* nothing, but something, however hard to grasp. Silence in 'Mont Blanc' is a suggestive presence, full of potency and significance to the perceiving imagination; it is directly associated with the sublime, appearing precisely at those moments when the experience of the external world breaks down into something ungraspable and indefinable. Silence is linked to the mysteriousness of the mountain's power, marking a moment that is so uniquely forceful that it moves beyond sound. By contrast, silence in *Pilgrimage* denotes a 'something' that *is* grasped and fully felt by Miriam, something to which she refers in *Oberland* as 'the familiar pathway of her life' (IV, p. 80).[91]

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91 Miriam does share her inability to translate the silent 'something' into words with the speaker of 'Mont Blanc', however. In Shelley's poem, silence is contrasted to sound, which represents both thought and language. John B. Pierce points out that 'when Shelley turns to the individualized experience of human thought, his description changes to an aural one'; see '"Mont Blanc" and "Prometheus Unbound": Shelley's Use of the Rhetoric of Silence', *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 38 (1989), 103-26 (p. 105). The 'feeble brook' to which 'human thought' is likened in the poem has, we learn, 'a *sound* but half its own' (ll. 7, 5, 6, emphasis added). The other half, then, is presumably taken from nature, from the 'everlasting universe of things' that '[f]lows through the mind' (ll. 1-2). Thus, the mind is only partly independent when it comes to creating thought (sound) out of experience; in part, it is also a passive recipient of those sounds emanating from the great 'Power' Shelley describes, which the mind itself cannot interpret or properly translate into sounds of its own. Pierce argues that these lines imply that there is also a 'halfness in nature', which needs a 'perceiving subject' to be complete (p. 105). This does not seem to me to be the case; it is the incompleteness of the human mind – that 'feeble brook' – which makes it incapable of experiencing nature in any complete sense, but there is nothing to suggest a comparable incompleteness on the part of nature. The image of a 'feeble brook' compared to that of the 'everlasting universe of things', or to the river Arve in the poem's second section, makes this clear. This river – which embodies the 'Power' – wholly owns its own sounds, its 'commotion' described as making a 'loud, lone sound no other sound can tame' (ll. 30-1). To 'tame' a sound could presumably mean to make it submissive to one's own, stronger noise, but here it also seems simply to mean interpreting or translating it into another sound, i.e. to find a way to articulate the experience of the river in words. The mind

Passages that blur the distinction between landscape and mindscape in *Oberland* are perhaps not indicative of the sublime, but they do emphasize a romantic strand in *Pilgrimage* – a strand that is especially present in the natural settings of *Oberland* and *Dimple Hill*. Scenes that confuse inner and outer worlds often suggest Wordsworth's influence on Richardson, an influence discussed further in the next chapter in relation to her poetics. The unity of self and world that Miriam experiences in *Oberland* is reminiscent of similar blurring in *The Recluse* and *The Prelude*:

> How exquisitely the individual Mind
> (And the progressive powers perhaps no less
> Of the whole species) to the external world
> Is fitted; and how exquisitely too –
> Theme this but little heard of among men –
> The external world is fitted to the mind;
> And the creation (by no lower name
> Can it be called) which they with blended might
> Accomplish[92]

Not only are World and Mind fitted to each other, but together they '[a]ccomplish' the 'creation' with blended might. Wordsworth returns to this idea on several occasions, suggesting in his Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* that man and nature are 'essentially adapted to each other', and that the 'mind of man' mirrors 'the fairest and most interesting qualities of na-

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that 'passively/ Now renders and receives fast influencings' from the 'unresting sound' of the Arve is described as beset by a 'legion of wild thoughts', but it is also seeking 'some shade […] [s]ome phantom, some faint image' in 'the still cave of the witch Poesy' – that is, something that could be used to translate the experience of the 'loud, lone sound' (ll. 37-47). The strong impressions of the river thus partly flow through the passive perceiving mind, yet they also create an echo in the mind's poetic 'cave', where the speaker is grasping for images. An attempt to translate experience into language can be found in the poem's fourth section, where the speaker muses on the mountain-top far above: 'A city of death […] Yet not a city' (ll. 105-7). Naming and renaming stresses the impreciseness and insufficiency of the words chosen.

92 Wordsworth, 'Home at Grasmere' (1800), in *The Major Works including* The Prelude, ed. by Stephen Gill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 174-99 (ll. 1006-14). This section of the poem was also published as part of 'Prospectus to *The Recluse*' (1814).

ture'.[93] Similarly, Miriam not only merges with nature, but nature appears to embody her mind.[94]

Interestingly, there is often a suggestion of communication between Miriam and the natural world. She describes the individual shapes in nature as 'gentle, powerful presences', sometimes sensing that they hold secret messages for her (IV, p. 414). In *Backwater*, trees 'challenged and questioned her silently as they had always done', providing Miriam with 'steady assurance' (I, p. 298). An encounter with another group of trees early on in *Dimple Hill* is described as an emotional reunion that becomes the opening of her recuperative sojourn in nature:

> 'Trees,' she said, aloud.
>
> Secret tears surprised her, welling spontaneously up from where for so long they must have been waiting to flow forth, and now finding their course obstructed by the smile risen to greet their message […] There they were, at hand day and night for as long as she chose, no longer held off by the wistfulness with which she had gazed in the company of others, imploring them to yield their secret, known long ago. […] these trees across the way, alone and silent like the woodlands she had passed through with parties whose talking voices kept their own world about them, looked into the depths of her, the unchanged depths awaiting them since childhood. (IV, pp. 412-13)[95]

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93 Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral and Other Poems*, in *The Major Works*, pp. 595-615 (p. 606). The correspondences between man and nature are the chief focus of Wordsworth's poetic enterprise as expressed in the Preface; his choice of '[l]ow and rustic life' as his subject coincides with his aim to portray the 'natural', for in such a 'condition of life', he writes, 'the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature' (p. 597).

94 Beyond the presence of Wordsworth in these scenes, there is also a strong influence from Emerson in the nature-volumes, apparent both in the self's merging with the world and in the restorative aspects of nature. In 'Nature', Emerson suggests that there is 'an occult relation between man and the vegetable', noticeable in how nature 'always wears the colors of the spirit', and the 'necessity in spirit to manifest itself in material forms' (pp. 29, 38). He moreover suggests that the world is 'emblematic' and that 'the whole of nature is a metaphor of the human mind' (p. 37). Finding beauty in its 'mute music' therefore also means finding beauty in one's own self, which explains some of the 'medicinal' facets of the natural world as well as its capacity to 'restore [the] tone' of the overworked body and mind (pp. 32, 31).

95 For a discussion of the symbolic function of poplars and chestnut trees in *Pilgrimage*, see Stamm, pp. 105-12.

If Miriam has been unable to engage with trees when in 'the company of others', this passage emphasizes how silence promotes her communion with nature: she is now free to engage with the trees in solitude, and to let them look 'into the depths of her'.

Communion with nature has religious dimensions at times, as though the 'messages' and 'signals' Miriam perceives are conveyed to her by a divine Being. The strongest instance of such spiritual communication occurs early on in *Dimple Hill*, where Miriam recognizes 'the smile of God' in a 'radiant patch' of bright leaves, which causes a 'rapture' that she experiences as a 'near, clear vision' and a 'signal calling for response' (IV, p. 420). This epiphanic moment establishes the communion Miriam experiences with nature as an essentially religious occurrence. Indeed, she greets the '[s]ly smile' of God as a welcome confirmation of a belief that has developed over a considerable time: '"I know," she heard herself exclaim towards the outspread scene whose grey light could no longer deceive. "At last I *know*!"' (IV, p. 420, emphasis in the original). As she leaves the spot of the revelation, she senses beside her a presence that she refers to as 'her man, the unknown sharer of the transfigured earthly life' (IV, p. 421).

Miriam's search for a 'green peace' in the last volumes of *Pilgrimage* suggests more than a longing for a pastoral setting. The connections between nature and religion – established both through Miriam's ecstatic communion with the Alps in *Oberland* and through her 'rapture' in the beginning of *Dimple Hill* – reveal both wilderness and country-side as parts of Miriam's idiosyncratic religious beliefs. Heather Ingman suggests that '[n]ature as a channel to the divine was another means for women writers in the modernist era to bypass religious orthodoxy and experience the divine directly'.[96] For Miriam, nature does not only offer the possibility of direct communion with the divine, but appears to represent divinity itself. She recognizes her own being in the 'silent presences' she finds in nature, just as these presences enter and become merged with her self (IV, p. 422). Nature and its presences 'claim' Miriam: 'not as something added

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96 Ingman, 'Religion and the Occult in Women's Modernism', *Cambridge Companion to Modernist Women Writers*, ed. by Maren Tova Linett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 187-202 (p. 195).

to the rest, but as her known companions, left behind long ago and now returned to' (IV, p. 433). While retaining their distinctness, both Miriam and her contemplated organic shapes merge into a wholeness, which at once includes and constitutes the divine.

Silence as Communication

Beyond internalized silence and its effects on Miriam's inner life, silence also becomes increasingly important in her relationships with others, as a measure of intimacy and mutual understanding. This aspect of silence becomes more prominent in her life after her deepened engagement with the Quakers. Already at her first Meeting – discussed above – she notices how a silence shared with others becomes a more forceful way of exploring the self. For Quakers, silence should not only be a means of communicating with God, but should also offer a possibility of a deepened communion between human beings. By minimizing conversation – especially during mealtimes – Friends sought to widen their respective personal experiences of silence into a shared, mutual experience. For Miriam, the Quaker way of communicating through silence also offers a long wished-for escape from awkward social situations construed by language; from the earliest volumes of *Pilgrimage*, it is clear that socializing means performing for Miriam, and that it forces her to adopt various roles and voices with which she feels uncomfortable. She relishes the Friends' focus on silence as a possibility of communion and closeness between two or more persons beyond the lesser powers of language: 'Strength that remains; making a link that perhaps, between two people who have ever met in silence, is never broken […] Spirits meet and converse and understand each other only in silence' (IV, pp. 620-1). As Stamm notes, '[*s*]*haring* a silence' thus becomes 'the solution of [Richardson's] dilemma between solitude and society'.[97] To be silent with others enables a larger degree of honesty in Miriam's relationships – she can give more of herself, but also receive more from others. She thus comes to think of silence as the only true means of communicating.

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97 Stamm, p. 190.

To a certain degree, silence becomes a measure of intimacy in Miriam's private relationships even before her time with the Quakers. As she notes in *Revolving Lights*: '[t]he test of absolutely everything in life is the quality of the in-between silences. It's only in silence that you can judge of your relationship to a person' (III, p. 389). The mutual silence Miriam seeks in her relationships constitutes a unifying, intuitive communication, replacing any need for verbal expression. In fact, it repudiates all need for verbal expression: 'Real speech can only come from complete silence. Incomplete silence is as fussy as deliberate conversation' (III, p. 389). While silence is a state of intimacy achievable with anyone – 'Any two souls could meet if only sometimes they would be silent together and wait' – Miriam learns that far from everyone has the patience or interest to seek closeness through silence (IV, p. 145).

Indeed, just as 'the circumstances of her life' affect the quality of the silence Miriam experiences when alone, so the quality of any mutual silence reveals the condition of the bond in question; the 'fussiness' of 'incomplete silence' represents rupture in the intuitive intimacy Miriam seeks (III, p. 330). Such rupture is also sometimes caused by excessive verbiage, which for Miriam empties any relationship of intimacy and intuitive empathy: 'Speech, thought-out speech, does nothing but destroy'; 'Words are separators, acknowledgement of separateness' (III, p. 182; IV, p. 620). Too much 'carnal' talk erodes the emotional core of Miriam's relationships, generating a silence caused by lack of any true communication. Here, then, silence indicates emptiness, blankness.

A case in point is Miriam's relationship with Michael Shatov. While their romance, especially as described in *Deadlock*, eventually develops into an 'incomplete' silence, at first their relationship is marked by a strong sense of mutual silence. This silence represents both their intimacy and their mutual infatuation, aspects of their relationship that Miriam finds are hard to phrase in words. Bronfen discusses how communication is conceived as a space by Miriam, 'a meeting-point at which the various characters' separate worlds converge'.[98] Silence constitutes such a space, creating a shared space for Miriam and Michael:

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98 Bronfen, p. 173.

> They wandered silently, apart, along the golden-gleaming street. She liste-
> ned, amidst the far-off sounds about them, to the hush of the great space
> in which they walked, where voices, breaking silently in from the talk of
> the world, spoke for her, bringing out, to grow and expand in the sunlight,
> the thoughts that lay in her heart. (III, p. 195)

Here, too, the importance of an externalized silent space is emphasized,
allowing the lover into the bubble, thereby demonstrating the sense of
harmony and wholeness between the couple. The words breaking in from
the world are unspecific and inarticulate: white noise surrounding the
couple's cocoon of unity. It is the impreciseness of these words, their not
being anything more definite than simply 'words', that makes them speak
'for' Miriam: silent noise. For Miriam, this is the only condition in which
love can survive: 'Only in silence, in complete self-possession, possession
of the inwardness of being, can lovers fully meet. An enthusiastic vocal
engagement is a farewell' (IV, pp. 645-6).[99] Silence confirms her affinity
with Michael and reveals her emotions.

Unfortunately, an 'enthusiastic vocal engagement' is just what Michael
seeks from Miriam, both in the sense that he wishes to marry her and in
the sense that he is too inclined to talk – attempting to create meaning
with actual words. His excessive conversation, filled with 'prosaic facts' and
'unacceptable plans', disappoints Miriam and makes her realize the impos-
sibility of a shared future. Even before any emotion has been acknowl-
edged between them, their respective attitudes towards language and si-
lence seem too opposed to make any lasting union possible:

> He would go on reading, all his life, sitting as he was sitting now, grave
> and beautiful; with a mind outspread in a mental experience so wide that
> he was indifferent to the usual ideas of freedom and advantage. Yet he did
> not seem to be aware how much the sitting like this, linked to the world
> by its deep echo in the book, was a realization of life as he saw it. It did
> not occur to him that this serenity, in which were accumulated all the

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99 In the beginning of her friendship with Michael, who constantly wishes to discuss
and define everything, Miriam at one point expresses the idea that 'solitude was too easy',
and that it is not necessarily a bad thing that he 'forced her to think' (III, p. 63).

> hours they had passed together, *was* realization, the life of the world in miniature, making a space where everything in human experience could emerge like a reflection in deep water, with its proportions held true and right by the tranquil opposition of their separate minds. […] It was the place where everything was atoned. […] He reinforced it with a consciousness that was not in the English, making it show as an idea, revealing in plain terms their failure to act it out. Thus would his leisure always be. But it was no part of her life. In this tranquillity there was no security… we will always sit like this […] Why did he not *perceive* the life there was, the mode of life, in this sitting tranquilly together? (III, pp. 189-90, emphases in the original)

Michael is too lost in intellectual exercises and ideas to be able to see that the philosophies he idealizes and agrees with could be realized in his own life. He is interested in the idea, not in the possibility of 'act[ing] it out', of seeking 'freedom' through the 'tranquillity' between them. While he seeks the theory, Miriam seeks the practice.

Consequently, any communication between the two eventually breaks down: 'he was as far as ever from the sense of her wordless communication' (IV, p. 301). In the end, Miriam gives up trying to explain anything to Michael, a resignation that inevitably marks the end of their relationship: 'She would make no more talk. There should be silence between them. If he broke it, well and good; in future she would take measures to curtail the hours of conversation leading […] only to one or other of his set of quoted opinions'; 'she knew she must not even try to tell him. To insist […] would be to lose, fruitlessly, something of the essence of the experience. Just these revealing misleading words. And then silence, indefinitely' (III, p. 191; IV, p. 283). This, clearly, is not the thriving silence of spirits in unity, but a corrosion ending their intimate bond. Miriam finally concludes that 'between them speech was better than silence', surely indicating the hopelessness of any future together (IV, p. 308).

As Miriam grows to privilege intuitive truth over scientific logic towards the end of *Pilgrimage*, she also lets go of relationships characterized by argumentative conversation and factual discourse. This includes Michael, but it also means letting go of her long-time friendship with Hypo Wilson. Silence develops into a sort of litmus test of friendship for Miriam, and

the fact that Hypo hates silence says it all. She rebuffs his fishing for an invitation to come down and inspect the Roscorlas: 'You wouldn't see them. Coming deliberately down, with a prepared spy-glass, you wouldn't see them' (IV, p. 549).[100] Miriam describes Hypo's spiritual state as 'poverty' in comparison with the 'great wealth' of the Quakers.

Silence as a form of communication is – as has often been noted – at its strongest for Miriam in her relationships with other women, most notably Amabel and Jean.[101] With Amabel, for example, Miriam initially experiences a powerful silence, which makes language unnecessary: 'their silences [...] those moments when they were suddenly intensely aware of each other and the flow of their wordless communion' (IV, p. 245). To Stamm, this silence is indicative of a 'comprehensive identification'; as he points out, their intense closeness comes to threaten Miriam's sense of her own self.[102] But there are also suggestions that Amabel does not share Miriam's profound feeling for mutual silences. It is telling, for example, that Amabel cannot relate to silence as the Quakers understand it: 'There's only one thing I couldn't stand. My God, those *awful* silences!' (IV, p. 523, emphasis in the original). The silence Miriam shares with Amabel grows claus-

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100 Before *Dimple Hill*, however, there are times when Miriam's opinion of Hypo is quite different, although this is mostly when she is thinking about him and not when she is actually with him. In *Clear Horizon*, for example, her thoughts go to him as one who would understand and approve her spiritual experience – discussed above – of 'being up in the rejoicing sky' without 'explanation or commentary' (IV, pp. 279, 280). In the same scene, she also recalls a moment when she felt 'independent of him and yet supported by his unusual silence' as she feels 'love and devotion' arise from 'her heart's depth' (p 281). It should be noted that the reverie ends with a query as to whether the joy Miriam felt when 'the few words he gently spoke' had made her believe 'that in spite of his ceaseless denials he saw and felt a reality that thought could neither touch nor express' had lasted beyond that one evening (p. 281).

101 Joanne Winning, for example, sees the silence between Miriam and her close female friends as directly related to a hidden lesbian subtext in *Pilgrimage*, arguing that the 'central theme which carries the subtext in this novel centres on the encoding of the overwritten signifier "silence", which comes to operate in the novel as a replacement term for lesbian desire'; see '"'The Past' is with me, seen anew": Biography's End in Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*', in *Writing the Lives of Writers*, ed. by Warwick Gould and Thomas F. Staley (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 212-23 (p. 216). On silence and female friendships, see also Stamm, pp. 188-96, and Frigerio, pp. 290-1.

102 Stamm, p. 192.

trophobic – instead of 'incomplete', as that shared with Michael earlier, it is *too* complete, to the point of being suffocating.

It is with Jean that Miriam comes to experience the most complete sense of mutual silence. This suggestive character, whom Miriam meets while on vacation in Switzerland in the interstices between *Dimple Hill* and *March Moonlight*, is only referred to as a memory. 'What can Jean mean?', Miriam asks herself as she sits in her sister Sally's spring garden in the opening pages of the last, unfinished volume of *Pilgrimage* (IV, pp. 556, 558).[103] Even the memory of Jean brings Miriam back to 'an unchanging centre': the shared core of their 'silences', which remains even as they are apart. While several critics have discussed Jean as Miriam's true love, or even as 'the culmination of Miriam's quest', the elusiveness of the character construes her rather as an embodiment of Miriam's internalized silence.[104] In fact, the descriptions of Jean and her effect on Miriam read much like earlier descriptions of the most intense kind of silent attention:

> Jean. Jean. Jean. My clue to the nature of reality. To know that you exist is enough. […] was our experience, to her too, a revelation? Leading, as for me it led, to the sudden discovery coming when on that last grey afternoon while side by side we sat gazing in silence at the thawing remains of winter: that in separation we should not be parted? (IV, pp. 612-13)

Though separated, they are not parted; the memory of the silence shared with Jean promises to awaken permanently Miriam's sense of silent attention. It is not, then, her actual communion with Jean, but what she names as 'Jean-in-me' that she feels might enable her to live constantly from out of her silent 'being', giving herself 'fully, to God-in-others' (IV, p. 612).

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103 While parts of *March Moonlight* were published as 'work-in-progress' in *Life and Letters* in 1946, the final, incomplete volume was published only ten years after Richardson's death, in 1967, as part of Dent's second omnibus edition.

104 Stamm, p. 195. For discussions of Jean, see also Hanscombe, *The Art of Life: Dorothy Richardson and the Development of Feminist Consciousness* (London: Peter Owen, 1982), pp. 126-9, Frigerio, pp. 288-91; and Winning, *The Pilgrimage of Dorothy Richardson*, pp. 144-71.

♦

Throughout *Pilgrimage*, silence is celebrated as a strength, directly related to Miriam's 'zone of being': that inmost part of her from which she can access truths otherwise unavailable, and from which she can connect to others in a more profound sense. The communicatory powers of silence also lie at the heart of the poetics that Miriam comes to develop over the course of the novel-sequence. In the following chapter, silence will be discussed as a central aspect both of Miriam's (and Richardson's) theories of reading and of Miriam's own writing, at the end of *Pilgrimage*. It will also consider silence in *Pilgrimage* in a very concrete manner, by focusing on Richardson's use of punctuation marks and the blank spaces inserted into the text, as a way of embodying silence on the page and of representing consciousness and states of mind.

Chapter 3
Dorothy Richardson and the
Poetics of Silence

'It isn't true. It's words. Nothing can ever be expressed in words.'

III, p 463

'I don't care for novels…. I can't see what they are about. They seem to be
an endless fuss about nothing.'

III, p. 45

Miriam's moments of silence and her spiritual exploration of her being
have affinities with the ideas she develops about literature in the course of
Pilgrimage. There is a clear religious dimension in her attitude towards
literature, and writing gradually becomes another way – perhaps an even
better way – for her to explore the world and, especially, the hidden depths
of her self. Miriam's spiritual explorations begin to include a pen and a
paper as she leaves the Quaker family she has been living with at the end
of *Dimple Hill*, and in *March Moonlight*, the final novel-chapter of *Pilgrim-
age*, she discovers that writing is an ideal method for achieving the silent
moments that she seeks throughout the sequence.

Silence hence plays an important part in Miriam's writing, as well as in
her general view of literature: a text, to be of any value to her, must com-
municate silently and make possible the silent attention she constantly
seeks to achieve. Silence is essential to Miriam's writing – not only because
the act of writing itself enables her to '[t]ravel […] down to that centre
where everything is seen in perspective; serenely', but also because the kind
of literature she comes to value in *Pilgrimage* is one that captures and

represents silence as a condition of life: the prism through which the subject's reality is filtered (IV, p. 619). What Miriam searches for in the literary works she reads is not necessarily anything expressed by the words themselves but rather a certain mood or an atmosphere, indicative of the writer's perspective on life. The literary text that realizes Miriam's poetics of silence would represent its writer's unique view of reality in form and content, and – most importantly – between the lines; the core of reality, which is Miriam's literary subject, is impossible to represent in words, as it moves not only beyond language but also beyond what the mind can easily grasp. For Miriam, expressing silence amounts to representing the intuitive process that makes sense of reality and that is associated with her own mode of silent attention.

This chapter examines the importance of Miriam's philosophy of silence – explored in the previous chapter – to the poetics she comes to develop in *Pilgrimage*. It focuses on the affinities between Miriam's moments of silent attention and her writing, but also on the impact of silence on the kind of literature she comes to advocate, both through her reading and through her own writing. The discussion mostly focuses on Miriam's thoughts about literature as expressed in *Pilgrimage* but also takes the metafictional level of her comments into consideration, as she is the protagonist of a novel that is largely autobiographical. While I hesitate to interpret events in *Pilgrimage* with reference to Richardson's own life, I do think that Miriam's comments on literature help readers achieve a better understanding of the narrative in which she appears as a character; much, if not all, of what Miriam concludes about literature, as well as the kind of realism she comes to advocate, can be directly applied to the novel of which she herself is a part.[1] In my discussion of Miriam's poetics, I therefore connect her kind of realism to Richardson's sparse commentary on her writing, including the 1938 foreword to *Pilgrimage*, in which Richardson defines her literary genre as a 'feminine equivalent of the current masculine realism'.[2]

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1 For a discussion of how Richardson's life has been 'mapped' onto *Pilgrimage*'s narrative, see Stacey Fox, '"I Shall Go Away but I Don't Promise to Rest": Dorothy Richardson and Diagnosis', *Pilgrimages*, 1 (2008), 74-94 (pp. 85-6).

2 Richardson, 'Foreword', in *Pilgrimage*, 4 vols (London: Virago, 1979), I, 9-12 (p. 9).

The chapter ends with a consideration of a very concrete kind of silence in Richardson's novel: through the use of punctuation marks and blank spaces, nonverbal content is visually represented on the pages, suggesting that *Pilgrimage* must in many ways be understood as a *silent* text: a text that includes nonverbal and unarticulated elements that need to be reflected upon to be understood, and that even then may not yield up their full significance.

Literature and the
Moment of Silence

There is a constant interplay between religion and literary practice in *Pilgrimage*.[3] Not least, there are many affinities between Miriam's spiritual experiences of silence and the descriptions of the kind of literature she wishes to write. The word 'pilgrimage' itself can be seen as denoting both her spiritual and her literary pursuits. Indeed, Miriam's writing is repeatedly described in terms of religious worship and travel. Through reading, and subsequently through translating and writing, Miriam creates a 'sacred place' for herself (III, p. 134). In *Deadlock*, 'the paper-scattered lamplit circle' on her desk – where she works on her translations of Andreyev – is established as 'the centre of her life': '[h]eld up by this secret place, drawing her energy from it, any sort of life would do that left this room and its

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3 Several critics have previously noted the affinities between spirituality and writing in *Pilgrimage*. Jean Radford, for example, suggests that in *March Moonlight*, Miriam turns 'from a religious vocation to writing'; see *Dorothy Richardson* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp. 32-3. Bryony Randall discusses Miriam's writing explicitly in terms of 'vocation', claiming that her 'experience of writing is directly comparable with the experience she has at a Quaker meeting'; see 'Work, Writing, Vocation and Quakers in Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*', *Pilgrimages*, 2 (2009), 39-60 (p. 53). Susan Gevirtz discusses the links between Miriam's spirituality and her writing at some length; see *Narrative's Journey: The Fiction and Film Writing of Dorothy Richardson* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), pp. 131-47. See also Randall, *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 89; and Shirley Rose, 'Dorothy Richardson's Theory of Literature: The Writer as Pilgrim', *Criticism: A Quarterly for Literature and the Arts*, 12.1 (1970), 20-37 (pp. 34-6).

little table free and untouched' (III, p. 134).[4] She turns to her desk 'as to an actual presence' (III, p. 135). Writing, Miriam discovers, is an 'entrancement', a 'journey', a 'glad adventure'; in her solitary work at her desk she comes to uncover 'through the shapeless mass [of text] the approaching miracle of shape and meaning' (III, pp. 140, 142).

In *March Moonlight*, as Miriam withdraws from the world in order to start writing in earnest, the parallels between religion and writing are even stronger: 'I forget the price; eagerly face the strange journey down and down to the centre of being. And the scene of labour, when again I am back in it, alone, has become a sacred place' (IV, p. 609). When contemplating the time she has been given for writing ('A year secure'), she divides her working days into morning, afternoon, and evening in a way clearly reminiscent of the Holy Trinity: 'Three eternities. Yet they are not three eternities but one eternity. The ever-changing light, one light. Unbroken' (IV, p. 609). While Miriam primarily refers to her own writing in terms of religious worship, she also uses similar words to describe literary works that she finds successful according to her own standards: 'it was he [Henry James] after all who had achieved the first completely satisfying way of writing a novel. If this were a novel. There *was* something holy about it' (III, p. 410, emphasis in the original). *The Ambassadors*, Miriam finds, is '[s]omething to make, like Conrad, the heavens rejoice' (III, p. 410). This 'something' is 'the whole of the light there was in [James]': his 'style', which is 'something beyond good and evil' (III, p. 410). Literature, then, is connected with Miriam's personal kind of religion and associated with her practice of silent meditation.

Miriam's literary pilgrimage is concretely tied to physical places. The actual sites where her writing takes place ('the scene of labour') are consistently presented as private and spiritual: 'secret'; 'sacred'; 'drawing her energy from it'. Like a pilgrim travelling from one holy site to another, Miriam journeys from one table to the next, all of which become places where worship can be conducted. The act of writing itself is sometimes also described as a voyage, but mostly it is the place that is of significance to the

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4 Richardson expressed similar sentiments in her autobiographical writing: 'The small writing-table in my attic became the centre of my life'; 'Data for a Spanish Publisher', in *Journey to Paradise* (London: Virago, 1989), pp. 131-40 (p. 139).

writing and reading process. The writing space becomes a place of meditation, imbued with a divine presence:

> The spell of the ink-stained table had survived the night. Moving about, preparing for to-day, she turned continually towards the window-space, as to an actual presence, and was answered by the rising within her of a tide of serenity, driving her forward in a stupor of confidence, impervious to strain and pain. It was as if she had entered a companionship that now spread like a shield between her and the life she had so far dealt with unaided. (III, p. 135)

There is often something ritualistic about Miriam's activities in these sites, and in the way she approaches them, as for example in this description of a vegetarian restaurant in *March Moonlight*, where she goes to read:

> All day the place awaits me. Gives me the long ramble from suburb to centre, sure of the welcome of a spacious interior well filled but never crowded. Sure of a seat in some corner where, after the queer, well-balanced meal comfortingly independent of slaughter-houses, I can sit within the differently nourishing variations of the assembled company, reading as receptively as if I were alone, yet feeling one even with that woman who sat at my table last night eye downcast in meditation, breathing out now and again her Buddhistic O–m. (IV, p. 657)

The repeated journey to the restaurant ('the long ramble'), the reading that takes place there, and her felt connection with the meditating woman all link Miriam's literary pilgrimage to spiritual imagery.

Writing becomes for Miriam a way of realizing herself without the constraints of organized religious practice; it develops into an individualized religion, an open space for her to adjust according to her mood. Elisabeth Bronfen argues that Miriam, when writing 'in her solitary room', is 'able to belong "in spirit" to many worlds', which is not the case when she is amongst the Quakers.[5] Certainly, Miriam always avoids becoming anything

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5 Bronfen, *Dorothy Richardson's Art of Memory: Space, Identity, Text*, trans. by Victoria Applebe (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 161.

'in name', in order to retain that freedom that allows her mind to wander (or to go on a pilgrimage), and she ultimately rejects the idea of becoming a 'real' Friend (IV, p. 540). When writing, however, she draws deeply from the meditative practices she has refined amongst the Quakers, practices largely associated with silence. 'Why should it be only Quakers who employed, in public as well as privately, this method of approach to reality?', Miriam demands (IV, p. 498). Writing, she finds, enables and builds on the same kind of focused attention that has become associated with silence in *Pilgrimage*, thereby becoming an extension of Miriam's spiritual exercises. Through writing, she can access her inner self and experience truth in a way very similar to how silence removes the barriers to the centre of her self. For Miriam, the experience of silence and of organized religion with the Quakers only constitutes the beginning of her spiritual explorations: '[I], who am only at the alphabet' (IV, p. 551). Miriam's choice of words is relevant, for she is about to attempt to put her spiritual search into words. Writing becomes a way to continue her explorations – not as a substitute for religion, but as a way to practise it, as Miriam personally understands it.

If the Quakers teach Miriam that silence is more intense when shared, she discovers in *March Moonlight* that writing requires a concentration that is possible only when one is completely alone. To write means to withdraw from the world to an even larger extent than Miriam has previously done – it means to 'forsake life', because to '[f]ully […] recognize, one must be alone' (IV, pp. 609, 657). To write, then, is to 'face [a] second journey' internally, more arduous than the first as it apparently requires not only a withdrawal from the world but also refraining from communion with the things around her: 'The things in the room have retired a little: not sure whether they have been affronted or merely momentarily forgotten. If one rejects the demands for a second departure they will at once fully return, bringing their treasures' (IV, p. 617). If a first departure means accessing the inner being and viewing the world from her mood of silent attention, then the second departure – necessary for the kind of intense contemplation required 'if words are to be summoned' – means turning the eyes from the surrounding world, however 'richly overflowing', to focus solely on the inner self (IV, p. 617).

Indeed, writing becomes an intense sort of relationship for Miriam, replacing all others: 'leaving me alone with the realization of a bond, closer than any other, between myself and what I had written' (IV, p. 611). She describes the experience as 'being deeply in love', ensconced in 'the farthest reaches of one's being' (IV, pp. 656, 657).[6] In these final pages of *Pilgrimage*, whether intended as the ending of the sequence or not, Miriam's intense relationship with writing appears as the deepest form of self-realization and fulfilment.[7]

The 'underlying thing': Reading Silence

It is not primarily through her own writing – which begins rather late in the novel-sequence – that Miriam develops her thoughts about literature and what it should be, but through her reading. Reading occupies a central place in Miriam's life and forms an important theme in *Pilgrimage*. Besides its function as a means of characterizing Miriam's intellectual development, the literature she refers to and chooses to read over the course of the

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6 The physical distance noticeable between Miriam and her lovers earlier in the sequence becomes even more conspicuous when compared to the deep fascination she experiences in relation to her literary pursuits. The joy and the self-fulfilment she finds in reading and writing are often described in a vocabulary reminiscent of lovers' language. She describes writing as an act of 'losing oneself', as a 'game to be played', and as a 'passion that left her in an entrancement of longing to discover the secret of its nature' (III, pp. 135, 141). Suddenly, 'everything in her life existed only for the sake of the increasing bunch of pencilled half-sheets distributed between the leaves of her roomy blotter', from which she draws 'an energy her daily work had never tapped, from the depth of her heart' (III, pp. 140-41). As a contrast, she often experiences a certain distance from Michael that she is unable to bridge: 'if he were to touch her now, they would again be separated for longer than before, for always' (III, p. 202). Similarly, sexual intercourse with Hypo fails to awaken any passion in her ('The manly structure, the smooth, satiny sheen in place of her own velvety glow was interesting as partner and foil, but not desirable'); without his clothes on, Miriam finds him 'pathetic' and is herself surprised over her choice of phrase at that moment: 'My little babe, just born' (IV, p. 232).

7 For a discussion of the ending of *Pilgrimage*, see Kristin Bluemel, *Experimenting on the Borders of Modernism: Dorothy Richardson's* Pilgrimage (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1997), pp. 122-68.

novel-sequence also offers insights into the literary scene at the turn of the last century. Here, however, I discuss Miriam's reading not primarily from the perspective of *what* she is reading, but *how* she reads it. If writing enables Miriam to achieve a state of silent attention, reading offers a possibility of communicating and sharing, in a way similar to how Friends communicate in silence. Silence in literature, like silence between people, represents experiences that move beyond words, and readers recognize it as authentic because 'something' in them responds to it.

In her 1939 review of *Finnegans Wake*, Richardson calls on Walter de la Mare's definition of poetry as sound and rhythm to describe Joyce's last novel: 'When poetry is most poetic, when its sounds, that is, and the utterance of them, and when its rhythms rather than the words themselves are its real if cryptic language, any other meaning, however valuable it may be, is only a secondary matter'.[8] Indeed, Richardson suggests that any reader of Joyce should '*listen*' to the text rather than pay attention to what it actually says: 'release consciousness from literary preoccupations and prejudices, from the self-imposed task of searching for superficial sequences in stretches of statement regarded horizontally, or of setting these upright and regarding them pictorially, and plunge, provisionally, here and there; *enter* the text and look innocently about'.[9] The word 'plunge' is especially noteworthy here, as it suggests a text surface. To get into *Finnegans Wake*, Richardson seems to suggest, means precisely that: to dive *into* its mass of words, to swim among them, to '*enter* the text' in order to retrieve a meaning beyond its surface.

The idea that literary texts have surfaces and depths appears frequently in *Pilgrimage*, and Miriam, when reading, begins to search for something below the words on the page. Her fascination with silence as an aspect of

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8 Richardson, 'Adventure for Readers', first published in *Life and Letters* 22 (1939), pp. 45-52; republished in *Modernism: An Anthology*, ed. by Lawrence Rainey (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 599-603 (p. 602). Further references to this essay will be to the reprinted edition. The passage from Walter de la Mare – slightly misquoted by Richardson – comes from *Behold, This Dreamer: Of Reverie, Night, Sleep, Dream, Love-Dreams, Nightmare, Death, the Unconscious, the Imagination, Divination, the Artist, and Kindred Subjects* (London: Faber & Faber, 1939), p. 103.

9 Richardson, 'Adventure for Readers', p. 602. Emphases in the original.

literature partly stems from her growing scepticism towards language: the surface of the text. The 'curse of speech', Miriam laments in *Dawn's Left Hand*, lies in 'its inability to express several things simultaneously', so that '[a]ll the unexpressed things come round and grin at everything that is said' (IV, p. 164). To her, the 'neat, clever phrases' that constitute her first impression of *Anna Karenina* are indicative of a truth about life '[s]kimmed off the surface' and 'set up neatly in forcible quotable words', through which '[t]he rest could not be shown' (III, p. 62). In *Deadlock*, Miriam senses another existence below this 'surface', an existence that she feels she cannot reach herself, having a 'mind that could produce nothing but quotations' (III, p. 76). This other reality is present 'when she was alone; only because there was no need to express anything' (III, pp. 76-7). Speech, to Miriam, is capable only of expressing 'things other people had said and with which she did not agree', and none of these things 'expressed the underlying thing….' (III, p. 77). This 'underlying thing', then, which she recognizes as reality in *Deadlock*, becomes central to Miriam's understanding of life, and comes to form the goal of her literary pilgrimage.

The underlying thing that Miriam seeks in a literary work can be traced, if not in the concrete words on the page, then in the general atmosphere that they generate. To Miriam, literature is capable of generating an undefined feeling that transmits a sense of what lies below the surface of the text, just as prosody and dialect create a sound that becomes more important to Miriam in her meeting with other people than what is actually said. When conversing, Miriam admits to 'hearing nothing, remembering afterwards nothing of what had been said, only the quality of the atmosphere', and this sense of atmosphere also becomes characteristic of the way she reads (III, p. 287). The 'quality of the atmosphere', the general sound of what is communicated, thus becomes the essential part of the text, the part where its 'true' meaning can be found.

Reading for atmosphere, Miriam is uninterested in plot. In *Honeycomb*, she reflects on the difference between her way of reading and that of others: 'People thought it was silly, almost wrong to look at the end of a book. But if it spoilt the book, there was something wrong about the book' (I, p. 384). Miriam reads a little here and a little there, looking for that 'something that came to you out of the book, any bit of it, a page, even a sentence –

and the "stronger" the author was, the more came' (I, p. 384).

Miriam's focus on the 'general sound' of literature also relates to the affinities between her aesthetics as expressed in *Pilgrimage* and Richardson's thoughts on silent film, which she expressed in the film column she wrote during the years 1927-1931 for the magazine *Close Up*, edited by Kenneth Macpherson.[10] Here, I am not primarily interested in examining the cinematic qualities of *Pilgrimage*, but rather in how Richardson's thoughts about silence and sound in early twentieth-century film can be read in connection to her novel aesthetics. Richardson was a champion of the *silent* film and expressed dislike for the 'talkie' when it appeared towards the end of the 1920s, because to her, '[v]ocal sound, always a barrier to intimacy, is destructive of the balance between what is seen and the silently perceiving, co-operating onlooker'.[11] The idea of collaboration between

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10 The relationship between *Pilgrimage* and film has received considerable attention in Richardson studies. See for example Laura Marcus, *The Tenth Muse: Writing about Cinema in the Modernist Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 350-9, 'Introduction', in *Close Up 1927-1933: Cinema and Modernism*, ed. by James Donald, Anne Friedberg, and Laura Marcus (London: Cassell, 1998), pp. 150-9, and *Dreams of Modernity: Psychoanalysis, Literature, Cinema* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 201-20; Radford, pp. 55-8; Carol Watts, *Dorothy Richardson* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1995), pp. 58-82; Paul Tiessen, 'A Comparative Approach to the Form and Function of Novel and Film: Dorothy Richardson's Theory of Art', *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 3.1 (1975), 83-90; Nicola Glaubitz, 'Cinema as a Mode(l) of Perception: Dorothy Richardson's Novels and Essays', in *Film 1900: Technology, Perception, Culture*, ed. by Annemone Ligensa and Klaus Kreimeier (New Barnet: John Libbey Publishing, 2009), pp. 237-47; Harriet Wragg, '"Like a Greeting in a Valentine": Silent Film Intertitles in Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*', *Pilgrimages*, 4 (2011), 31-50; Gevirtz, pp. 5-107; Angela Frattarola, 'Auditory Narrative in the Modernist Novel: Prosody, Music, and the Subversion of Vision in Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*', *Genre* 44.1 (2011), 5-27; Francesca Frigerio, *Quando le parole cantano: La scrittura musicale di Dorothy Richardson* (Rome: Aracne Editrice, 2010), pp. 270-80; Melinda Harvey, 'Moving, Movies and the Sublime: Modernity and the Alpine Scene in Dorothy Richardson's *Oberland*', *Colloquy*, 4 (2000), n.p.; and Jenelle Troxell, 'Shock and "Perfect Contemplation": Dorothy Richardson's Mystical Cinematic Consciousness', *Modernism/modernity*, 21.1 (2014), 51-70. An extensive discussion of Richardson's relationship to silent film is also found in Kathryn Worlton-Pulham's dissertation 'Dorothy Richardson and the Cinematic Writing of Temporal Perception' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Hertford College, University of Oxford, 2011). Worlton-Pulham also examines some relevant aspects of Richardson's aesthetics; see especially chapter five.

11 Richardson, 'Continuous Performance: A Thousand Pities', *Close Up*, 1 (1927), 60-4.

creator and audience – discussed further below – is based on silence as the absence of spoken language.

It is not literal silence that Richardson seeks in film but the absence of spoken words; this is similar to how external silence in *Pilgrimage* does not necessarily signal the absence of sound but rather Miriam's knowledge that she will not be disturbed by somebody requiring her to speak or listen. Spoken words in films (or from the audience) disturb Richardson. Indeed, in one of her columns, she describes the experience of a silent film seen without the accompanying music as 'lifeless and colourless' – mostly because the absence of music allowed 'the sound of intermittent talking and the continuous faint hiss and creak of the apparatus' to be heard.[12] Unlike spoken words, '[m]usic and song demand only a distributed hearing which works directly as enhancement rather than diminution of the faculty of seeing'.[13] Music allows Richardson to lose herself in the film, in a manner comparable to how Miriam at times finds more stillness in sound than in the actual absence of noise.[14]

Such general sound might not at first glance appear to be obviously linked to a literary aesthetics but there is a strong connection between Richardson's comments on silence and sound in the film and how Miriam's reading is described in *Pilgrimage*. In one of her columns, Richardson states that she much prefers those words that accompany film to be written, like the captions generally associated with silent film. Such written words do not disturb the concentration demanded by the film, and will at

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Richardson's film column in *Close Up* has been reprinted in *Close Up 1927-1933: Cinema and Modernism*, ed. by James Donald, Anne Friedberg and Laura Marcus (London: Cassell, 1998); further references will be to this volume, henceforth referred to as *Cinema and Modernism*. 'A Thousand Pities' can be found on pages 166-8 (p. 167).

12 Richardson, 'Continuous Performance: Musical Accompaniment'; *Cinema and Modernism*, pp. 162-3 (p. 163).

13 Richardson, 'Continuous Performance: Dialogue in Dixie', p. 194.

14 While Richardson objected to spoken language in film, she apparently did not mind singing: 'Song, partly no doubt by reason of the difference between spoken word and sustained sound, got through the adenoidal obstruction and because the sound was distributed rather than localised upon a single form, kept the medium intact. Here was foreshadowed the noble acceptable twin of the silent film'. See 'Continuous Performance: Dialogue in Dixie', p. 194.

times even '[flow] unnoticed into visual continuity'; that continuity becomes, Richardson suggests, 'the swift voice within the mind', which is 'more intimately audible than the spoken word'.[15] What she describes here is a blurring of the senses: an experience where various sensory impressions become unified in a 'visual continuity'. The experience of wholeness in the silent film that Richardson describes here is an interesting parallel to Miriam's reading beyond the words towards the 'underlying thing'. Miriam's reading, as discussed above, is often focused on the literary text's ability to create a general feeling – an atmosphere, or a sound – rather than on individual sentences or thoughts.

In *Pilgrimage*, Miriam often responds intuitively to what she reads, finding texts to be 'true' because they correspond with her own understanding of reality. As early as *Honeycomb*, Miriam comes to the conclusion that she reads to get at the mind behind the words:

> I have just discovered that I don't read books for the story, but as a psychological study of the author… […] it was true and exciting. It meant… things coming to you out of books, people, not the people in the books, but knowing, absolutely, everything about the author […] It did not matter that people went about talking about nice books, interesting books, sad books, 'stories' – they would never be that to her. They were people. More real than actual people. They came nearer. (I, p. 384)

The fact that the word 'stories' is put within quotation marks reveals something important about Miriam's attitude to plot; she never reads for 'story' but for the representation of thought and experience. To her, a text presents a mind-frame or a perspective, which is that silent presence hovering between and beneath the lines.

To Miriam, recognizing in a text a quality that speaks to the silent depths of consciousness means conversing with the philosophy of the writer. It is a conversation enabled by that unspecific something between the lines of the text, which seems unrelated to what the lines themselves appear to be saying. Reading W. H. Mallock's *A Human Document* (1892) in *Hon-*

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15 Richardson, 'Continuous Performance: Dialogue in Dixie', p. 196.

eycomb – the novel that makes Miriam reflect on the difference between her reading habits and those of others – she experiences a strong sense of identification with the text, not with what it says, but with what it does not say:

> Why did this strange book come so near, nearer than any other, so that you *felt* the writing, felt the sentences as if you were writing them yourself? He was a sad pained man, all wrong; bothered and tragic about things, believing in sad black horror. Then why did he come so near? Perhaps because life was sad. Perhaps life was really sad. No; it was somehow the writing, the clearness. That was the thing. He himself must be all right, if he was so clear. Then it was dangerous, dangerous to people like Mrs Corrie and Joey who would attend only to what he said, and not to him … sadness or gladness, saying things were sad or glad did not matter; there was something behind all the time, something inside people (I, pp. 384-5, emphasis in the original)

There is something 'behind' the text, something that makes Miriam experience the 'clearness' of what Mallock writes. Similarly, when reading *Anna Karenina* with Michael in *Deadlock*, Miriam feels the text as though she were a part of it: 'What was the mysterious difference? Why did she feel she could hear the tone of the voices and the pauses between the talk; the curious feeling of things moving and changing in the air that is always there in all conversations?' (III, p. 60). The 'mysterious difference' in texts like these becomes the impulse that drives Miriam's reading. She searches in literature, not for words of truth, but for silent truth.

Because this truth is silent and because Miriam spends a long time feeling uncomfortable about the intuitive nature of her understanding, she has problems expressing her thoughts about literature. Like religion, reading becomes something essentially personal to her, a form of worship conducted in private.[16] How is it possible, she asks, to convey intuitive understanding of texts to other persons? Is it ever possible to express the deeply

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16 Richardson similarly expressed the opinion that '[r]eading, all but reading aloud, is a solitary art', in contrast to film, which 'is a social art'; see 'Continuous Performance: Almost Persuaded', *Cinema and Modernism*, pp. 190-2 (p. 191).

personal feelings that literature and art sometimes awaken? As with her experiences of solitary and shared silence, Miriam learns that her form of intuitive reading can be silently shared only by those who have had similar experiences. Reading books others have talked about, she constantly discovers that she finds 'principally quite other things, which stayed, after one had forgotten what people had explained' (III, p. 61).

A rare moment of such understanding passes between Miriam and Eleanor Dear in *The Tunnel*, as Miriam reads *Villette* to her convalescent friend. This reading opens up, not only a conversation with Brontë's text similar to the one she has with Mallock's, but also a sense of shared experience between Miriam and Eleanor, despite Miriam's initial reluctance to share her favourite novel with her sickly acquaintance: 'They were looking and hearing together […] Something was passing to and fro between them, behind the text; a conversation between them that the text, the calm quiet grey that was the outer layer of the tumult, brought into being. If they should read on, the conversation would deepen' (II, pp. 260-1). As Bronfen suggests, Miriam and Eleanor Dear enter a 'contemplative space while reading'.[17] In this 'contemplative space', the two women share an altogether wordless form of conversation, enabled by the text the two women are sharing. *Villette* thus opens silent spaces within and between the two women, allowing them – or at least Miriam – to better understand the shared premises of their humanity. The silent, intuitive conversation allows them to inhabit their common experience instead of their idiosyncrasies.

A 'Feminine Equivalent of the Current Masculine Realism': *Pilgrimage* and the Real

Over the course of *Pilgrimage*, Miriam comes to advocate a special kind of realist fiction that is firmly based in the author's own experience. In order for a work to represent 'something', that 'something' must arise out of the truths found in the innermost parts of the self. Literature can thus never be 'made up' or examine the general in any way; essential to both Miriam's

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17 Bronfen, p. 177.

view of life and her view of literature is the idea that generalization is impossible – for the individual, only the particular experience exists, and each experience is unique and must be treated as unique. Through her reading, Miriam especially comes to abhor literature that is based on 'ideas', which she considers as belonging outside the sphere of immediate personal experience.

The writer of the realist text Miriam seeks does not need to be an inspired genius but someone capable of describing reality as it is actually experienced. Writing, it is implied, is thus not necessarily an art, but a craft. As an act of creation, it is no different from actual living, and at several points Miriam connects her brand of realism to life as creation: 'I must create my life. Life is creation. Self and circumstances the raw material. But so many lives I can't create. And in going off to create my own I must leave behind uncreated lives' (III, p. 508). In this passage, creating the actual life appears as a form of self-realization: to attain what lies within 'being'. Miriam's literary realism is closely tied to this kind of self-creation: literature should represent and arise from the 'centre of being' of its 'creator'. In order to achieve this kind of text, writers must first create themselves in the sense of reaching their inmost cores. Her poetics is built on her understanding of the relationship between art and life, and on the notion that there can be no distinction between the two. Nothing in a work of literature can be based on anything other than the writer's own experience. Nothing can thus be made up or imagined. Any text worth reading must have its base in its author's own life. What Miriam proposes is a kind of 'auto-realism': a realism firmly based in autobiography and the writer's own life – not its 'circumstances', but the core of 'being' and the experience of life in its most basic and most essential sense.

It is not enough, though, that a literary work is based on the author's own life if the text does not come from the individual's inner being, a realization Miriam arrives at through her meeting with the author Edna Prout during a visit with the Wilsons in *Revolving Lights*. Edna's novels, Miriam learns, are based on her own life: 'She had put *people* in…. People he knew of. They joked about it. Horrible….' (III, p. 342, emphasis in the original). It might seem strange that Miriam is shocked to learn that there are authors who base their work on their own lives as she herself comes to

advocate a similar stance.[18] There is an essential difference between Miriam's 'auto-realism' and the writing of Edna Prout, however, a difference that lies in the fact that Edna appears to judge her characters through the way she presents them in her text. She has debased them in order to elevate her own alias:

> *That* was 'writing'; from behind the scenes. People and things from life, a little altered, and described from the author's point of view. Easy; if your life was amongst a great many people and things and you were hard enough to be sceptical and superior. But an impossibly mean advantage… a cheap easy way. Cold clever way of making people look seen-through and foolish; to be laughed at, while the authors remained admired, special people, independent, leading easy airy sunlit lives, supposed, by readers who did not know where they got their material, to be *creators*. (III, p. 342, emphases in the original)

As Gillian Hanscombe points out, it is not the presentation of real, living people in novels that is objectionable to Miriam 'as long as they appear, as they do in "life", as the percepts of the observer without any attempt to give the objective facts and details that only a "godlike" creator can know', because to a subject, '[p]eople can be perceived but not known'.[19] Edna the woman is not in the privileged position of seeing through the people around her in life, so she should not presume to fill that role in her fiction either. To Miriam, Edna lays claim to knowledge she does not have, building her work on her own prejudices and her desire to aggrandize herself; it is fiction built not on 'being' but on 'becoming'.

Since Miriam proposes a kind of fiction based in the writer's own real-

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18 There is a deliberate irony in this scene, as readers must at this point be aware of the autobiographical nature of the novel they are in the process of reading – this very scene depicts a summer's day with Hypo, the character based on H. G. Wells, and his intimate friend Edna, who according to George H. Thomson is based on Violet Hunt; see *Notes on* Pilgrimage*: Dorothy Richardson Annotated* (Greensboro: ELT Press, 1999), p.185.

19 Hanscombe, 'Dorothy Richardson Versus the Novvle', in *Breaking the Sequence: Women's Experimental Fiction*, ed. by Ellen G. Friedman and Miriam Fuchs (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 85-98 (p. 89).

ity, it is hardly surprising that she rejects the alleged role of the imagination in the writing process: 'Ah, imagination. Lies'; '*Imagination*. What is imagination? It always seems insulting, belittling, both to the writer and to life' (IV, p. 240; III, p. 276). When seen in relation to the romantic view of the writer as a genius, clearly set apart from ordinary people – a view prevalent among many of Richardson's contemporaries – this denial of any creative faculty on the part of the writer is noteworthy.[20] The romantic elevation of the imagination is seen, for example, in Stephen Dedalus's celebration of the genius of the artist in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. According to Stephen, only a true artist can express such beauty as to awaken in the beholder 'an esthetic stasis, an ideal pity or an ideal terror', and the 'first step in the direction of beauty is to understand the frame and scope of the imagination' (*PA*, pp. 173, 175). In his act of creation – for the romantic genius is always a man – the artist is likened to God ('The artist, like the God of creation'; 'O! In the virgin womb of the imagination the word was made flesh', et cetera), powerful and almighty – which makes for an interesting contrast to Miriam's sacred place, where worship of writing may certainly take place, and where God may be experienced, but where the writer would never presume to declare him- or herself God (*PA*, pp. 181, 182-3). Moreover, while Stephen goes into a voluntary exile and plans to leave Ireland at the end of *A Portrait*, in order to 'discover the mode of life or of art whereby [his] spirit could express itself in unfettered freedom', Miriam instead finds that freedom inside herself, by means of her internalized silence (*PA*, p. 207).

The 'imagination', writes Kermode, is often placed 'in an antithetical relationship with "reality"', and this is indeed the case with Miriam's poetics.[21] If she rejects the concept of creativity ('You see, I have no imagination'), it is because of her commitment to the 'real': 'Absurd, too, to try to invent life which did not come of itself'; 'Only a mind turned altogether towards outside things could invent'; 'Contemplation is adventure into discovery; reality. What is called "creation" imaginative transformation,

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20 Frank Kermode, for example, notes that the idea of the 'necessary isolation or estrangement of men who can perceive [the Image] is shared by the Romantics and the Moderns alike': see *Romantic Image* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957; repr. 2002), p. 4.

21 Kermode, p. 15.

fantasy, invention, is based only upon reality. Poetic description a half-truth? Can anything produced by man be called "creation"?' (III, pp. 431, 201, 272; IV, p. 657). The author's task is not to create, but to 'record' the real (IV, p. 609).[22] Miriam finds little to applaud in literary works that do not conform to her understanding of the 'real'; books are interesting only if you can sense reality in them, meaning their authors' experience. Moreover, she cannot perceive anything unique about the artist as compared to other humans, and in this sense, her poetics is certainly egalitarian. Anyone who will take the trouble can become a writer: 'The incense-burners do not seem to know that in acclaiming what they call "a work of genius" they are recognizing what is potentially within themselves. If it were not, they would not recognize it', she states – and by 'incense-burners' she is presumably referring to those who, like Stephen Dedalus, worship at the altar of the 'imagination' (IV, p. 657). Through proper contemplation, anyone can retrieve, from within their own being, material for literary work.

The act of contemplation – the moment of silent attention – replaces the role of the creative imagination for Miriam and becomes the foundation for her writing. At one point she even suggests redefining 'imagination' as something more similar to what she understands by contemplation: 'Imagination? Not in the sense of *making up*. Imagination means holding an image in your mind. When it comes up of itself, or is summoned by something. Then it is not outside, but within you. And if you hold it, steadily, for long enough, you could write about it for ever' (IV, p. 613, emphasis in the original). The image is not invented but arises from within; it is part of its owner's experience.

To a large extent, this 'image' corresponds to memory as it is presented in Richardson's novel. As discussed above, silent attention is essential to the writer, a point to which Miriam repeatedly returns in the second half of *Pilgrimage*. During her moments of silence, Miriam can access her past selves and experiences, which become not only the focus of her silent attention, but also the subject of her writing.

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22 To Hanscombe, this 'is not only an anti-Romantic stance'; it 'derives from a fundamental Puritanism', one of whose chief characteristics is a 'resistance to fantasy'; 'Dorothy Richardson Versus the Novvle', pp. 89-90.

Throughout *Pilgrimage*, the concepts 'being' and 'becoming' are linked to stillness and movement, respectively. That Miriam's moments of silent 'being' are still does not only mean that she is unmoving or finds herself in an act of contemplation. It also suggests a more complex connection to temporality and memory. In a sense, the stillness of Miriam's silence is absolute, as she not only experiences time as standing still, but as momentarily nullified; to be in such stillness means for Miriam that her past – and sometimes also her future – are present in the moment, there to be relived:

> Going back into the room she found that her movement about it had all its old quality; she was once more in that zone of her being where all the past was with her unobstructed; not recalled, but present, so that she could move into any part and be there as before. (III, p. 322)[23]

There are many instances in the novel where the past becomes 'unobstructed' and 'present'. In *Revolving Lights*, for example, Miriam has an experience of time '*pouring* itself out; ceaselessly winding off short strips of life, each life a strip of sleepless light' (III, p. 357, emphasis in the original). At one point, Miriam describes her past as '[w]ritten indelibly' in 'the book of consciousness', as though all her memories were to be found on separate pages in her mind (III, p. 503). During these moments, Miriam appears to conceive of time as a single space, where everything in her past is present at once and in which the self can be understood as a whole, not only in the sense of an inner harmony, but also encompassing the self's connections with the surrounding world, with other beings, and, notably, with earlier versions of the self.[24] This experience of time is strongly associated

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23 According to Vincent Brome, Richardson had similar experiences of time and memory: 'She was capable of experiencing curious premonitions, states of heightened perception when places forbidden to the normal senses seemed suddenly luminous to her. She talked at length of the mystery of time in which the dead were no longer dead and of that special exhilaration which came from experience remembered, controlled and recaptured more vividly than was possible with the distracted present. She had known it sometimes writing *Pilgrimage*'; 'A Last Meeting with Dorothy Richardson', *London Magazine*, June, 1959, 26-32 (p. 30-1)

24 Bronfen rightly points out that Miriam spatializes her experience of time in moments like these; time becomes a space in which she can move, experiencing past events

with her conception of the non-changing 'being'.

It is in moments of silent attention – when the past again becomes present, to be re-experienced and carefully contemplated – that the literary work can originate. Its subject should be those experiences that are retrieved from the 'zone of being'. Richardson mentions something similar – which she names as 'contemplated reality' – as the basis for her own writing in her 1938 foreword to the first omnibus edition of *Pilgrimage*:

> Aware, as she [Richardson] wrote, of the gradual falling away of the preoccupations that for a while had dictated the briskly moving script, and of the substitution, for these inspiring preoccupations, of a stranger in the form of contemplated reality having for the first time in her experience its own say, and apparently justifying those who acclaim writing as the surest means of discovering the truth about one's own thoughts and beliefs, she had been at the same time increasingly tormented, not only by the failure, of this now so independently assertive reality, adequately to appear within the text, but by its revelation, whencesoever focused, of a hundred faces, any one of which, the moment it was entrapped within the close mesh of direct statement, summoned its fellows to disqualify it.[25]

Here, Richardson confirms writing as a means of accessing the inner self ('the surest means of discovering the truth'), but also defines it as 'independent', having 'its own say' – as though the inner reality, once accessed, constitutes a form of truth that cannot be denied. She also emphasizes the difficulty of expressing this truth in 'direct statement', which she names as one of the main reasons why she experienced a sense of failure at the early stages of writing *Pointed Roofs*.

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as removed from 'their original sequentiality', instead approaching them 'as a continuous whole', 'so as to endow Miriam with a panoramic view of life' (pp. 190-1). Rose describes '[r]ecollection' as 'the subjective source of imagination' for Richardson, an act that results in a 'synthesis of the multiple aspects of memory'; in *Pilgrimage*, this results in Miriam becoming 'a complex unity of observer, mediator, interpreter, creator, contemplator of her own creation, new interpreter, and so forth, in the perpetual condition of reëxperience'; see 'Dorothy Richardson's Theory of Literature', pp. 32, 33. For further discussions of Richardson and temporality, see Randall, *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life*, pp. 59-91.

25 Richardson, 'Foreword', p. 10.

There are several affinities between Richardson's notion of 'contemplated reality' as a basis for the literary work and Wordsworth's definition of poetry as 'the result of emotion recollected in tranquillity', suggestive of a romantic strand in Richardson's aesthetics.[26] First of all, Wordsworth describes his and Coleridge's 'principal object' in the poems of *Lyrical Ballads* as 'incidents and situations from common life' – though not necessarily their own lives – because 'in that condition of life our elemental feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated'.[27] Richardson thus shares her focus on 'elemental feelings' with Wordsworth, although she would refer to these as belonging to the 'being'.

Second, and this is the more important connection, Wordsworth stresses the need to think 'long and deeply' before actually composing, and he praises his 'habits of meditation'.[28] Richardson herself raises this aspect of Wordsworth's Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* when she opens her review of *Finnegans Wake* with a discussion of Wordsworth:

> Wordsworth [describes] what happens when the poet, recalling an occurrence that has stirred him to his depths, concentrates thereon the full force of his imaginative consciousness; how there presently returns, together with the circumstances of the experience, something of the emotion that accompanied it, and how, in virtue of this magnetic stream sustained and deepened by continuous concentration, there comes into being a product this poet names, with scientific accuracy, an 'effusion'.[29]

By concentrating on a memory, Richardson describes how Wordsworth relives 'something of the emotion' that accompanied the original experience, in a somewhat similar fashion to how Miriam is described as re-ex-

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26 For a discussion of the connection between Richardson and Wordsworth, see Rose, 'Dorothy Richardson's Theory of Literature', pp. 32-3, 34*n*29.

27 Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral and Other Poems*, in *The Major Works including* The Prelude, ed. by Stephen Gill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 595-615 (pp. 596, 597).

28 Wordsworth, Preface, p. 598.

29 Richardson, 'Adventure for Readers', pp. 599-600.

periencing the past in the present in *Pilgrimage*. The resulting 'effusion' – a word Richardson also applies to the work of Proust and Joyce – strongly bases the literary work in personal emotion, its writer's 'signature […] inscribed across his every sentence'.[30]

The kind of 'feminine realism' that Richardson suggests had been her aim with *Pilgrimage* is linked to the notion of 'contemplated reality'; it finds its subject in its author's own relived experience and emotion, and is thus always firmly based in the subjective, rather than relying on the objective 'mirrors of plain glass' through which the practitioners of 'the current masculine realism' apparently 'believe themselves' to write.[31] It is a fiction based in silence, which Miriam construes as a specifically feminine method of communication, albeit not limited to women: 'Man's life was bandied to and fro… from *word* to *word*. Hemmed in by women, fearing their silence, unable to enter its freedom – being himself made of words' (III, p. 278, emphasis in the original).[32] Miriam's 'feminine realism' is neither autobiography nor fiction, strictly speaking, but a kind of realism that aims to get at the heart of the real and to find there the essence of the individual's being. It is a realism of the particular and the individual, and it strives to make its readers – its collaborators – recognize their own particularities through their own moments of silent attention.

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30 Richardson, 'Adventure for Readers', p. 601. To Rose, this 'effusion is a synthesis of the multiple aspects of memory, and becomes itself a new source of creative inspiration', which she links to Wordsworth, Proust, Joyce, and Richardson alike; 'Dorothy Richardson's Theory of Literature', p. 32. However, Richardson's own text connects this aspect of the creative inspiration to Wordsworth only: 'In Wordsworth's own case, the product can itself become the source of further inspiration' (p. 600).

31 Richardson, 'Foreword', p. 9.

32 Stephen Heath discusses the importance of silence to Miriam's writing, finding that is rooted in 'a kind of elliptical concatenation of pauses in what for the novel would be reality, a story in elsewhere and silences'. See 'Writing for Silence: Dorothy Richardson and the Novel', in *Teaching the Text*, ed. Suzanne Kappeler and Norman Bryson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), pp. 126-47 (p. 134).

Silence on the Page: Richardson and the Grammar of the Mind

When Elizabeth A. Drew suggested in 1926 that 'the Novel of the Three Dots' was an appropriate label for early twentieth-century fiction, she made a comment on the close association between modern prose and innovative punctuation.[33] One of the most recognisable characteristics of modernist prose is indeed its experimentation with and deviation from standard punctuation rules. In the modernist novel, ellipses, brackets, commas, and semicolons are not only used to mark syntax: they also add a new level of meaning to the text. Here, punctuation suggests a form of nonverbal content, inviting readers to engage more actively with the literary work.

This is certainly the case with the work of Richardson, whose writing is especially associated with those 'Three Dots'.[34] Her well-known ellipses have to a large extent come to define the interior monologue as represented in *Pilgrimage*.[35] Richardson's idiosyncratic use not only of the ellipsis, but also of the comma, the semi-colon, and the dash, suggests that punctuation carries a wider significance in *Pilgrimage* than merely that of separating phrases or coordinating syntax.

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33 Drew, *The Modern Novel: Some Aspects of Contemporary Fiction* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1926), p. 37.

34 Randall Stevenson suggests that Drew in fact had Richardson and/or Ford Madox Ford in mind when she defined the modern novel with reference to ellipsis; see *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction* (Hemel Hampstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), p. 37.

35 For discussions of Richardson's ellipses, see for example Mhairi Catriona Pooler, 'Of Language, of Meaning, of Mr. Henry James', *Pilgrimages*, 4 (2011), 95-111; John Mepham, 'Dorothy Richardson's "Unreadability": Graphic Style and Narrative Strategy in a Modernist Novel', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 43.4 (2000), 449-64; Susan Gevirtz, 'Into Ellipse: Geographic and Grammatic Disappearance in Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*', *Women's Studies*, 26.5 (1997), 523-33, as well as *Narrative's Journey*, pp. 147-59; and Bluemel, pp. 140-1. For general discussions of Richardson's punctuation, see Joanne Winning, *The Pilgrimage of Dorothy Richardson* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), pp. 134-6; M. B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1992), pp. 94-5; Bluemel, pp. 5, 22-3, 29-30, 110; Radford, pp. 69-70; and Lyn Pykett, *Engendering Fictions: The English Novel in the Early Twentieth Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1995), p. 89.

To understand how the punctuation in *Pilgrimage* interacts with the words on the page requires a more personal involvement with the literary work; part of my argument here hence revolves around Richardson's concept of 'creative collaboration', i.e. the reader's cooperation in 'creating' the literary work.[36] The punctuation marks instruct the reader how to approach the work, indicating moments for pause and reflection. Moreover, the typography of the printed page adds non-verbal meaning to the text, retrievable through reflection on the part of the reader. Interestingly, the sometimes unusual punctuation in *Pilgrimage* has been mentioned as part of its author's supposed 'unreadability'.[37] Here I will argue that Richardson's punctuation is indeed 'unreadable', although in a very different sense from what is usually implied by the word. Together with other typographical elements on the printed page – such as the blank spaces that are sporadically inserted into the text – I suggest that the ellipses and commas function as visual components of the literary work, representing and illustrating thought-processes and states of mind that are essentially nonverbal.

My discussion is largely based on *The Tunnel* and *Interim* (both 1919), the two 'novel-chapters' in which Richardson experimented most with punctuation and typography, and which she subsequently revised for the first omnibus edition of the *Pilgrimage* sequence in 1938. These two volumes as they were originally published constitute a highly innovative representation of consciousness, and the ground-breaking nature of this experiment will be highlighted below through a comparison between the first and the revised editions. Before turning to Richardson's use of commas, ellipses, and blank spaces, however, I will explain how her punctuation relates to her ideas about 'creative collaboration'.

In her essay 'About Punctuation' (1924), Richardson defines standard punctuation as part of 'the machinery of book production', which she

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36 Richardson expressed her ideas about 'creative collaboration' on several occasions, for example in 'About Punctuation', *Adelphi*, 1 (1924), 990-6; *John Austen and the Inseparables* (London: William Jackson, 1930), pp. 12-13; *Authors To-Day and Yesterday*, ed. by Stanley Kunitz (New York: Wilson, 1933), pp. 562-4 (p. 562); and 'The Artist and the World To-Day: A Symposium', ed. by Geoffrey West, *The Bookman* 86 (1934), 92-96.

37 For a discussion of early critical responses to *Pilgrimage* and Richardson's alleged 'unreadability', see Mepham.

represents as something impersonal and unengaging – something that has 'devitalized the act of reading'.[38] Against the machine-text with standard punctuation Richardson posits the 'organic' text, which is largely unpunctuated and where punctuation – when it appears – is irregular and acts as a 'pace-maker for the reader's creative consciousness', thus demanding the 'collaboration of the reader' in the creation of the literary work.[39] Indeed, Richardson suggests that punctuation – or the lack of it – can be used to launch a sort of 'attack' on readers, rousing them to alertness and activity by mere shock.[40]

The 'organic' prose Richardson advocates is largely unpunctuated, except in those cases when the writer invites the reader to pause and contemplate. To Richardson, punctuation should function as an '[appeal] to reflection' and be used to indicate passages in the text where there is content below the surface of the words, a content that the reader must retrieve through contemplation.[41] A large part of the function of punctuation in the 'organic' text is thus to guide the reader's approach to the text, in a similar manner to how musical notation works. Richardson's reader can be likened to the piano-player who sits down at a piano with a music score; the text functions like that score, and needs to be 'played' in order to attain its full effect. Punctuation marks like the comma serve the same purpose as 'rubato', instructing the reader to 'play' certain passages in a slower and less regular tempo.[42]

Essential to Richardson's theory of 'creative collaboration' is the idea that the reader must contemplate the text in order for the full content of the work to surface. She touched on the subject on several occasions, for example in her book on the artist John Austen, *John Austen and the Inseparables* (1930), in which she emphasizes that the writer's 'medium' is one in

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38 Richardson, 'About Punctuation', p. 991.

39 Richardson, 'About Punctuation', pp. 991, 992. For discussions of Richardson's thoughts on 'creative collaboration', see for example Radford, pp. 13-24; Winning, p. 134; and Bronfen, pp. 202-6.

40 Richardson, 'About Punctuation', p. 990.

41 Richardson, 'About Punctuation', p. 996.

42 I am grateful to Katherine Anderson Ahlstedt for suggesting 'rubato' as a musical analogy.

which 'the reader also is at home', whereas visual art works require that the beholder first learns something of the craft to be able to understand it fully.[43] Language is a medium 'stored up within [the writer] in fragments each of which is a living unit complete in form and significance', writes Richardson, and because it is a medium shared with the reader, a literary work 'yields its treasure not directly in a single eyeful, but extendedly in the course of a prolonged collaboration between reader and writer'.[44] She returned to the topic in her contribution to *The Bookman*'s 1934 'symposium', focused on contemporary writers' view on the 'human [tolerability]' of the 'state of things to-day':

> the relevance of "art," of all kinds and on all levels, to "existing conditions," at all times and in all places, resides in its power to create, or arouse, and call into operation (but not to direct – that is the business of ethics) the human faculty of contemplation. In other words: while subject to the influence of a work of art, we are ourselves artists, supplying creative collaboration in the form of a reaction of the totality of our creative and constructive and disinterested being rather than with our partial, which usually means interested and calculating being.[45]

Contemplation, then, which in *Pilgrimage* is also connected to Miriam's writing – as discussed in the previous chapter – is also a 'human faculty' essential to readers, who have to collaborate in order to complete the literary work they are reading.

In 'About Punctuation', Richardson discusses the necessity of reading with the 'whole self', and of '[fusing] the faculties of mind and heart' by '*listening*' to the text instead of merely scanning the page.[46] To listen to a text does not primarily mean that it should be spoken out loud or that the reader should focus on its aural qualities and rhythms. Instead, it entails grasping what is not directly expressed in the text itself: it is a matter of

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43 Richardson, *John Austen and the Inseparables*, p. 12.

44 Richardson, *John Austen and the Inseparables*, pp. 12-13.

45 'The Artist and the World To-Day', pp. 92, 94. Richardson's answers to the questionnaire can be found on p. 94.

46 Richardson, 'About Punctuation', pp. 990-1, emphasis in the original.

finding resonances of one's own experiences and/or knowledge between the lines, using these to discern further meaning in the literary work. Intuition thus becomes an essential part of the reading experience, as readers are invited to connect the literary work to their own consciousnesses and their own lives. Jean Radford suggests that the creative collaboration occurs on a different level in the text, noting for example how all traces of the 'authoritative author' have disappeared from *Pilgrimage*, leaving the reader to sort out what is what among the 'mass of detail' and references to 'specific historical events'.[47] My understanding of the term 'creative collaboration' is different, and I see the reader's own life experience as essential to uncovering layers of meaning between and behind the words. Bronfen suggests that the reader is '[called] upon […] to supplement textual allusions with his or her own ideas and to incorporate these into the unspoken'.[48] While closer to my own understanding of 'creative collaboration', I do not see the reader's 'ideas' as essential to the collaboration. Instead, it is the reader's personal experience and the emotional response this experience creates in connection to the text that form the core of the reader's cooperation.

There are several scenes in *Pilgrimage* that depict such experiences of reading on Miriam's part, and where a clear link between listening and emotion is established. In a passage in *The Tunnel*, for example, the effect of Shakespeare is likened to that of music, which, of course, is high praise coming from Miriam: 'Just the sound. Music. Like Beethoven. […] It was the *sound* of Shakespeare that made the scenes real – that made *Winter's Tale*, so long ago and so bewildering, remain in beauty…. "Dear Eve, Shakespeare is a sound…"' (II, p. 180, emphasis in the original). Similarly, later in *The Tunnel*, as Miriam is reading Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* aloud to Eleanor Dear, she notes the 'something' that is happening because she and Miss Dear are 'looking and hearing together': 'did she feel anything of the grey… grey… grey made up of all the colours there are; all the colours, seething into an even grey' (II, p. 260). While the effects of *Villette* in this scene appear more connected to the eye than to the ear, the colours Miriam 'feels' are clearly not perceived on the page, but constitute an inner experi-

47 Radford, pp. 16, 17, 19.
48 Bronfen, p. 203.

ence caused by her 'looking and hearing' the literary text: this is a reading conducted with the 'whole self'. Clearly, the effects of these literary works on Miriam have an affinity with Richardson's ideas about the reader's involvement. Miriam *hears* the texts; they create a 'sound', which enables her to read beyond the mere surface of the words. Through an act of 'creative collaboration' her own emotions deepen the experience of reading, making it something much more personal than a mere intellectual comprehension.

Writing 'Organic' Prose: Commas and Ellipses

Richardson's own experiments with writing 'organic' prose culminated with *The Tunnel* and *Interim*, and it is possible to regard 'About Punctuation' as an implicit comment on these two volumes' unusual punctuation and typography. Of these two 'novel-chapters', the unorthodox punctuation is at its most extreme in *Interim*. The differences are vast between the version that was serialized in *The Little Review* between June 1919 and June 1920 – and published by Duckworth in December 1919 – and the revised version published in the Dent omnibus edition of 1938, on which the Virago edition of 1979 is based.

In the first version of *Interim*, Richardson takes her experiment with punctuation to extreme lengths, mixing reported speech with Miriam's thoughts in long, uninterrupted paragraphs with highly idiosyncratic punctuation. There is no clear indication as to which lines should be read as other characters' speech and which belong to Miriam's own interior monologue. Being one of the most radical examples of represented consciousness in the modernist period, *Interim* demands much from its reader. It is not known why Richardson revised the volume for its republication; possibly her editor made demands for standard punctuation, or Richardson herself was disappointed in the critical reaction to her experiment, which was largely unfavourable.[49] By 1924, when her essay was first

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49 The latter is an idea expressed by Mepham, who suggests that Richardson 'abandoned this device, as part of her reaction to the charge of being unreadable'. While criticizing Richardson's unorthodox punctuation in *Interim*, he also condemns her for the changes she made to *Interim* in 1938: 'It is as if Joyce, to make things easier for the reader and to

published, two further instalments of *Pilgrimage* had appeared – *Deadlock* in 1921 and *Revolving Lights* in 1923 – and she was at work on *The Trap* (1925). In none of these three volumes, nor in the subsequent five instalments of the sequence, does Richardson repeat the experimental punctuation she attempted in *The Tunnel* and *Interim*. When she revised the volumes for the Dent edition of *Pilgrimage* in 1938 she added many punctuation marks, and especially commas, making the text conform to what may be described as standard usage. For example, the revised edition of *The Tunnel* includes 1752 added commas, or 6.32 commas per page.[50] In *Interim*, the number is 5.53 commas added per page.[51]

Even the simplest descriptions of Miriam's actions and surroundings read differently with the added punctuation, as in the following passage from *The Tunnel*, which describes Miriam's brief escape into the warm waiting-room on a cold and tired afternoon at the Wimpole Street dental practice:

> The long faded rich crimson rep curtains obscured half the width of each high window and the London light screened by the high opposing houses fell dimly on the dingy books and periodicals scattered about the table. Miriam stood by the mantelpiece her feet deep in the black sheepskin rug and held out her hands towards the fire.[52] (*The Tunnel*, p. 55)

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boost flagging sales, had gone back over Molly Bloom's interior monologue and inserted conventional punctuation' (p. 459). Instead of questioning Richardson's artistic integrity, one might question the publisher's meddling with the very same argument: would any publisher have asked Joyce to change his punctuation in the 'Penelope' episode of *Ulysses* without being condemned by literary critics and historians?

50 See George Thomson, 'Introduction', in *The Editions of Dorothy Richardson's* Pilgrimage*: A Comparison of Texts* (ELT Press, 2001), p. 6. <http://www.eltpress.org/richardson/introduction.pdf> [accessed 27 June 2013]. Elsewhere, though, Thomson specifies the number of added commas in *The Tunnel* as 1743; 'Chapter II: *Pilgrimage*, volume II: The Collected Editions (CE) and the English First Editions (E) Compared: *The Tunnel*', p. 1, in Thomson, *The Editions of Dorothy Richardson's* Pilgrimage. <http://www.eltpress.org/richardson/richardsonpdf2/ch2bk4.pdf> [accessed 27 June 2013].

51 Thomson, 'Introduction', p. 6.

52 Richardson, *The Tunnel* (London: Duckworth, 1919), p. 55. References to this first edition of *The Tunnel*, as well as to *Interim* (London: Duckworth, 1919), will be given directly in the text by title and page number.

In the revised edition, the same passage reads as follows:

> The long faded rich crimson rep curtains obscured half the width of each high window, and the London light, screened by the high opposing houses, fell dimly on the dingy books and periodicals scattered about the table. Miriam stood by the mantelpiece, her feet deep in the black sheepskin rug, and held out her hands towards the fire. (II, p. 61)

The added commas are of the 'machine' variety, the kind that does not push readers towards engaging more actively with the text. What is most noticeably lost with the addition of the commas is the sense of immediacy that characterizes the first version. This is especially the case with the second sentence in the passage. Without the commas, the reader has to slow down and maybe even reread the line before its content becomes quite clear. The commas bring a slightly different structure not only to the sentence, but to the experience it describes. The first version emphasizes Miriam's simultaneous experience of the heat of the fire against her hands and the warmth of the rug around her feet; the absence of punctuation in the passage serves to unify this experience. Her intense presence, both in the moment described and in the subjective nature of the description, is lost in the revised version, in which she is depicted as though seen from the outside.

There is a clear connection between the kind of 'organic' prose found in the first versions of *The Tunnel* and *Interim* and the notion of stream-of-consciousness writing. In many ways, the flow of the largely unpunctuated text is a representation of the intensity of the lived moment, of the now; as Thomson suggests, the unpunctuated sentence represents the 'most basic logic of stream of consciousness narrative'.[53] The freedom from restrictive punctuation creates a flow in the text that represents the experience of reality through consciousness in the moment: unstructured and unstoppable.

This flow – if not of consciousness, then of experience – is in some ways similar to the perception of sound. When we hear, there are often no clear

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53 Thomson, 'Introduction', p. 5.

boundaries between different sounds; they constitute one generalized soundscape where individual sounds intermittently stand out.[54] Sound rushes at us and pours into our ears, entering our bodies as sound-waves. The unpunctuated sentence is similarly hard to keep at bay, and for the engaged reader there is a pouring-in of text analogous to listening. The text rushes out from the page – not specifically as words, but as content – and for the reader of *Pilgrimage*, as Miriam says about *Villette*, this creates a 'grey made up of all the colours there are': a generalized text-sound, in the midst of which bits and pieces stand out more than others, like individual sounds in a generalized soundscape. The individual 'sounds' of *Pilgrimage* – represented by passages, lines, or even words that stand out more than others – should of course be engaged with more profoundly than is required by the generalized 'sound' of the text, and it is here that punctuation serves to introduce pauses in the reading. The pause invites the reader to stop the forward movement and contemplate, marking a place in the text where content can be retrieved below the surface of the words.

An example of a scene that illustrates Richardson's organic prose and its interplay of flow and pause is found early in *Interim*. Visiting the Broom sisters, Miriam wakes up in the middle of the night and experiences a moment of silent attention: 'There was nothing but the cool sense of life pouring from some inner source and the deep fresh spaces of the darkness all round her' (*Interim*, p. 17). In this silence, Miriam vaguely hears the strand of a melody coming in from the street, a sound that draws her out 'into the quiet neighbourhood' and into 'the gardens at the backs of the rows of little silent dark houses' (p. 17). There is something almost unreal about this music and its effect on Miriam, whose body remains in her bed while her 'heart' rushes up and out of the window, seemingly present among the buildings in the street (p. 18).

The contrast between sound and silence in this scene is mirrored in Richardson's use of 'organic' commas in what is otherwise a largely un-

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54 My analogy of the 'generalized soundscape' is based on Melba Cuddy-Keane's discussion of the soundscapes in the works of Virginia Woolf. See 'Modernist Soundscapes and the Intelligent Ear: An Approach to Narrative through Auditory Perception', in *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, ed. by James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), pp. 382-98.

punctuated passage. The sound of the text is intermittently brought to a halt as the commas slow down the reading, inserting pauses of silence into the scene. Here, the reader is invited to contemplate what lies unexpressed between the lines. In contrast, the intensity of Miriam's experience is highlighted by an exclusion of commas in the initial description of the experience, for example in the first mention of the melody she hears: 'Perhaps she had awakened because of her happiness… clear gentle and soft in a melancholy minor key a little thread of melody sounded from far away in the night straight into her heart' (*Interim*, p. 17). In the revised version, the second part of this line reads as follows: 'Clear, gentle, and soft in a melancholy minor key, a little thread of melody sounded from far away in the night straight into her heart' (II, p. 301). The addition of the commas changes the representation of the experience so that the intensity captured by the first version is lost together with the flow of the prose.[55]

There are other differences between the two versions as well: the ellipsis preceding the word 'clear' has three dots in the first and four in the revised version (I will address the difference between these two kinds of ellipsis below). In the second case, 'clear' becomes 'Clear', as it now begins a new sentence, thus separating the two clauses on each side of the ellipsis and consequently also their contents. In the first version, the ellipsis emphasizes the rush of the experience, linking Miriam's 'happiness' and her experience of her 'inner source' with the subsequent perception of the melody. In the second version this link is lost, the two events being presented as distinct: first Miriam ponders her own happiness, and *then* she hears the tune. Possibly Richardson wanted to separate the two clauses, which would explain the change in the second version. At the same time, reading the two sentences as one syntactic entity makes sense as the melody is clearly connected to Miriam's state of mind, here presented almost as a dream-state.

In the first version, the commas are used to indicate places where the reader should pause. Two of these 'organic' commas appear, for example, in a line describing Miriam's sentience of the world outside the window:

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55 The first version of this passage includes nine commas, and the revised version has eighteen.

'She rushed up and out heart foremost, listening, following the claim of the music into the secret happy interior of the life of each sleeping form, flowing swiftly on across a tide of remembered and forgotten incidents in and out amongst the seasons of the years' (*Interim*, p. 18). Here, the commas ask us to stop at the word 'listening', suggesting the importance of this term to understanding the strange events that are described. Interestingly, 'listening' is also related to Richardson's theory of punctuation – her ideas about how the reader should 'listen' to the text – which adds a metatextual dimension to the passage. The word serves to remind us that we should approach this passage with our ears and not our eyes; we should listen for the vague melody behind the words in order to arrive at the 'secret happy interior' of the text. Richardson's text should be read in a manner that resembles the way in which Miriam engages with the tune that she hears: we should bring our own half-forgotten 'sleeping forms' – memories of our own 'incidents' – to *Pilgrimage* in an act of creative collaboration in order to fully understand Miriam's experience at this moment. Likewise, the second comma in this sentence again makes the reader pause to contemplate the relationship between the 'sleeping form' and the swift flow of memories, suggestive of the interplay between pause and flow, silence and sound, in Richardson's unpunctuated prose.

As in this dream-like scene from *Interim*, the flow of the unpunctuated text represents the intensity of the present – life as it is experienced – while the commas, which mark places in the text that invite the reader to pause and reflect, are related to introspection and interiority. The commas suggest inner experiences while the flow of the unpunctuated passages describe Miriam's experience of the external world, however surreal or '*strange*' (*Interim*, p. 18). The interplay between pause and flow in the text has parallels in other similar contrasts: between eye and ear, stillness and movement, interiority and the external world, or, to use more Richardsonian terms, between 'being' and 'becoming'. 'Being' would then be associated with the pause and the punctuation mark while 'becoming' – the rush of experience – is associated with the unpunctuated sentence, with the 'sound' of literature, and with movement.

The comma is not the only punctuation mark that serves to slow down the reading in *Pilgrimage* and to suggest moments of silence and inward

movement. For example, Richardson also uses the ellipsis – her signature punctuation mark – to guide the reader towards contemplation and closer engagement with her text. Her use of the ellipsis is more complex and varied than her use of the comma, however, and ellipses have many different functions throughout her work.

Generally, Richardson's ellipses occur in two variants: there are those with three dots and there are those with four. The three-dot ellipsis is the most frequent, and it seems to mark a gap in an ongoing thought process. For example, in the first chapter of *The Tunnel*, where Miriam enters her room in Tansley Street, she stops to consider her surroundings: 'She was surprised now at her familiarity with the detail of the room… that idea of visiting places in dreams. It was something more than that… all the real part of your life has a real dream in it; some of the real dream part of you coming true' (II, p. 13). The ellipses suggest that there is something else occurring in Miriam's mind between the individual clauses, and that 'something' links the clauses together without pressing the connection on the reader. The three-dot ellipses do not stop the flow of the prose, and they do not necessarily force the reader to pause and reflect; rather, they visualize the flow and urge the reader onwards, as though they are illustrating the movement of the thoughts themselves.

The four-dot ellipsis implies instead that something is missing in the text – that is, something is not expressed verbally. These ellipses constitute a more forceful kind of break in the text compared with the three-dot ellipses, clearly belonging to the kind of punctuation that marks moments for pause and contemplation; they form a block in the flow of the 'organic' prose.[56] But while these ellipses suggest a missing something, they are also something in themselves: they visualize Miriam's state of mind as a form of symbol or image. The four-dot ellipses in *Pilgrimage* are thus part of an aesthetic programme that seeks to literally visualize occurrences in the mind by making the graphics of the printed page form part of the literary work. Mhairi Catriona Pooler suggests that the ellipses 'reflect

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56 It should be noted, however, that Richardson is not entirely consistent in how she uses the three and four-dot ellipses, and that there are exceptions both when it comes to the three-dot and the four-dot ellipses.

thought patterns as if they were being enacted before the reader's eyes'.[57] Clearly, it is hard to argue that the ellipses represent specific thought-content, as they evade any attempt at specification. It is my contention, though, that it is not only the pattern or structure of Miriam's thought processes that is represented graphically on the page through the ellipses but her actual thoughts, which are silent in the sense that they are nonverbal and therefore unwriteable – just as they are unreadable in the traditional sense.

In the first version of *Interim*, this use of the ellipsis is more pronounced, as Richardson's experimentation with typography led her to include not only three and four-dot ellipses in the text but also ellipses with as many as five and even six dots. In the revised edition of *Interim*, the five and six-dot ellipses are generally replaced by a four-dot ellipsis, and some of them have been removed altogether. The variants in the first version suggest a difference in intensity between the inner experiences that the ellipses represent. The sporadic six-dot ellipsis, for example, is used to indicate an inner experience in Miriam, below the surface of the text, as when she gloomily contemplates Mrs Philps's health while visiting the Brooms: 'Mrs. Philps' face had grown dark and old. Miriam glanced restively at her meaning…… Large terrible illnesses, the doctor coming, trouble amongst families, someone sitting paralyzed; poverty, everything being different' (*Interim*, p. 22). The placement of this ellipsis suggests that it represents whatever 'meaning' Miriam has retrieved from 'glancing' at Mrs Philps, and the sentence following the ellipsis reveals the nature of her thoughts: her foreboding of illness and darker times. If this presentiment sits oddly in this scene, it is because the line might actually refer to something different: Miriam's memories of her mother's illness and suicide, and her own family's misfortune and poverty. The ellipsis then represents the surfacing of dark memories and the trauma of her mother's death.

The line preceding the ellipsis – 'glanced restively at her meaning' – serves to draw the reader's attention to the visuality of the scene and the visuals on the page: specifically, to the ellipsis that follows. In a similar way to how the word 'listening' asks readers to use their ears in their reading in

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57 Pooler, p. 109.

the passage discussed above, this line instructs readers to use their eyes. There are similar comments throughout *Interim* in relation to the longer ellipsis. Speaking of her memories of her childhood dolls, for example, Miriam notes that their eyes had an '*expression*': 'looking at something, looking at the same thing you looked at yourself – ......' (*Interim*, p. 15, emphasis in the original).[58] The dolls' eyes, Miriam's memory, and the reader's contemplation of the six-dot ellipsis are all connected here, through the shared act of 'looking'. Similarly, numerous lines with ellipses in them also draw the reader's attention to the act of looking or to secrets: '..... It is my secret companion'; 'Brilliant.... *Brilliant ;* [sic] and someone was seeing it'; 'The high housefronts stood out against the grey, eastern-white, frilled below with new-made green, sprouting motionlessly as you looked......'; 'Summer. Eternity *showing*.....' (*Interim*, pp. 200-1, emphases in the original).[59] Frequently, then, Richardson invites us to *look* at the text, suggesting that its secrets can be located with the eye.

Blank Spaces

Besides punctuation, Richardson experimented with blank spaces in *Pilgrimage* as visual additions to the text. While appearances of blank lines in the middle of a chapter often indicate a break or a pause between different sections in the chapter – that is, a good place to take a break from your reading if you are so inclined – there are plenty of occasions where these blank spaces serve a different function and where they should be considered a nonverbal component of the literary work itself. These blank spaces often appear in scenes describing Miriam's experiences of silence and inward movement, and they have a function similar to that of the four-dot

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58 The dash indicates the end of the reported speech, and the ellipsis is followed by a yawn from Mrs Philps and movement from Florrie, indicating restlessness on the part of Miriam's audience. This ellipsis is removed in the revised version, where what follows after the ellipsis now appears in a new paragraph, following Miriam's finished speech about the dolls (II, p. 299).

59 The first of these ellipses ('It is my secret companion') has been removed completely from the revised edition. The following two ellipses have been replaced with three-dot ellipses in the revised version, and the last five-dot ellipsis has been changed into a four-dot ellipsis (II, pp. 402-3).

ellipsis. However, their presence constitutes a more pronounced break in the text, owing to the fact that they require more space on the page. As a consequence, the blank spaces suggest more intense inner experiences than the ellipses do, experiences that move beyond any representation other than the pure, blank white of the page. Essentially, these blank spaces are not gaps; they do not indicate an *absence* of anything other than language. On the contrary, they should be understood as presences in their own right – representing experiences that are unrelated to language and that relate only to Miriam's inner self – and as part of the literary work.[60]

In the first editions of *Pilgrimage*, published by Duckworth, Richardson divided her chapters into sections marked by numbers. In the revised edition, she removed the numbers, instead separating the sections using blank spaces only. The following discussion is not focused on such structural spaces – hereafter referred to as gaps – but on those spaces inserted into the text that do not serve any apparent structural function. Such blank spaces start to appear in the sequence with *The Tunnel*, which indicates that they were part of the bigger formal experiment that Richardson conducted there.

It appears as though Richardson became more aware of the function of the blanks in the text when she revised *Pilgrimage* for the 1938 edition. Whereas her punctuation became more traditional, her use of blank spaces instead grew more experimental.[61] This is noticeable on those occasions in the text where not only the numbers have been removed, but the sizes of the gaps have also been changed, so that they are of varied length. Whereas the gaps separating the numbered sections in the first edition usually cover three lines – though there are some irregularities here too – they are mostly replaced by three blank lines in the revised edition. How-

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60 Radford acknowledges the blank spaces in *Pilgrimage* precisely as '*printed silences*' that 'register the activities of the unconscious which neither speech nor writing can reach' (pp. 69-70, emphasis in the original).

61 Richardson's annotated manuscript of *Dimple Hill*, held at the Harry Ransom Center in Austin, Texas, appears to corroborate this idea. Here she has indicated how many lines each space should be, ranging between one and four lines. See Valentina Paradisi, 'Dorothy Richardson's Adventure in Memory', *Pilgrimages: A Journal of Dorothy Richardson Studies,* 5 (2012), 48-70 (p. 68*n*41).

ever, there are noticeable exceptions where the gaps are instead replaced with only two blank lines. These changes are significant, especially in those cases where blank spaces of different lengths are incorporated into the same scene or even on to the same page.

Significant blanks of different lengths can be found in, for example, the first chapter in *The Tunnel*, in the scene describing Miriam's intense experience of silence when she enters her room in Tansley Street as its inhabitant for the first time. In the first edition of *The Tunnel*, the chapter is divided into ten numbered sections, and it includes two blank spaces that are not preceded by numbers. The lengths of the gaps are almost all three lines, but the gap preceding section six is somewhat longer, stretching towards four lines.[62] In the revised edition, the nine gaps have been changed into blank spaces, which means that the chapter includes eleven blanks in total. All the gaps from the first edition except one have been replaced by blank spaces the length of three lines.

The gap preceding section three in the first edition, however, has been replaced with a blank space encompassing two lines in the revised edition. As this blank space appears in a passage that includes a sequence of three blanks, its diverging length is significant, and it also affects the way in which the other blank spaces in the same passage are perceived. The three blank spaces in the passage comprise two gaps in the first edition, namely the one between sections two and three, one of the two original blank spaces, and the one between sections three and four. The length of the first of these blank spaces is two lines, that of the second one line, and that of the third three lines. The passage appears in the middle of the chapter and describes the moment when Miriam steps into her room where she has a strong *déjà-vu* experience, finding that she has previously seen the room in a dream. The liberation of finally being in a room of her own makes her able to connect to a part of herself she thought was lost: 'the self that was with her in the room was the untouched tireless self of her seventeenth year and all the earlier time' (II, p. 16). This moment of intense self-aware-

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62 Such variants occur throughout the first versions of *The Tunnel* and *Interim*, and do not necessarily indicate a conscious typographical choice. As the differences in length sometimes amount to millimetres, they could be due to the manual setting of the type.

ness, marked by a profound awareness of silence, is followed by the sequence of blank spaces, interspersed into a description of Miriam's experience of the light coming through the window.

The first chapter on Richardson discussed the importance of silence to understanding Miriam's development and her concept of self in *Pilgrimage*. Throughout the novel-sequence, scenes defined by intense, spiritual experiences of silence convey Miriam's exploration of her self and her inmost core: they mark those moments when she reaches her 'centre of being' (IV, p. 609). As David Stamm has noted, there is often a connection between Miriam's experience of silence and descriptions of light in *Pilgrimage*, where the light functions as a 'projected vision of [Miriam's] own illumination'.[63] The strong emphasis on the interplay of light and darkness in the scene from *The Tunnel* discussed above suggests such a moment of revelation for Miriam. The silent, blank spaces on the page become concrete embodiments of this moment:

> London could come freely in day and night through the unscreened happy little panes; light and darkness and darkness and light.
>
> London, just outside all the time, coming in with the light, coming in with the darkness, always present in the depths of the air in the room.
>
>
>
> The gas flared out into a wide bright flame. The dingy ceiling and counterpane turned white. The room was a square of bright light and had a rich brown glow […]. (II, pp. 16-17)

The blank spaces visualize and illustrate Miriam's epiphanic, ineffable experience, and their difference in length indicates a parallel difference in intensity of the state of mind that they represent. Their appearance in the passage is linked to light, descriptions of which can be found around the edges of the blank spaces. Elsewhere in *Pilgrimage*, Miriam calls for a lit-

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63 Stamm, *A Pathway to Reality: Visual and Aural Concepts in Dorothy Richardson's* Pilgrimage (Tübingen: Francke Verlag, 2000), pp. 182-3.

erature that illustrates what 'floods of sunshine and beauty indoors and out meant to [people] as single individuals, whether they were aware of it or not' (III, p. 243). Inescapably, Miriam's comment draws the reader's attention to the text of which she herself is the main character. Indeed, *Pilgrimage* often sets out to chart how Miriam is 'made strong partly by endless floods of sunshine and beauty' (III, p. 243). The passage from *The Tunnel* discussed above is an example of such an instance. It illustrates the strong effects that the beauty of the everyday can have on the individual: the silence of the private room, the bustle of life just outside it, the way the sunlight falls on the walls through the window.

These blank spaces indicate an inclusion in the scene of a different kind of expression than the merely verbal.[64] They invite us, not to read them as we would words, but to consider them as we would a painting. If we briefly halt our reading in the middle of these blank spaces, as Richardson's instructions for reading appear to suggest we should do, we will find there a form of visual representation of Miriam's experience of silence, light, and beauty. Focusing the gaze on the white spaces between the dark text-blocks will make the words on the page no longer appear like printed characters only, but as blocks of darkness interspersed with light: walls of 'a rich brown glow' enfolding the 'square[s] of bright light' that are the blank spaces on the page. These blank spaces, if looked at long enough, appear as tunnels, where the bright light of the blank page shines on the reader, representing Miriam's revelatory moment of silence and light.

♦

The aesthetics developed by Miriam in *Pilgrimage* – an aesthetics that builds on silence and the ineffable, and on the idea of reader/writer collaboration – relates strongly to Richardson's own work and to the novel in which Miriam herself is the protagonist. In *Pilgrimage*, too, silence comes to represent the unknowable 'something': those aspects of existence that

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64 Gevirtz reads the blanks as 'the pools out of which words issue and to which they return in Richardson's phenomenology' ('Into Ellipsis', p. 143). To Radford, the blanks 'signal, more eloquently than any words, the blind spots of language and consciousness' (p. 70).

move beyond language and that, even when grasped and briefly held by Miriam, seem to remain hidden from the reader.

Moreover, the strong links between the passages in *Pilgrimage* where Miriam experiences silence intensely and those where silence is represented visually on the page indicate that silence is not only a theme in Richardson's work but also a formal device. *Pilgrimage* is literally shaped by its nonverbal content, and the visual appearance of the text on the page should be considered an important aspect of the work as a whole. Readers have to listen carefully to this silence to retrieve the hidden aspects of the novel. It is there that they can converse with the text in the way suggested by both Miriam and Richardson. If 'real speech' can only come from silence, as Miriam says in *Revolving Lights*, perhaps the reason Richardson needed to write such a very long novel was because she had so much silence to put between the lines.

Chapter 4
Silence and Noise in Joyce

'it was the din of all these hollowsounding voices that made him halt ir-
resolutely in the pursuit of phantoms. He gave them ear only for a time
but he was happy only when he was far from them, beyond their call,
alone or in the company of phantasmal comrades'

(*PA*, p. 70)

'– I won't listen, she cried.
But Bloom?'
(*U*, XI, 132-3)

James Joyce is not a writer generally associated with silence. On his pages,
the streets of Dublin are noisy, filled with the sounds of '[j]ingling' jaunt-
ing cars, mad nuns' 'screeching', and children running 'screaming along
the gravel paths' (*U*, XI, 304; *PA*, p. 147; *D*, p. 53). They 'Rtststr!' and
'*Heigho! Heigho!*' (*U*, VI, 970; IV, 546). Joyce, who famously claimed that
Ulysses would enable future generations to recreate Dublin, were it ever
destroyed, certainly did not neglect to include the clamour of the Irish
capital for future readers' reference.[1] Not all of Joyce's fiction is quite so
noisy, however; silence returns over and over in Joyce's writing, from the
admiring letter he wrote to Ibsen in 1901 – in which he linked the play-
wright's works to silence – to Stephen's self-proclaimed weapons in *A Por-*

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1 See Frank Budgen, *James Joyce and the Making of* Ulysses*, and Other Writings* (London:
Grayson and Grayson, 1934; repr. London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 69.

trait ('silence, exile and cunning'), to 'Sylvia Silence, the girl detective' in *Finnegans Wake* (*PA*, p. 208, *FW*, p. 61).[2]

The argument I pursue in this and the following chapter links the representation of silence in the Joycean *oeuvre* to developments in his writing, as the use of silence in his works both changes and diminishes as his writing becomes less realistic. Silence in Joyce's texts is often associated with Stephen Dedalus. Unlike Richardson, however, Joyce eventually grew bored with his fictional alter ego, and, moreover, he apparently outgrew the aesthetics of his first novel. The turn in Joyce's writing – from Stephen to Bloom, from mind to body, and from modernism to postmodernism – can be clearly seen on the pages of *Ulysses*, whose second half is characterized by a kind of literary play-time that anticipates *Finnegans Wake*. As Hugh Kenner suggests, Joyce 'began *Ulysses* in naturalism and ended it in parody'.[3] Joyce's break with the realist paradigm of his early writing thus

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2 In March 1901, the young Joyce wrote to Ibsen: 'I did not tell them what bound me closest to you. I did not say how what I could discern dimly of your life was my pride to see, how your battles inspired me – not the obvious material battles but those that were fought and won behind your forehead, how your willful resolution to wrest the secret from life gave me heart and how in your absolute indifference to public canons of art, friends and shibboleths you walked in the light of your inward heroism. Your work on earth draws to a close and you are near the silence. It is growing dark for you. Many write of such things, but they do not know. You have only opened the way – though you have gone as far as you could upon it'; see *Letters of James Joyce*, ed. by Stuart Gilbert and others, 3 vols (New York: Viking Press, 1957-66), I, ed. by Stuart Gilbert (1957), 52. The word 'silence' here seems not only to comment on the fact that Ibsen's life is drawing to its close – it is hardly surprising that Ibsen never responded to this letter – but also on his writing, as there appears to be a connection between 'the secret' Ibsen has 'wrest[ed] […] from life' and the silence he is near – meaning both as someone who understands and can express certain truths inexpressible in language *and* as someone close to death. In his essay on Ibsen, 'Ibsen's New Drama', Joyce uses the word 'silence' mostly to comment on characters' inability to communicate with one another; in Joyce, *Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing*, ed. by Kevin Barry, transl. by Conor Deane, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 30-49. The essay was first published in *Fortnightly Review*, 67 (1900), 575-90.

3 Kenner, *Joyce's Voices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978; repr. Rochester: Dalkey Archive Press, 1978, 2007), p. ix. Kenner first described *Ulysses* in this way in *A Homemade World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975), p. 155; *Joyce's Voices* is his response to a question regarding what he meant by this statement.

sets him apart from Richardson and Woolf. The break can be seen in the way that silence develops in his fiction: from inner world in the early works to imagined and surreal world(s) in the later. This contrast is discussed below in relation to the 'Sirens' episode in *Ulysses*.

Numerous critics have discussed silence in Joyce's works, and from many different perspectives, mainly as narratological silences (that is, as gaps and omissions), as political silences (the state or quality of silencing or being silenced), or as a matter of ineffability. In an often-quoted text in this critical corpus, Kenner discusses narratological silences in *Ulysses*, finding that 'some of the most moving things the book has to say are things never said'.[4] Marilyn French similarly sees silence in *Ulysses* as signifying absence, claiming that 'since the large, vague centrality is absence itself, is Nothing, *Ulysses* may be taken as Joyce's answer to Shakespeare's line in *King Lear* that "Nothing will come of nothing", for in fact, as Joyce demonstrates, everything does'.[5] Sam Slote discusses silence in terms of language and negation, finding in Joyce's later works 'an enunciation that aims towards some achievement, and in so doing […] aims towards the very destruction of itself-as-enunciation'.[6] In *Finnegans Wake*, Slote suggests, all language moves towards some ultimate silence.

By contrast, I argue here that in *Dubliners* and *A Portrait*, all language ultimately derives from silence and from ineffable experiences of reality. What I bring to the discussion of silence in Joyce's works is an exploration of the connection between silence and the modernist aesthetics that characterizes *Dubliners*, *A Portrait*, and the first half of *Ulysses*. I am particularly interested in the oscillation between sound and silence in Joyce's works – an oscillation that, I suggest, runs parallel with a movement between inner and outer worlds. While sound indicates interaction with the world,

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4 Kenner, 'The Rhetoric of Silence', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 14.4 (1977), 382-94 (p. 385).

5 French, 'Silences: Where Joyce's Language Stops', in *The Languages of Joyce*, ed. by R.M. Bolletteri Bosinelli and others (Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1992), pp. 41-53 (p. 46).

6 Slote, *The Silence in Progress of Dante, Mallarmé, and Joyce* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), p. 4. Similarly, Lucia Boldrini finds that the limits of the expressible 'stand at the centre of [Joyce's] poetics' in *Finnegans Wake*; *Joyce, Dante, and the Poetics of Literary Relations: Language and Meaning in* Finnegans Wake (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 145

silence signals 'inneraction', that is, a move inwards. In the present chapter, the relation between the silence/sound dichotomy and Joyce's characters' inner worlds is examined. The discussion focuses mainly on Stephen Dedalus – the Joycean character who is most associated with silence – but the chapter ends with a consideration of silence in the 'Sirens' episode in *Ulysses*, which illustrates the development from real to surreal in Joyce's writing. The chapter begins, however, with a discussion of sound and listening.

'Listen!': Joyce's Silences and Soundscapes

Whether *Ulysses* is primarily a novel of the eye or the ear has long been a topic of contention between Joyce scholars.[7] It is difficult to perceive a unified theory concerning the engagement between senses and world in the novel, and to ascribe primacy to either sight or hearing in *Ulysses* is even more problematic, as the various characters' respective attitude to their senses – and, indeed, to the nature of sense-mediation itself – differs and is, moreover, inconstant. Stephen and Bloom both engage with the visual and the auditory senses but not always in the same way, and not necessarily more with one or the other. Sara Danius's suggestion that *Ulysses* is built on a dissociation of the senses – thus never presenting a world perceived with more than one sense at a time – is helpful to a certain extent but applies more to Stephen than to Bloom.[8] A dissociation of the senses

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7 For example, Mitchell Morse and Joseph E. Duncan have argued for the primacy of ear over eye in *Ulysses*; see Mitchell Morse, 'Joyce and the Blind Stripling', *Modern Language Notes*, 71.7 (1956), 497-501, and Joseph E. Duncan, 'The Modality of the Audible in Joyce's *Ulysses*', in *PLMA*, 72.1 (1957), 286-95. Jerome Hamilton Buckley asserts that in *A Portrait*, 'Stephen's sharpest impressions are auditory' and that sound 'is everywhere more intense than sight, and when the penitent youth decides to mortify the senses, the punishment of the ear exceeds that of the eye'; *Season of Youth: The* Bildungsroman *from Dickens to Golding* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 235. Sara Danius, on the other hand, finds that 'visuality prevails in *Ulysses*'; *The Senses of Modernism: Technology, Perception, and Aesthetics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 158. To Maud Ellmann, the eye-versus-ear debate 're-enacts a struggle waged in Joyce's works themselves', where the perspective constantly oscillates between eye and ear; 'Joyce's Noises', *Modernism/modernity*, 16.2 (2009), 383-90 (p. 383).

8 Danius, p. 156.

would associate silence with sight, suggesting that when the eye dominates a scene, no sounds would be heard. Such scenarios are common with Stephen, who generally focuses on just one thing at a time. In 'Proteus', for example, he has to close his eyes in order to be able to focus on sound, suggesting to Maud Ellmann that 'it is only when his eyes are shut that the ear begins to reassert its claims'.[9] While Stephen's engagement with the external world is self-possessed and deliberate, moving from the inside and out, Bloom's is immediate and intuitive, frequently situating him in the context of his surroundings.

If Joyce's characters at times imagine sounds that are not heard in the outer world, they also experience silences that only belong to their own mindscapes; having unconsciously blocked their ears, they do not notice any sounds. Indeed, Joyce's soundscapes often appear silent simply because no one is paying attention to them, a phenomenon that was termed 'unstated silence' in the introduction above. At times, an increased focus on the visual aspects of the setting implies oblivion in relation to sound, and thus sight is especially associated with silence; in the 'Proteus' episode, Stephen becomes aware of the soundscape only as he closes his eyes (U, III, 10). In Joyce's works, then, silence often occurs somewhere between outer-world and inner-world sounds, and somewhere between eye and ear.

Joyce's soundscapes certainly make for complicated listening.[10] It is often difficult, to say the least, to understand who is hearing what and from where sounds emanate, and especially so with *Ulysses*, in which the narrative constantly moves in and outside the heads of different characters. Moreover, the complicated narrative structure of Joyce's second novel makes it hard to know to what degree individual sounds actually belong to the outside world and to what degree they are imagined or perceived in the minds of the characters.

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9 Ellmann, 'Joyce's Noises', p. 384.

10 On Joyce and sound, see Danius, especially pp. 156-158, 180-183; Maud Ellmann, 'Joyce's Noises'; Josh Epstein, 'Joyce's Phoneygraphs: Music, Mediation, and Noise Unleashed', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 48.2 (2011), 265-89; Vike Martina Plock, 'Good Vibrations: "Sirens", Soundscapes, and Physiology', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 46.3-4 (2009), 481-96; and Angela Frattarola, 'Developing an Ear for the Modernist Novel: Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, and James Joyce', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 33.1 (2009), 132-53 (pp. 144-7).

These two kinds of sound – which I will refer to as outer-world sound and inner-world sound – lend themselves to further divisions. Whereas the outer-world sounds make up what may be described as the texts' soundscapes, the inner-world sounds tell us more about the mental geography of the characters: their mindscapes. Outer-world sounds are generally represented in the text by a narrator. Consequently, the sounds from Bloom's cat in the beginning of the 'Calypso' episode ('Mkgnao!'; 'Mrkgnao!'; 'Gurrhr!') clearly belong to the outer world, as the narrator indicates that they come from the cat itself: 'the cat cried' (*U*, IV, 16, 25, 38).[11] Outer-world sounds affect the text's characters in three different ways. First, there are sounds that the characters hear and react to. For example, the fact that Bloom's cat catches his attention with its meow is indicated by his answer: 'O, there you are' (*U*, IV, 17). Second, the narrator at times describes sounds and it is unclear whether or not they are heard by characters. For example, in the 'Proteus' episode, Stephen is described as walking on 'a damp crackling mast, razorshells, squeaking pebbles' (*U*, III, 147-8). The fact that Stephen is referred to through references to '*his* feet' and '[*h*]*is* boots' signals that this information comes from the narrator (*U*, III, 147, my emphasis). However, the end of the sentence, with its reference to *King Lear* – 'that on the unnumbered pebbles beats, wood sieved by the shipworm, lost Armada' – does seem to come from Stephen (*U*, III, 148-9). Third, there are sounds that (some) characters cannot hear. For example, in the 'Sirens' episode, many of the sounds in the bar cannot be heard by Bloom, who is sitting in the adjoining restaurant.

Inner-world sounds generally belong to characters' thought-processes, although there are instances when it is hard to tell if a sound is inside or outside. Inner-world sounds, too, can be divided into three categories.

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11 Fritz Senn suggests, however, that the 'feline phonetics' allows the reader 'to deduce that Bloom is a good listener, attentive to subtle changes', thus supposing that the sound is heard by Bloom or through Bloom's consciousness; *Joyce's Dislocutions: Essays on Reading as Translation*, ed. by John Paul Riquelme (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), p. 126. Bloom also imagines the cat's sounds in his head: 'Just how she stalks over my writingtable. Prr. Scratch my head. Prr' (*U*, IV, 19). On the representation of sound and onomatopoeia in *Ulysses*, see Derek Attridge, 'Joyce's Noises', *Oral Tradition*, 24.2 (2009), 471-84.

First, there are representations of subjective perception. These sounds seemingly belong to the outer world but are rendered in a somewhat distorted manner, so as to represent the idiosyncrasies of the characters' perceptions. For example, as Bloom is passing the Saint Joseph's National School in the 'Calypso' episode, he hears voices coming from a 'joggerfry' lesson: 'Inishturk. Inishark. Inishboffin' (*U*, IV, 138-9).[12] Second, there are many instances when characters mimic or represent sounds they have just heard in the outer world. The many onomatopoeic representations of sounds in the text are examples of this. They are not always inner-world sounds, as the example with Bloom's cat above shows, but frequently such sound-representations echo what has been heard, thus constituting a processing of the initial perception. When, for instance, Stephen looks at the sea in the 'Proteus' episode and listens to the 'fourworded wavespeech' stemming from his urination, the 'seesoo, hrss, rsseeiss ooos' and the 'flop, slop, slap' are his own representations of what he has perceived, and should therefore be understood as occurring in his mind rather than in the actual world, although relating to what he has just heard (*U*, III, 456-8). Third, a category discussed at length below, there are inner-world sounds that occur in the mind only and that do not relate to anything heard in the outer world. Such imagined sounds can still be realistic and fill the mindscape when the outer world appears to be silent. Imagined sounds can also be nonsensical, associative, or made up, as in a daydream. For example, Stephen imagines hearing 'the ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry' in the 'Nestor' episode, in which he teaches the history of Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, and comes to think of William Blake's 'A Vision of the Last Judgment' (1810) (*U*, II, 9).

In 'Proteus', Stephen tries to settle whether or not there is any permanent matter beyond the information mediated by his senses and consequently withdraws into his self to such a degree that he begins to question the existence of the outside world. He struggles to differentiate between his own subjective experiences and sense-mediated reality. Like Mr Ramsay in *To*

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12 *Ulysses* is also filled with instances where characters misperceive speech-sounds. The best-known example of this is probably Bantom Lyons's mishearing in the 'Lotus-Eaters' episode, where he mistakes Bloom's offer of the newspaper he wants to discard for a racehorse-tip (*U*, V, 534-41).

the Lighthouse, he is in his own way contemplating '[s]ubject and object and the nature of reality', trying to prove the presence of the 'kitchen table' when he is not there (*TL*, p. 22). Stephen's experience of reality is intellectual rather than corporeal to the extent that he questions the veracity of his own sensory impressions, struggling to move his mind beyond his sight and hearing towards a more reliable truth. Danius suggests that Stephen's reflections on sight and hearing in 'Proteus' serve as an 'introduction' to the 'theory of the senses for which *Ulysses* itself serves as an index and instrument'.[13] Such a reading is problematic, however, as Stephen is reluctant to engage with the world through his senses and, moreover, in this aspect stands in sharp contrast to Bloom. The 'Telemachia' rather reads as Joyce's goodbye to Stephen Dedalus, calling to mind the author's response to Pound's suggestion that Stephen should be foregrounded in later episodes of the novel, to which Joyce answered: 'Stephen no longer interests me to the same extent. He has a shape that can't be changed'.[14]

Interestingly, when writing his own version of 'Proteus', Joyce appears to have taken the theme of changeability as his starting-point; in the *Odyssey*, Proteus can assume the shape of any one creature on earth, as well as those of water and fire. The Gilbert schema lists 'Primal Matter' as corresponding to Proteus, and Stephen returns throughout the episode to the mutability of matter: 'God becomes man becomes fish becomes barnacle goose becomes featherbed mountain. Dead breaths I living breathe, tread dead dust' (*U*, III, 477-9). This train of thought is possibly prompted by the recent death of Stephen's mother, who hovers on the outskirts of his thoughts throughout the 'Telemachia'.

In the *Odyssey*, Menelaus relates to Telemachus, the son of Odysseus, how he made Proteus reveal secrets to him by learning how to hold the god still. Joyce's 'Proteus' opens with Stephen's attempt to question the '[i]neluctable modality of the visible' and the 'audible' (*U*, III, 1, 13). Stephen does not share Menelaus's luck with holding Proteus still, however, for in attempting to 'hold' on to one modality, he finds himself in the clutches of the other.

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13 Danius, p. 171.
14 Budgen, p. 107.

Ineluctable modality of the visible: at least that if no more, thought through my eyes. Signatures of all things I am here to read, seaspawn and seawrack, the nearing tide, that rusty boot. Snotgreen, bluesilver, rust: coloured signs. Limits of the diaphane. But he adds: in bodies. Then he was aware of them bodies before of them coloured. How? By knocking his sconce against them, sure. Go easy. Bald he was and a millionaire, *maestro di color che sanno*. Limit of the diaphane in. Why in? Diaphane, adiaphane. If you can put your five fingers through it it is a gate, if not a door. Shut your eyes and see.

Stephen closed his eyes to hear his boots crush crackling wrack and shells. You are walking through it howsomever. I am, a stride at a time. A very short space of time through very short times of space. Five, six: the *Nacheinander*. Exactly: and that is the ineluctable modality of the audible. (*U*, III, 1-13)

The passage describes Stephen's attempts to determine whether or not the external world remains even when not seen: 'Open your eyes now. [...] Has all vanished since?' (*U*, III, 25).[15] The answer to this question is of course 'no', and Stephen subsequently concludes – albeit tentatively – that the world is '[t]here all the time without you: and ever shall be' (*U*, III, 27). To James Cappio, Stephen in 'Proteus' is presented as a 'solipsist trying to come to terms with the objective world'.[16] Possibly, part of Stephen's difficulty in accepting the objective nature of reality lies in his reluctance to accept the external world's precedence over him, as he sees himself as central to its existence. In the end, he cannot escape from either his sight or his hearing and, as Cappio suggests, he appears finally to accept the 'objectivity of the world' and his own place within it as 'a part, not the whole'.[17] However much matter changes shape, it is always there, 'ineluctably'.

Stephen might have to accept that he cannot escape the external world's mediation through his senses, but he still appears to approach the world as an intellectual exercise and explores reality as though it were a three-di-

15 On Stephen's 'ineluctables', see Danius, pp. 171-4, Maud Ellmann, 'Joyce's Noises', 383-5, Duncan, and James Cappio, 'Aristotle, Berkeley, and Proteus: Joyce's Use of Philosophy', *Philosophy and Literature*, 5.1 (1981), 21-32.

16 Cappio, p. 21.

17 Cappio, pp. 21, 31.

mensional work of art, there for him to 'read' and analyse.[18] The idea of the world as a text appears several times in the 'Proteus' episode; for example, the references to Gotthold Lessing's *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (1766) connect the audible and the visible to time and space, qualities that Lessing links to poetry and painting, respectively.[19] Lessing's conjectures about the 'limits' of painting and poetry run parallel with Stephen's ideas about the limits of the real, thus bringing an aesthetic dimension into the theory.

Lessing argues that the difference between visual and verbal art has to do with stasis and movement. While visual art captures the instantaneous, verbal art, on the other hand, can capture a sequence of events in a way that a painting could not. Stasis and movement are also contrasted through the terms '*Nebeneinander*' and '*Nacheinander*', which Stephen uses, terms that he has apparently taken from Lessing. '*Nebeneinander*' means 'next to one another, adjacent', and defines painting for Lessing; Stephen links this concept to the visible. '*Nacheinander*' means 'one after another, successively', and is used by Lessing to describe poetry, where events, or at least images, follow one another. For Stephen, this concept is connected to the audible. On the basis of this distinction, he then connects the audible and the visible to time and space, respectively. In space, things are next to one another, while in time they follow each other. In order for sound to be perceived by the human ear, time is necessary, as sound requires temporality in order to be able to extend properly. In the passage quoted above, Stephen uses his own walking to illustrate this point: 'You are walking through it [...]. A very short space of time through very short times of space. Five, six: the *Nacheinander*'. Closing his eyes, Stephen becomes much more aware of the sounds around him. The noise his feet make

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18 The young Stephen of *A Portrait*, however, finds he has earflaps to shut out sound with: 'It was like a train going in and out of tunnels and that was like the noise of the boys eating in the refectory when you opened and closed the flaps of the ears. Term, vacation; tunnel, out; noise, stop' (*PA*, p. 13). While perhaps not as easily operated as a set of eyelids, they do seem just as effective.

19 Fritz Senn was the first to pick up on this reference; see 'Esthetic Theories', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 2.2 (1965), 134-6. There are direct references to Lessing in chapter five of *A Portrait* as well (see *PA*, p. 177).

('Crush, crack, crick, crick') emphasizes how his perceptions have shifted to the audible rather than the visible (*U*, III, 19). In darkness, listening becomes his method of interpreting the world.

If Stephen has to shut his eyes in order to even notice the sounds surrounding him, what part does sound actually play in his apprehension of reality?[20] Since Stephen can blink the visible away with his eyelids, but not escape the audible as easily, Maud Ellmann questions whether sound should not be understood as being more 'ineluctable' than vision.[21] It seems, however, that Stephen often neglects to pay attention to the sounds around him. When the eye is scanning the world, the ear turns the other way, neglecting to cooperate in the analysis of a three-dimensional world. Indeed, the dog's bark, one of the few sounds mentioned in 'Proteus', is given a visual form, as though Stephen is unable to separate what he hears from what he sees, instead fusing the two together to one entity: 'The dog's bark ran towards him' (*U*, III, 310). As he stops to urinate, he has to remind himself to listen to the sound: 'Listen' (*U*, III, 456). Danius argues that in *Ulysses*, each sense 'appears to operate independently and for its own sake', and that 'particularly the eye [...] tends to perform according to its own autonomous rationality, as though detached from any general epistemic tasks'.[22] When looking, Stephen becomes oblivious to sound, suggesting a connection between visuality and silence, as though reality were not a three-dimensional art-work but merely a two-dimensional painting, with no supplementing sound-score.

In fact, silence does not appear to fit into Stephen's structure of the senses, being neither a visual concept nor, strictly speaking, an aural one. As it represents an absence of sound, there is no '*Nacheinander*' when it comes to silence; there is nothing following anything else. Nor does silence seem to be a '*Nebeneinander*', as it is not something visible. At times, it seems as though silence should be understood as a form of suspended reality. It would then be a form of stasis, marking an experience for a character where nothing can occur or move forward, compatible with the no-

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20 Danius bases her argument for the dominance of the visual over the aural in *Ulysses* on precisely this point (p. 172).

21 Ellmann, 'Joyce's Noises', p. 383.

22 Danius, p. 151.

tion that there is no time or space, no '*Nacheinander*' or '*Nebeneinander*' at all.[23] The silent moments of stasis are instead presented as a form of liberation of mind from body, as though time and space were two of those nets Stephen is trying to 'fly by' (*PA*, p. 171). In the 'Oxen of the Sun' episode, for example, silence is described as a state beyond a spatio-temporal world: 'The voices blend and fuse in clouded silence: silence that is the infinite of space: and swiftly, silently the soul is wafted over regions of cycles of generations that have lived' (*U*, XIV, 1078-80). Through silence, the soul appears to experience a release from the restrictions of the physical world, moving freely through time and through an 'infinite of space'. Leopold is '[n]o longer': he 'is young Leopold' (*U*, XIV, 1041, 1043-4).[24] This liberating aspect of silence will be discussed further below.

Ulysses is primarily a novel of the senses – or, as Joyce described it in conversation with Frank Budgen, an 'epic of the human body' – and in writing it, Joyce seems to have abandoned his earlier fascination with the inner world, instead becoming increasingly focused on the bodily.[25] This turn in Joyce's writing has a parallel in his loss of interest in Stephen, dis-

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23 In his discussion of 'the political and historical importance of "suspended" silences' in relation to *Dubliners*, Nels Pearson argues that these silences are 'not ends in themselves, but devices that Joyce employs, in tandem with a theme of death and occluded voices, to expose the various limitations and biases that are inherent in the scrupulously controlled (and often imperially and patriarchally encoded) forms, perspectives, and languages in which his stories are being told'. To Pearson, Joyce's silences in *Dubliners* are political, and largely correspond to who is given voice and who is silenced. It is difficult to see that Joyce is concerned with giving voice to silenced women in his texts, however; rather, he often seems to be silencing them himself. See 'Death Sentences: Silence, Colonial Memory, and the Voice of the Dead in *Dubliners*', in *Beckett, Joyce, and the Art of the Negative*, ed. by Colleen Jaurretche (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), pp. 141-70 (p. 144).

24 While the passage from 'Oxen of the Sun' construes silence as liberating – as Bloom connects to a younger version of himself – there is also a streak of grief in it, as he remembers his deceased father and son: 'That youthful illusion of thy strength was taken from thee – and in vain. No son of thy loins is by thee. There is none now to be for Leopold, what Leopold was for Rudolph' (*U*, XIV, 1075-7).

25 Joyce also added: 'If they had no body they would have no mind [...] It's all one'; Budgen, p. 21. On the bodily in *Ulysses*, see Maud Ellmann, '*Ulysses*: The Epic of the Human Body', in *A Companion to James Joyce*, ed. by Richard Brown (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), pp. 54-70, and Plock, 'Bodies', in *The Cambridge Companion to* Ulysses, ed. by Sean Latham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 184-99.

cussed above. Throughout *Ulysses*, it is primarily Bloom who is linked to the bodily, while Stephen remains associated with the mind. Both in the Gilbert and in the Linati schemata – which link individual episodes of *Ulysses* with different body-parts – the 'organ' category for the three episodes of the 'Telemachia' are left blank, suggesting that Stephen should not be associated with the body to the same extent as Bloom. The Linati schema even states, in the column for 'Organ', that 'Telemachus does not yet suffer the body'.[26] Moreover, both the Gilbert and the Linati schemata designate the 'Scylla and Charybdis' episode, where Stephen visits the library and discusses his theory about Shakespeare, as the 'brain' episode. The schemata thus reinforce a reading where Stephen is, as he himself claims in *A Portrait*, 'in a mental world'; he is largely unconcerned with the physicality of his own body, unless he philosophizes over it, as in 'Proteus' (*PA*, p. 173).

If Stephen lives in his mind, often appearing unaware of his surroundings, Bloom's corporeality is instead foregrounded through emphasis on sense perception in the episodes that centre on him. Gilbert and Linati both designate 'Sirens' as the 'ear' episode, for example, and 'Nausicaa' as the 'eye and nose' episode. Certainly, Bloom lives more immediately in the present and his associative chains of thought can generally be traced from his recent or ongoing sense perceptions. Often his visual perceptions lead his thoughts astray, as when he pauses in front of the window of the Belfast and Oriental Tea Company, reading 'the legends of leadpapered packets' that he associates with the 'far east' (*U*, V, 18, 29).

Conversely, sound tends to interrupt Bloom's reveries, rousing his attention with a sense of immediacy that the visual lacks. As he is pretending to tie his shoes in order to be able to glance up a girl's skirt, a 'heavy tramcar honking its gong' disturbs the moment ('Lost it. Curse your noisy pugnose'), and his reveries as Dignam's coffin is being lowered in to the ground are arrested by a 'Rtststr!' and a 'rattle of pebbles' (*U*, V, 131, 132; VI, 970). In the same scene, Bloom muses on the strength of memory through sound as compared to memories through visual artefacts, such as photographs:

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26 See *Ulysses*, ed. by Jeri Johnson, Oxford World's Classic (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 736.

> Besides how could you remember everybody? Eyes, walk, voice. Well, the voice, yes: gramophone. Have a gramophone in every grave or keep it in the house. After dinner on a Sunday. Put on old poor greatgrandfather. Kraahraark! Hellohellohello amawfullyglad kraark awfullygladaseeagain hellohello amawf krpthsth. Remind you of the voice like the photograph reminds you of the face. (*U*, VI, 962-7)[27]

Although it is noteworthy that the recorded voice that Bloom imagines would be saying 'awfullygladseeagain', thus emphasizing sight rather than hearing, this passage also demonstrates Bloom's tendency to fill silences with sound – and especially silences that are uncomfortable to him, such as the idea of the ultimate silence: death. I return to this tendency below.

While Bloom imagines that the dead should also be remembered through sound, Stephen's thoughts of his recently deceased mother are unrelated to sound. He is haunted by the silent image of his mother, who in one of his dreams 'bent over him with mute secret words' (*U*, I, 272). Like the dead priest in 'The Sisters', Stephen's mother seems to wish to communicate something to her living son, but fails to articulate the words. Unlike Bloom, who imagines the sound of the dead 'greatgrandfather', Stephen cannot or will not hear what his mother is saying; here, as in 'The Sisters', the silence of the dead points to inner experiences that move beyond linguistic representation. His mother's silence emphasizes the horror of her death and Stephen's guilt over their last meeting, during which he apparently refused to 'kneel down and pray for her' (*U*, I, 93-4). In her silence, Stephen hears echoes of his guilt, the 'Agenbite of inwit' to which he keeps returning (*U*, I, 481, *et passim*). The contrast between Stephen's silent, anxious grief for his mother and Bloom's wish to eradicate all uncomfortable silence with sound brings out an essential difference between the two characters. While Stephen lives mainly in his mind, which is characterized and frequently represented by silence, Bloom's focus is persistent-

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27 On Joyce and the phonograph, see Danius, pp. 180-183, and Frattarola, 'The Phonograph and the Modernist Novel', *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, 43.1 (2010), 143-159. Frattarola notes that the same 'crackles' that Joyce put in Bloom's voice-memory recordings can be '[e]erily' heard today in recordings of Joyce's own voice (p. 155).

ly on the external world, and he becomes uncomfortable by the very idea of not hearing, not seeing. Below I discuss silence in relation to these two characters further, beginning with a brief venture into the dark spaces of Stephen's inner world.

'Just Now in a Mental World': Silence and the Inward Turn

There is a strong link between silence and inner worlds in Joyce's texts, and, as mentioned above, the absence of outer-world sounds often signals that a character has moved inwards and has in doing so shut off receiving sense stimuli through the ears. The connection between silence and inner worlds is especially prevalent in Joyce's early works: *Dubliners* and *A Portrait*. In these works, silence represents experiences that differ vastly from those mediated by the senses. In *Dubliners*, a description of a sound-setting as 'silent' implies an inner course of events, often indicating an unsettling experience. Moreover, the much-discussed concept of 'paralysis' in the opening story ('The Sisters') is linked to silence, and in several of the stories, a silent sound-setting indicates an inability to move forward or break free from restraint.[28] In 'The Sisters', 'A Painful Case', and 'The Dead', life and death are contrasted through the use of sound and silence, suggesting that noise and its absence are representations of the respective protagonists' states of mind. In all three stories, death and silence are juxtaposed. By

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28 The short-story collection's concern with paralysis is established in the first paragraph of the first story, 'The Sisters', where the young boy stands outside the house where the priest lies dying, saying softly to himself 'the word *paralysis*'; Joyce himself stressed the importance of the concept on several occasions, for example in an often-quoted letter to Constantine Curran in 1904, where he describes his stories as 'betray[ing] the soul of that hemiplegia or paralysis which many consider a city' (*D*, p. 3; *Letters of James Joyce*, I, 55). See, for example, Jean-Michel Rabaté, 'Silence in *Dubliners*', in *James Joyce: New Perspectives*, ed. by Colin MacCabe (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1982), pp. 45-72; Joseph Chadwick, 'Silence in "The Sisters"', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 21.3 (1984), 245-55; Florence L. Walzl, 'Joyce's "The Sisters": A Development', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 10.4 (1973), 375-421; Gerald Doherty, 'The Art of Confessing: Silence and Secrecy in James Joyce "The Sisters"', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 35/36.4/1 (1998), 657-64; and A. James Wohlpart, 'Laughing in the Confession-Box: Vows of Silence in Joyce's "The Sisters"', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 30.3 (1993), 409-17.

contrast, silence in *A Portrait* is presented as a desirable state, a silence to which I return below.

In *Dubliners*, silence is at times confused with intimacy. To wish to share a silence with someone – as Gabriel does in 'The Dead', for example – exposes this confusion. To be refused intimacy in such instances reveals that silence instead signifies isolation and alienation. Silence in these texts stands in contrast to sound – and to music in particular – which instead generates feelings of communion between two or more characters. In both 'The Dead' and 'A Painful Case' there is something threatening about silence, while sound is presented as the bridge between self and world, or at least between the self and the romantic Other.[29] If Gabriel momentarily confuses silence with this bridge, he soon bitterly learns his mistake, for in these stories it is music that functions as a bridge between people, while silence is associated with loneliness and isolation.

'A Painful Case' juxtaposes silence and music in similar ways. Here, music holds a strong emotional power over the characters – so strong that it enables one of Joyce's most restrained characters to soften. The fact that Mr Duffy likes classical music is actually one of the few personal things that the reader learns about him; his sporadic concert-goings are described as 'the only dissipations of his life' (*D*, p. 83). This is where he meets and befriends Mrs Sinico, who immediately becomes associated with music, and consequently with Duffy's private inner life. Throughout the story, this link between music and feeling is emphasized as the ensuing friendship

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29 The two stories have been discussed in conjunction before. Richard Ellmann briefly mentions their similarities, noticing that they share the theme of 'interrelationship of dead and living', but goes on to suggest that 'Ivy Day in the Committee Room' is a 'closer parallel' to 'The Dead'; *James Joyce* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966; repr. 1983), p. 252. Kenner notes that with 'A Painful Case', 'we are entering the regions of "The Dead"'; *Dublin's Joyce* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1955), p. 58. Cóilín Owens suggests that the 'self-criticism' of 'A Painful Case' 'anticipates the major epiphany of "The Dead"'; *James Joyce's Painful Case* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008), p. 3. Thomas Jackson Rice notes that Duffy 'seems remarkably like Gabriel Conroy in his relationships to himself, his wife, and his world'; he suggests that both Duffy and the boy in 'Araby' 'help the reader better understand the distance Gabriel must travel during his evening'. See 'The Geometry of Meaning', *Style* 25.3 (1991), 393-404 (p. 398). See also Cynthia D. Wheatley-Lovoy, 'The Rebirth of Tragedy: Nietzsche and Narcissus in "A Painful Case" and "The Dead"', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 33.2 (1996), 177-93.

between Duffy and Mrs Sinico develops and is upheld through the emotional power of music: 'Many times she allowed the dark to fall upon them, refraining from lighting the lamp. The dark, discreet room, their isolation, the music that still vibrated in their ears united them' (*D*, p. 85). The music – more prominent in the dark, although now only playing in the minds of its audience – underlines the bond between the pair, as well as their undeclared feelings for each other. That Mrs Sinico's presence in Duffy's life has brought him closer to his inner self is also shown through his increasing awareness of his own sounds: 'Sometimes he caught himself listening to the sound of his own voice' (*D*, p. 85).[30] The fact that Duffy is now *listening* instead of watching himself 'with doubtful side-glances', which is how he is presented in the beginning of the story, is significant, as it suggests that he is beginning to examine his position in relation to the world surrounding him (*D*, p. 83).

It seems, however, that neither the sound of his own voice nor that of Mrs Sinico is enough to reach Duffy's innermost depths or to fundamentally alter his stubborn solitude. As Cóilín Owens suggests, Duffy 'imagines himself as a disembodied intellect', a view of himself that is threatened by the 'bodily presence' of Mrs Sinico.[31] When he finds that he has 'attached the fervent nature' of Mrs Sinico too closely to himself, his immediate reaction is to estrange himself, not only from her but also from himself: 'he heard the strange impersonal voice which he recognized as his own, insisting on the soul's incurable loneliness. We cannot give ourselves, it said: we are our own' (*D*, p. 85). As a result, he ends their friendship, a break that is significantly represented by an ensuing silence. After their final conversation, an ominous lack of sound takes hold over Duffy's life, as the couple is described as walking 'in silence towards the tram' (*D*, p. 85). This silence, as well as that which ensues, stands in sharp contrast against the intimacy of the couple's communion through music.

The deepest silence arrives with the news of Mrs Sinico's death. As Duffy

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30 In a discussion of the story's narration, John Paul Riquelme finds that Duffy's 'inner voice' possibly becomes audible during his conversations with Mrs Sinico; *Teller and Tale in Joyce's Fiction: Oscillating Perspectives* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), pp. 116-17.

31 Owens, p. 83.

is absorbing the shock, a moment comes when he seems to hear her voice, the sound of which is now mentioned for the first time in the story. Again, the suggestion of sound is linked to darkness and intimacy: 'She seemed to be near him in the darkness. At moments, he seemed to feel her voice touch his ear, her hand touch his. He stood still to listen' (*D*, p. 89).[32] The word 'seemed' is essential here – for only moments later a deeper silence permeates Duffy, as he realizes that her death confirms his 'soul's incurable loneliness'. Unlike the silence that has surrounded him since he parted from Mrs Sinico, this new, abysmal absence of sound has no connection to the outside world but emanates from inside – from that most guarded part of himself earlier associated with music and emotion, and with Mrs Sinico.[33] The beautiful sounds that once represented their intimacy are suddenly replaced by the 'laborious drone of the engine' of a passing goods train, 'reiterating the syllables of her name', a harrowing external noise that stands in sharp contrast with the numbness and silence inside him:

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32 Owens reads this scene in light of Frederic H. W. Myers's *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death* (1903), a treatise on paranormal phenomena, which Joyce borrowed from the library the day after his mother's death. Owens suggests that the 'particular sensory terms' in which Mrs Sinico 'manifests her presence' in 'A Painful Case' are closely linked to the intimacy she has previously shared with Duffy, 'as musical collaborators'; Duffy's 'visitation by the spirit of the departed Mrs. Sinico' would, Owens argues, have convinced him that he was wrong in 'insisting on the soul's incurable loneliness' (pp. 31-8; *D*, p. 85).

33 To Riquelme, the long passages representing Duffy's 'interior voice' at the end of the story 'present his growing realization that he has lost the voice he might have had', a realization that 'silences even the voice he does possess'; *Teller and Tale*, p. 118. The silence at the end of the story 'fuses inner and other' and 'replaces speech', which to Riquelme suggests an 'interior silencing' (p. 119). I agree with Riquelme's reading of the story but would like to place greater emphasis on Duffy's relationship with Mrs Sinico rather than on his relationship with himself; reading the story through the contrast between music and silence presents togetherness vs loneliness as a central theme.

He turned back the way he had come, the rhythm of the engine pounding in his ears. He began to doubt the reality of what memory told him. He halted under a tree and allowed the rhythm to die away. He could not feel her near him in the darkness nor her voice touch his ear. He waited for some minutes listening. He could hear nothing: the night was perfectly silent. He listened again: perfectly silent. He felt that he was alone. (*D*, p. 90)

The 'perfect' silence not only underlines but also represents Duffy's great loss: the absence it signifies suggests that Mrs Sinico's death is his end, too. If sound at the beginning of 'A Painful Case' was a path to Duffy's inner self – a way to open up to the world and to experience life more fully – silence does not only close him up again at the end of the story, but empties him completely. Even though he listens intently for any sound, there is nothing there to hear.

In 'The Dead', silence at first seems to indicate intimacy, as mentioned above: a space where Gabriel feels he can hide during the noise and commotion of the Misses Morkan's party and, later, also an intimate space for him and his wife to share. In this story, too, music plays a prominent part, as the defining quality of a party hosted by 'the Three Graces of the Dublin musical world' (*D*, p. 161).[34] Piano-recitals, dancing, singing, and discussions of opera shape this noisy event, during which the only silence can be found the second before Gabriel delivers his speech to his aunts and cousin. Even then, the silence is rapidly dissolved by a 'patting' of the table, meant to encourage the speaker (*D*, p. 159).

Gabriel, however, does not participate in the merry-making to any large extent, a fact that is emphasized throughout the story by his reticence and unwillingness to engage in the musical activities, if only by listening. Repeatedly, we are told that he has trouble focusing on the sounds at hand: 'He waited outside the drawing-room door until the waltz should finish, listening to the skirts that swept against it and to the shuffling of feet'; 'Gabriel could not listen while Mary Jane was playing her Academy piece'; 'Gabriel hardly heard what [Mrs Malins] said' (*D*, pp. 140, 146, 151). More-

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34 On music in 'The Dead', see Bruce Avery, 'Distant Music: Sound and the Dialogics of Satire in "The Dead"', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 28.2 (1991), 473-83.

over – as some critics have noted – all of Gabriel's significant meetings this night are failures and leave him diffident.[35] If unable to focus entirely on what is happening before him at the Misses Morkan's dance, Gabriel turns his attention to the outside, longing to be by himself in the fresh air and in the snow, thinking how 'much more pleasant it would be there than at the supper-table!' (*D*, p. 151). Snow is thus associated with a conscious wish for isolation and silence on Gabriel's part at this point in the story.[36] To exchange his halting attempts at conversation for the soothing silence outside, to 'walk out alone' where 'the air was pure', towards 'the park where the trees were weighted with snow', seems to Gabriel as if it would release him from a pressing social gathering (*D*, pp. 151, 159).

In 'The Dead', as elsewhere in Joyce's fiction, there is a connection between silence and the visual. At several points, the story presents what could be called 'tableaux', that is, '"picture[s]" formed by living persons caught in static attitudes'.[37] The most notable of these appears in the scene where Gabriel watches a woman listening to music on the stairs, not realizing at first that it is his own wife he is looking at. Gretta listens attentively to the music that Gabriel cannot hear, even though he '[strains] his ear

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35 R. B. Kerschner makes one of the most interesting contributions to this discussion when he points out that Gabriel's failed attempts at communication are all with women: with Lily the caretaker's daughter, with Molly Ivors, and, finally, with his own wife; *Joyce, Bakhtin, and Popular Literature: Chronicles of Disorder* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), pp. 143-4.

36 To Vicki Mahaffey, the snow is representative of the doubleness that she sees in 'The Dead'; it both represents 'exposure and isolation', burying 'thought and feeling', while simultaneously acting as 'a principle of connection as well', 'linking the strange and the familiar, the living and the dead'; '*Dubliners*: Surprised by Chance', in *A Companion to James Joyce*, ed. by Richard Brown (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), pp. 19-33 (p. 29). To Kenner, the snow stands 'for something like Ibsen's envacuumed Norway' and constitutes Gabriel's 'element': 'an invigorating medium' against which his 'animal warmth is asserted'; *Dublin's Joyce*, pp. 67, 68. He similarly argues that the snow ultimately 'corresponds to the quality of Gabriel's isolation' (p. 67). Walzl argues that the 'snow symbol unites all the other images' in a complex pattern; she connects the snow to Michael, who, she maintains, 'brings an experience of death' to Gabriel at the end of the story. See 'Gabriel and Michael: The Conclusion of "The Dead"', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 4 (1966), 17-31, pp. 24, 28.

37 Chris Baldick, 'tableau', in *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 4 ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 355.

to listen also' (*D*, p. 165). Instead, he imagines painting 'her in that attitude', thinking that he would name the picture 'Distant Music' (*D,* p. 165).[38] Gabriel clearly objectifies his wife in this scene, asking himself what 'a woman standing on the stairs in the shadow, listening to distant music', is 'a symbol of', as though Gretta were any woman and as though any woman could produce the same effect on him (*D*, p. 165).[39] The emotion the 'picture' arouses in Gabriel moreover suggests the impersonal nature of the couple's relationship: it is the 'picture' of his wife that fills Gabriel with tenderness, an aesthetic reaction that relates strongly to Stephen's theory of art and the effect of beauty on the beholder, which will be discussed further in the next chapter.[40] It is enough to note here that the effect of Gretta on Gabriel is that of an aesthetic object and not one of actual intimacy between two human subjects.

The tableau marks an important moment in the text and has been interpreted as its central epiphanic moment.[41] There is no sense of illumination in this scene, however; if anything, Gabriel's aesthetic appreciation reflects his illusions. In fact, it is noteworthy that this tableau is marked by stillness and silence for Gabriel, who cannot initially hear the music. He

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38 Gabriel's references to painting in this scene has elicited considerable critical commentary. Tomás Monterrey, for example, discusses this scene and others in 'The Dead' in terms of 'ekphrasis', 'a literary description of a work of art', finding that 'framed images both enhance and supplement instants of great emotional intensity in the story'; see 'Framed Images as Counterpoints in James Joyce's 'The Dead', *Atlantis*, 33.2 (2011), 61-74 (pp. 62, 73).

39 To Margot Norris, Gabriel's objectification of Gretta in this scene is obstructed by the narrative itself, which reveals that 'when a woman is transformed into a symbol by man, woman becomes a symbol of her social decontextualization, her silencing, the occlusion of her suffering, the suppression of her feeling'. Norris reads 'The Dead' as an inverted version of *A Doll's House* (1879), where the wife's 'revolt' can be found in her 'revisiting' Galway and her romantic relationship with Michael Furey as a 'revenge for a denied trip' to the city earlier in the evening; *Joyce's Web: The Social Unraveling of Modernism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), pp. 100, 99.

40 Monterrey, too, notes how this scene reveals 'the problems of [Gabriel's] married life', suggesting moreover that this 'ekphrasis', together with others that he finds in 'The Dead', 'render in symbolic visual language Gabriel's psychological landscape' (p. 73).

41 Epifanio San Juan, Jr. reads the famous scene at the end of the story as a 'continuation' of the 'self-disillusionment' that begins in this scene; *James Joyce and the Craft of Fiction: An Interpretation of* Dubliners (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1972), p. 227.

confuses silence with intimacy and is so busy interpreting the symbolic meaning of his wife's pose that he effectively silences her, neglecting to take into account what the moment might mean to her. For Gretta, on the other hand, the moment is filled by the strong emotion that the memory of Michael Furey brings; again, it is music that suggests intimacy, as it forcefully reminds her of the love that she lost and the lover who died for her. Unknowingly, Gabriel is alone in the silence that he mistakes for something it clearly is not; and it is this mistake that causes his epiphany in the short story's final scene.

As they are leaving the party, Gabriel notices that his wife, too, is quiet, which he mistakenly interprets as a sign of their shared intimacy. In fact, the silence that he himself has been seeking in the snow outside all evening is revealed in the story's final scene not to be a white liberation but rather a frozen confirmation of his isolation. While Gabriel's response to Gretta's story about Michael Furey – the young man she 'used to go out walking with' and who subsequently 'died for [her]' – might be described as insensitive and an overreaction, it is also a reaction to what he himself has misunderstood: a realization that the silence he has actively sought was actually inescapable and something completely different from what he thought (*D*, pp. 173, 174).[42] Florence Walzl notes that if the 'ghost' of Michael Furey 'seems alive' in this scene, Gabriel on the other hand seems dead; the story thus places 'life-in-death' in opposition to 'death-in-life'.[43] Like Duffy in 'A Painful Case', Gabriel is forced to live with his 'soul's incurable loneliness'.

Indeed, both Gabriel and Duffy are left paralysed in silence at the end of the two stories, separated and secluded from the sound of life and the living. The snow that begins to fall again, as Gabriel is approaching 'that

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42 Richard Brown has argued that Gabriel's epiphany in this scene is linked to a realization about his marriage and that 'Gretta's emotional life […] does not conform to the pattern that he might have expected'; see *James Joyce and Sexuality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 17. I agree with Brown that it is Gabriel's disillusionment about his marriage that causes the epiphany but would argue that its effect stretches much further, making clear to Gabriel his alienated and lonely position in life; at this moment, he has not only lost Gretta but the very idea of human companionship.

43 Walzl, 'Gabriel and Michael', p. 26.

region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead', confirms not only his own isolation and paralytic silence, but that of his entire country: 'Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland' (*D*, p. 176). Interestingly, Gabriel is described as *hearing* 'the snow falling faintly through the universe', clearly linking its descent 'upon all the living and the dead' to his experience of isolation. It is in his silent inner world – in his 'swooned' soul – that this imagined sound echoes.

Contrary to the case in *Dubliners*, silence in *A Portrait* is presented as something valuable, associated with Stephen's artistic pursuits. In Joyce's first novel, a stated silence often indicates that Stephen is experiencing something significant; silent moments are linked to his epiphanies on a number of occasions. This is certainly the case in the novel's most famous epiphany – the one on Dollymount beach at the end of chapter four, discussed further below – but also at earlier instances, such as the scene in which the young Stephen makes up his mind to complain to Clongowes's rector after having been unjustly punished and 'pandied' for breaking his glasses. As Stephen is approaching the rector's office, still unsure whether to actually go there or not, he turns inwards and closes off his surroundings. In doing so, he apparently reaches an important insight:

> He passed along the narrow dark corridor, passing little doors that were doors of the rooms of the community. He peered in front of him and right and left through the gloom and thought that those must be portraits. It was dark and silent and his eyes were weak and tired with tears so that he could not see. But he thought they were the portraits of the saints and great men of the order who were looking down on him silently as he passed. (*PA*, p. 46)

Unable to see or hear, Stephen *thinks* that he can see portraits hanging on the wall, and the passage continues with his fairly detailed description of them. As he cannot actually see the portraits, however, what he describes must come from within himself, suggesting what is happening inside him at this crucial moment. Exactly what these strong, proud men of the Jesuit order represent to Stephen in this scene remains unclear. Perhaps he feels that they are beckoning him to fight for what he feels is right. Or perhaps

their silent glances, 'looking down on him', are felt to be condescending, leading Stephen to question the church representatives' authority, as he has just been treated unfairly. Either way, as he comes out of the 'dark and silent' corridor, something happens to make up his mind, and he heads straight for the rector's office.

In the later chapters of *A Portrait*, sound threatens to disturb the budding artist's sphere of thought, and it needs to be disposed of in order for Stephen's mind to function properly:

> He shook the sound out of his ears by an angry toss of his head and hurried on, stumbling through the mouldering offal, his heart already bitten by an ache of loathing and bitterness. His father's whistle, his mother's mutterings, the screech of an unseen maniac were to him now so many voices offending and threatening to humble the pride of his youth. He drove their echoes even out of his heart with an execration. (*PA*, p. 147)

Sound, not silence, threatens Stephen's equilibrium, and it is a disturbance clearly associated with the nearness of his family in their cramped home, their poverty, and their personal problems. The dinginess of Stephen's situation stands in sharp contrast to the loftiness of his thoughts, a contrast that will be discussed at length in the following chapter.

Repeatedly, Stephen refers to his mind in spatial terms, as though it were an actual place to hide in. 'But we are just now in a mental world', Stephen explains to Lynch, who is more interested in his body's animal functions than in philosophical thought, and who also reminds Stephen of 'a hooded reptile' (*PA*, p. 173). This space is variously referred to as a dark cave (*PA*, pp. 114, 149), as 'the smithy of my soul' (*PA*, p. 213), and on one occasion as 'the soft peace of silent spaces of fading tenuous sky above the waters, of oceanic silence, of swallows flying through the seadusk over the flowing waters' (*PA*, p. 190). Silence becomes associated with the visual, as Stephen's quiet, private space is given shape, if only metaphorically.

Stephen spends a large amount of time in the private silence of his inner world, and on numerous occasions the word 'silent' in the text signals that descriptions of settings should be read not merely as soundscapes or landscapes but also as mindscapes: as metaphorical descriptions of Stephen's

interiority, and what is developing there. When escaping into his 'mental world', Stephen appears to shut out his surroundings to such an extent as to be unaware of what happens around him.

An example of such a scene is Stephen's much-discussed walk on the beach at Dollymount at the end of the fourth chapter of *A Portrait*, the setting for the novel's arguably most important epiphany. The contemplative walk on the beach represents Stephen's return to the secular world, as he has just rejected the possibility of a life in the service of the church. Walking along the sea, he ponders a line he has adapted from a work of geology, 'A day of dappled seaborne clouds', finding that 'he drew less pleasure from the reflection of the glowing sensible world through the prism of a language many coloured and richly storied than from the contemplation of an inner world of individual emotions mirrored perfectly in a lucid supple periodic prose' (*PA*, p. 140).[44] Stephen's conclusion signals that he is not, in fact, ready or willing to return to the world; what interests him is his own inner space. The words that speak to him, Stephen concludes, do so because they in some way reflect his 'individual emotions'. Stephen cannot relate to the world, but only to himself.

Turning from words to world, it seems indeed as though the line of poetry has 'coloured' Stephen's world, for only a moment afterwards he finds the 'slowdrifting clouds' to be both dappled and seaborne (*PA*, p. 141). But is it in the outer world that the near-sighted Stephen is contemplating these dappled clouds or is it his inner space that mirrors this particular 'prism' of language? In the passage preceding his contemplation of word and world, Stephen is described as watching 'the seventh city of christendom', visible to him 'across the timeless air', thus suggesting that he is experiencing reality as suspended, and for the moment liberated from time and space (*PA*, p. 141). His mental distance from the outer world is highlighted even further through his description of the setting as 'a scene on some vague arras, old as man's weariness' (*PA*, p. 141). Reality is described as something essentially unreal in that it is not primarily experi-

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44 As Jeri Johnson points out, the line comes from Hugh Miller's last work, *The Testimony of the Rocks; or, Geology and its Bearing on the Two Theologies, Natural and Revealed*, and occurs in a discussion of Satan's ignorance of divine creation. The actual line is 'a day of dappled, breeze-borne clouds'; *PA*, p. 261*n*140.19.

enced through the senses, but literally perceived as a painting: a visual artefact to be interpreted, a case of '*Nebeneinander*'.

Are there no sounds on Dollymount beach? While watching the clouds, Stephen seems to hear nothing, even though there surely would be sounds for him to hear if he were to turn his ear towards them: the calls of the young men bathing in the ocean, the 'voices childish and girlish in the air', the wind, the birds, and the sea itself (*PA*, p. 144). What sounds there are instead come from inside him: a 'confused music within him as of memories and names which he was almost conscious of but could not capture even for an instant' (*PA*, p. 141). This music then 'seemed to recede, to recede, to recede: and from each receding trail of nebulous music there fell always one longdrawn calling note, piercing like a star the dusk of silence' (*PA*, p. 141). As the perspective has moved from sight to sound, the reference-frame also switches; clearly, there are still clouds on the horizon, but they have moved vast distances, as we no longer seem to be by the sea, but are now in space, among stars and nebulas, where '[a] voice from beyond the world was calling' (*PA*, p. 141). This vague allusion to outer space reinforces the notion that we should place Stephen in this scene, not geographically on the beach, but in a form of suspended reality, in his own inner world.

The re-appearance of external sounds in the text signals that we are back amongst the perceptions of everyday life. Stephen is called back into the world of Dollymount beach by the shouts of his classmates. He soon returns into his mind, though, which is again indicated in the text by means of a reference to clouds, now described in the following terms: 'drifting above him silently and silently the seatangle was drifting below him; and the grey warm air was still: and a new wild life was singing in his veins' (*PA*, p. 144). As indicated by the repeated references to silence and stillness, Stephen again experiences reality as suspended; it is in his interior that he finds real life.

In this frame of mind and 'alone' – a word repeated three times in three lines – Stephen apprehends the girl in the water, whom he likens to 'a strange and beautiful seabird' (*PA*, p. 144). The girl is also 'alone and still', and appears changed by 'magic' to Stephen, suggesting that she is a figure of his imagination rather than an actual human being. Watching her, and

then meeting her gaze, Stephen appears to experience an epiphany, just as vaguely expressed as the earlier one from the first chapter. The magical moment is finally broken by a sound: 'The first faint noise of gently moving water broke the silence, low and faint and whispering' (*PA*, p. 144). As he returns to the outer world, there is no further mention of the girl in the water, which again suggests that she belongs to Stephen's inner world. Indeed, Stephen refers to her as a 'wild angel', 'the angel of mortal youth and beauty, an envoy from the fair courts of life' (*PA*, p. 145). Moreover, he describes the girl's 'image' as having 'passed into his soul for ever', without any word breaking 'the holy silence of his ecstasy' (*PA*, p. 145). It is significant that Stephen describes this epiphanic moment of silence as 'holy', signalling the link between this experience and the religion he has just left. The vision of the girl is a message not from the heavens, but from 'the fair courts of life'; what Stephen seems to have grasped in this visionary moment is not only that he must abandon any thought of a life in the service of the church but that there is also a different kind of life for him, strongly linked to the 'mental world' of his interior: 'His soul was swooning into some new world, fantastic, dim, uncertain as under sea, traversed by cloudy shapes and beings' (*PA*, p. 145). The word 'swoon' connects Stephen's epiphany in this scene to the end of 'The Dead', where Gabriel, too, 'swooned slowly' as he listens to the snow falling.[45] In both cases, the word is linked to inner experiences and change.

Silence serves Stephen as a protective shield against the outside world, but it also makes it difficult for him to connect – not only to reality, but to other human beings. Towards the end of 'Proteus', as Stephen is leaving the beach, he turns around and takes in the scene as a picture: 'Moving through the air high spars of a threemaster, her sails brailed up on the crosstrees, homing, upstream, silently moving, a silent ship' (*U*, III, 503-5). It is an image of Stephen himself, moving 'upstream', searching for something. As it turns out, Bloom might not be the only Odysseus in this narrative, lost at sea, looking for a harbour.

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45 The only other time the word 'swoon' appears in *Dubliners* is in 'A Painful Case', where Duffy notices 'what seemed a deliberate swoon of the pupil into the iris' as he looks into Mrs Sinico's eyes (*D*, p. 84).

'Sonorous Silence':
The Imagined Sound[46]

As discussed above, silence is often a subjective experience in Joyce's early works, signalling a movement inwards rather than an absence of sound in the external text-world. In Joyce's later fiction, there are instances where this scenario is inverted and where the soundscape is apparently silent – or where a character cannot hear something for some reason – but where the sound is provided by the characters themselves, if only in their heads. If the world does not make any noise, the inward ear creates sound for the picture itself. Such 'aural eyeness' is signalled by the presence of unlikely or impossible sounds and is part of the move away from realism that characterizes the middle part of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* (*FW*, p. 623). In *Ulysses*, sounds imagined to belong in the external world are generally associated with Bloom, who frequently enhances his perception of the world when what he perceives does not appear complete. His vivid imagination often attributes sound and thought to other characters, as for example in the scene with Gerty in the 'Nausicaa' episode, which Joyce himself claimed took place 'in Bloom's imagination'.[47]

This subsection discusses a chapter of *Ulysses* where Bloom's imagined sounds take centre-stage: 'Sirens', the novel's 'ear'-episode. To read 'Sirens' for its silences is perhaps not an obvious critical approach, as the chapter is obviously concerned with music in so many different ways.[48] While

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46 FW, p. 230.

47 Arthur Power, *Conversations with James Joyce* (London: Milliongton, 1974; repr. Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1999), p. 40.

48 Music is certainly a governing presence in the episode and in a very concrete sense: not only does the action at the Ormond Hotel centre on Simon Dedalus's emotional rendering of *M'Appari* but there are numerous references to popular and classical music throughout the episode; Zack Bowen counts as many as 158 references to forty-seven different works of music in 'Sirens'. See *Musical Allusions in the Works of James Joyce* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1975), p. 27. In conversation with Georges Borach, Joyce claimed to have written the eleventh chapter of *Ulysses* 'with the technical resources of music', asserting that the episode was a 'fugue with all musical notations: *piano, forte, rallentando*, and so on'; see Richard Ellmann, p. 459. This comment, as well as Joyce's subsequent letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver, in which he proposed that 'Sirens' should be read in terms of 'all the eight regular parts of a *fuga per canonem*', have brought forward a score of critical responses on the musical aspects of the ep-

sound and music certainly dominate 'Sirens', there are instances when a strange silence infiltrates the text, however. This silence belongs almost exclusively to Bloom, who is positioned outside the scene of the main action at the Ormond Hotel, where he has come after having followed Boylan. Bloom's association with sight in *Ulysses* is especially obvious in this episode, where his 'eyeness' becomes more emphasized through his role as a spectator. Early in the chapter, the reader is advised to pay attention to the relation between Bloom and sound; after Miss Kennedy plugs 'both two ears with little fingers' and cries 'I won't listen', a small question is inserted: 'But Bloom?' (*U*, p. XI, 132-3). What, indeed, does Bloom hear? Throughout most of the episode, he is seated in the restaurant, a room adjacent to the bar, watching what happens in the other room ('See, not be seen'), but without *hearing* (*U*, XI, 357-8).[49] Positioned in silence outside

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isode, most of which start by commenting that the fugue and the fuga per canonem are two different music-forms. Of the many texts on 'Sirens' and music, I have found Nadya Zimmerman's article on musical form and temporal contemporaneity to be the most insightful; see 'Musical Form as Narrator: The Fugue of the Sirens in James Joyce's *Ulysses*', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 26.1 (2002), 108-18. See also Brad Bucknell, *Literary Modernism and Musical Aesthetics: Pater, Pound, Joyce, and Stein* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 121-161; Bowen, *Bloom's Old Sweet Song: Essays on Joyce and Music* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995), pp. 25-75; and *Musical Allusions*, pp. 46-64; Margaret Rogers, 'Mining the Ore of "Sirens": An Investigation of Structural Components', in *Bronze by Gold: The Music of Joyce*, ed. by D. G. Knowles (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999), pp. 263-75; Jack W. Weaver, *Joyce's Music and Noise: Theme and Variation in His Writings* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), pp. 70-3; Heath Lees, 'The Introduction to "Sirens" and the *Fuga per Canonem*', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 22.1 (1984), 39-54; and 'Decoding the Fugue in "Sirens"', *James Joyce Literary Supplement* 4 (1990), 15-20. A small school within the criticism on 'Sirens' has questioned the possibility of reading the episode with reference to music, claiming that there are more appropriate terms for Joyce's textual creativity in this episode to be found within a linguistic framework. See for example Jean-Michel Rabaté, 'The Silence of the Sirens', in *James Joyce: The Centennial Symposium*, ed. Morris Beja and others (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), pp. 82-8; Lorraine Wood, 'Joyce's Ineluctable Modality: (Re)Reading the Structure of "Sirens"', *Joyce Studies Annual*, (2007), 67-91; and Andreas Fischer, 'Strange Words, Strange Music: The Verbal Music of "Sirens"', in *Bronze by Gold: The Music of Joyce*, ed. by D. G. Knowles (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999), pp. 245-62.

49 Not only does Bloom not hear, he does not make much noise either: in the whole episode we only hear him speak three times, and then he speaks quite briefly. The only other noise he makes is the fart at the end of the chapter, which itself goes unheard because of a tram passing.

the scene of the main action, Bloom thus serves as audience to an ongoing play of whose plot he is not certain, as he cannot hear, only see. Even after Boylan leaves, Bloom's eyes remain focused at the bar, as though his rival left behind some clue as to his later whereabouts for Bloom to find and decipher.[50]

Understanding what Bloom sees, hears, and does not hear is crucial to interpreting the events in 'Sirens'. Recognizing who sees and hears what in the episode is an anxious business for the reader, however, especially as some of the characters referred to cannot see (the 'blind stripling') and some cannot hear (primarily Bloom, but also Pat, the waiter). Moreover, the narrator's part in explaining events remains unclear from the start. As Brad Bucknell notes, 'to hear, or read, some*one* speaking is not really to know or understand the *location* of the voice; sound does not always make space precise, nor accomplish an identity'.[51] It is far from certain where many of the sounds of 'Sirens' belong, who in the text hears them, and who presents them.

The confusion concerning who hears and who sees is linked to the tension between eye and ear as perceiving organs that is palpable throughout 'Sirens', for example in the way the two senses are mixed into 'soundsights', i.e. synesthetic concepts that blur the limits between the two. For instance, Pat the waiter is sporadically referred to as noisy 'boots' ('loud boots unmannerly asked'), and Miss Douce's and Miss Kennedy's hair-colours are constantly mixed with their voices and their laughter: 'young goldbronze voices blended'; 'bronze gigglegold' (*U*, XI, 94, 158, 159). Similarly, Miss Kennedy, while immersed in her reading at the beginning of the chapter, is referred to as a 'gaze' that is 'heard not seen' (*U*, XI, 240).[52]

There is also an interchange of metaphorical qualities associated with

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50 Bloom's silence in this episode can be related to his position as an outsider in general, which has been much commented on. Already on the first pages of the episode, his status as an invisible non-participant at the Ormond Hotel is emphasized through such designators as 'Bloowho' and 'Bloowhose' (*U*, XI, 86, 149).

51 Bucknell, *Literary Modernism and Musical Aesthetics*, p. 141.

52 Wood finds that the 'instruction' to how to read 'Sirens' is given to the reader in 'Proteus': 'true perception requires both the visible and the audible; they cannot be separated, for modality (in language or music) is both *simultaneous* and *sequential*, *nebeneinander* and *nacheinander*, sight and sound' (p. 79).

the two senses, so that the ear – being the dominant sense of the episode – assumes symbolic properties usually ascribed to the eye. For example, the metaphorical meaning of 'seeing' something, i.e. to understand it, is here implicitly transferred to the ear. To 'hear' something thus also means to apprehend it in a different sense than merely to receive sound waves. Seen (heard) thus, it does seem highly relevant that Bloom cannot hear clearly throughout much of the episode. At a loss for sound, seated in a bubble of silence, as it were, he is also at a loss for information. Bloom's 'deafness' in the episode is both literal and metaphorical; silence, meaning the absence of sound as well as of understanding, becomes a source of distress for him.

Bloom is not completely alone in his silence. At one point, he is coupled with Goulding, with whom he shares his meal, as 'married in silence' (*U*, XI, 523). Being 'married in silence' presents their silence as mutual and their meal as quiet – as opposed to the noise coming from the bar – but in a chapter so concerned with love, sexuality, and infidelity, the word 'married' also underlines Bloom's and Goulding's marital status as compared to that of single men, to whose luck or ill luck with women Bloom keeps returning, and especially, of course, as compared to Boylan, the single man who is at that moment on his way to 7 Eccles Street for his *rendezvous* with Molly. It is significant that Bloom is described thus, as though the absence of noise represented the vacuity of his marital vows but also his own passivity in relation to his wife's supposed infidelity. Boylan, on the other hand, is a very noisy presence throughout the episode, a noisiness that signifies his dominance.

Mostly, though, Bloom is alone with his 'deafness', an uncomfortable situation that leads him to construe sounds himself, partly on the basis of what he sees. In a comment on the history of deafness, Naomi Schor asserts that '[f]or the deaf, seeing is hearing'.[53] For Bloom, this seems to be literally true. It is obvious in the instance when Miss Douce at the bar raises a seashell to the ear of George Lidwell and Bloom is described as

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53 Schor continues: 'In the realm of deficient senses, the crossing of sensory borders is an effect not of plenitude, but of lack: absent one sense, another comes to substitute for it, to supplement its absence rather than to add to its presence'; 'Blindness as Metaphor', *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 11.2 (1999), 76-105 (p. 100).

hearing the shell's sound as well, though seated at a far distance: 'Bloom through the bardoor saw a shell held at their ears. He heard more faintly that that they heard, each for herself alone, then each for other, hearing the plash of waves, loudly, a silent roar' (*U*, XI, 934-6). The boundaries between vision and hearing have become blurred; Bloom perceives the intimate moment between the couple with his eyes but seems to convert this vision to sound in his head. Thus listening with his eyes, the sound that he imagines them hearing together in the seashell ('each for other') reveals his awareness and jealousy of their intimacy as well as his own isolation and loneliness. Again, a social intimacy is created through sound, while Bloom's position as an outsider is emphasized through the final description of the imagined sound in his head: the seemingly paradoxical 'silent roar', that is, a non-sound.[54] For what roars here is not the seashell but the silence; as for Duffy and Gabriel, Bloom's silence signifies alienation and a failed romantic relationship.

The silence that surrounds Bloom certainly appears threatening, partly because it blurs the boundaries of reality for him, making it hard to distinguish between real and imagined sounds.[55] The threat to Bloom in 'Sirens' does appear to stem from his own imagination, thus inverting the circumstances of the episode in the Homeric original.[56] There, Odysseus manages to pass the Sirens' island by being tied to the mast while his men plug their ears. Because Odysseus's men pass the Sirens in silence, they, their captain, and their ship are saved. In the *Ulysses* episode, however, Odysseus/Bloom is the one who is not hearing, but he instead becomes the victim of his imagination, which seems a dangerous thing at the exact moment that he knows Molly's infidelity is about to take place. Indeed, while Simon is singing, Bloom loses himself in a fantasy about Boylan and Molly together.

54 As in 'The Dead' and 'A Painful Case', music has a socializing function in 'Sirens', bringing the men in the bar together through singing and listening. This togetherness is demonstrated linguistically in the text through the amalgamation 'Siopold!', which combines the names of Simon and Leopold (*U*, XI, 752).

55 Rabaté concludes that in this episode, 'the real song of the Sirens is a song of silence', created by the listener himself; 'The Silence of the Sirens', p. 86.

56 Indeed, as Simon Dedalus's rendition of *M'Appari* is coming to a close, and as the rest of the audience is described as moving and making noise, Bloom is actually described as singing in silence: 'But Bloom sang dumb' (*U*, XI, 776).

The passage with the seashell and the imagined sound leads to questions about whether other sounds in 'Sirens' could be understood as imagined as well. Actually, the entire episode is sprinkled with small sounds that could be read as occurring in Bloom's head. The jingles, associated with Boylan, and the taps, associated with the blind tuner, are examples of such sounds. These jingles and taps are usually understood to emanate from Boylan and the stripling themselves as they move along the streets of Dublin.[57] However, as these sounds are connected to meetings and events central to Bloom – not only in 'Sirens' but in *Ulysses* at large – they could also be seen as representations of his preoccupations.[58] The fact that these sounds occur almost exclusively in connection to Bloom's thoughts implies that this is where they belong. For example, there are many instances just before and after Bloom's thoughts are represented when the jingle is interjected into the text, as in: 'Conductor's legs too, bagstrousers, jiggedy jiggedy. Do right to hide them./ Jiggedy jingle jaunty jaunty'; or: 'Jingle jaunted down the quays. Blazes sprawled on bounding tyres./ Liver and bacon. Steak and kidney pie. Right, sir. Right, Pat' (*U*, XI, 578-9, 498-9). Such instances link the jingles with Bloom's thoughts, indicating that those few jingles that appear in the text without any direct link to Bloom should be read as belonging in his head as well. His head is jingling and tapping because Boylan and the blind stripling keep returning to his thoughts.

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57 Such readings are especially common in discussions of the musical nature of 'Sirens'; if the episode is indeed written as a fugue, Boylan and the blind stripling are mentioned as two of the eight 'instruments', their jingling and tapping woven into the music-piece. Several critics, most notably Stuart Gilbert, A. Walton Litz, and Scott J. Ordway, see the jingle and taps as Wagnerian leitmotifs; see Gilbert, *James Joyce's* Ulysses*: A Study* (New York: Vintage Books, 1930), pp. 242-44; Litz, *The Art of James Joyce: Method and Design in* Ulysses *and* Finnegans Wake (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 66-70; and Ordway, 'A Dominant Boylan: Music, Meaning, and Sonata Form in the "Sirens" episode of *Ulysses*', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 45.1 (2007), 85-96.

58 William Snyder Jr. suggests that the jingles and taps can be partly understood as symbols of 'Bloom's thoughts as he eats in the restaurant'; 'Tap tap. Jingle. Tap: Form is Content in "The Sirens"', *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews*, 11.1 (2010), 24-7 (p. 26). Garin V. Dowd similarly suggests that Bloom can be seen as a 'sounding-chamber' in 'Sirens', which 'in picking up certain voices, multiplies them, repeats and echoes them'; 'Disconcerting the Fugue: Dissonance in the "Sirens" Episode of Joyce's *Ulysses*', *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, 3.4 (1998), 147-67 (p. 154).

It is natural that Bloom would have Boylan on his mind in 'Sirens'. Furthermore, the jingle-sound goes back to the bedroom-scene in 'Calypso', where Bloom hears Molly's 'warm heavy sigh, softer' as she turns over in bed, after which 'the loose brass quoits of the bedstead jingled' (*U*, IV, 58-9). The jingle thus connects Boylan to Molly in bed, sighing heavily and softly: a painful reminder of what Bloom believes will happen at four o'clock.[59] Throughout the episode, Boylan is referred to metonymically through the jingle, and often in Bloom's own thoughts, as for example in this passage: 'Yes, I remember. Lovely air. In sleep she went to him. Innocence in the moon. Still hold her back. Brave. Don't know their danger. [...] Call name. Touch water. *Jingle jaunty*. Too late. She longed to go. That's why. Woman. As easy stop the sea. Yes: all is lost' (*U*, XI, 638-41, my emphasis). Clearly, Bloom does think of Boylan in terms of the jingle; moreover, the sudden intrusion of Boylan into his thoughts also immediately makes Bloom think of Molly and his regret that it is now too late to save their relationship.

Bloom's preoccupation with Boylan reaches its peak during Simon Dedalus's rendition of *M'Appari*, when Bloom first imagines that the jingle reaches 7 Eccles Street ('Jing. Stop. Knock'), followed by Boylan's sexual encounter with Molly (*U*, XI, 689). Bloom's thoughts seem to move in a loop here, because after Dedalus's performance, they return to Boylan in the street, still moving towards Eccles Street: 'Jingle into Dorset street'; 'This is the jingle that joggled and jingled. By Dlugacz' porkshop bright tubes of Agendath trotted a gallantbuttocked mare'; 'Car near there now. Talk. Talk' (*U*, XI, 812, 883-5, 912). Then, the jingles disappear from the text – possibly because Bloom imagines that Boylan's and Molly's encounter is already over, or at least consummated in his imagination – and the taps appear instead.

The link between Bloom and the blind stripling is less clear, but the

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59 In 'Sirens', the jingle is also connected to the vehicle Bloom first sees Boylan riding in: 'Jingling on supple rubbers it jaunted from the bridge to Ormond quay' (*U*, XI, 304-5). Bucknell sees 'ironic sexual implications' in the word, not only for its association with Molly and Bloom's bed but for its association to the words 'jiggle' and 'ring' (p. 134). To Snyder Jr., the jingle is associated with Boylan's coins: 'Jingle, when spoken, sounds like coins striking each other in a pocket' (p. 25).

frequent taps in the second half of 'Sirens' emphasize a connection, thus discreetly reminding us of Bloom's sensory deficiency in this scene: the stripling's blindness matches Bloom's 'deafness', and draws attention to it.[60] Keith Cohen suggests that the blind stripling is presented as the 'precise opposite of Bloom' in 'Sirens'; Bloom sees, but does not hear, while the stripling hears, but does not see.[61] The idea that there is a connection between the two characters is reinforced by the stripling's later appearance in one of Bloom's hallucinations in 'Circe': 'BLOOM/ (*shaking hands with a blind stripling*) My more than Brother!' (*U*, XV, 1600).[62] Significantly, this 'more than Brother' first taps his way into 'Sirens' in the middle of the episode, where Bloom watches Miss Douce raise the seashell to Lidwell's ear: 'Ah, now he heard, she holding it to his ear. Hear! He heard. Wonderful. She held it to her own. And through the sifted light pale gold in contrast glided. To hear./ Tap' (*U*, XI, 930-3). Here, as with several of the subsequent taps, attention is drawn to the act of hearing ('To hear'; 'He heard'), again indicating that there is a particular connection between Bloom and sound.[63]

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60 The blind stripling's presence in 'Sirens' is often acknowledged by critics but seldom discussed. Several critics, however, have discussed him in terms of Joyce's own alter ego in the novel. Andre Cormier suggests that 'Joyce's own problems with sight invite us to read the stripling as an embodiment of the novelist who metafictionally finds a place in *Ulysses*'; '"Our Eyes Demand their Turn. Let Them Be Seen!": The Transcendental Blind Stripling', *Joyce Studies Annual*, (2008), 203-25 (pp. 204-5). See also Morse; Dominic Rainsford, 'Pity in Joyce: The Significance of the Blind Stripling', *English Language Notes*, 34.1 (1996), 47-55; and Abbie Garrington, *Haptic Modernism: Touch and the Tactile in Modernist Writing* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), pp. 107-9. Michael Stanier sees a link between the piano's tapping and Bloom's fantasy about Boylan and Molly together ('Tipping her tepping her tapping her topping her'; *U*, XI, 706-7); '"The Void Awaits Surely All Them That Weave the Wind": "Penelope" and "Sirens" in *Ulysses*', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 41.3 (1995), 319-31 (p. 328).

61 Cohen, *Film and Fiction: The Dynamics of Exchange* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 152. To Danius, Bloom's 'digressions on blindness' testify to the 'sublime importance of sight – in Bloom's own world as well as in the Joycean universe at large' (pp. 175-6).

62 Bloom first meets the blind stripling in 'Lestrygonians', where he helps the stripling across the street and then considers what life as a blind man would entail.

63 Two pages later, the tap is connected to voices ('The voice of dark age, of unlove, earth's fatigue made grave approach and painful, come from afar, from hoary mountains, called on good men and true. The priest he sought. With him would he speak a word./

Here, too, Joyce plays with connotations pertaining to the blind and the deaf: through the sounds he imagines, Bloom becomes something of a visionary, a role associated with blindness since ancient times. Bloom does not 'see' things but he 'hears' them: he hears the taps and the jingles as the stripling and Boylan move about Dublin, he hears Boylan and Molly engaged in coitus, and he hears a seashell roar silently in a room adjacent to the one where he is sitting.

This 'visionary' aspect of Bloom's hearing is linked to silence, for it is not during the emotional climax of Simon Dedalus's performance – when he is imagining Boylan's sexual encounter with Molly – that Bloom feels he can hear/understand most clearly, it is afterwards: 'It's in the silence after you feel you hear. Vibrations. Now silent air' (*U*, XI, 793-4).[64] The word 'feel' is noteworthy here, casting doubt on what is heard: is it actually heard or just 'felt' to be heard? Such questions pertain to many of the sounds in 'Sirens', and to Bloom's role in the episode as audience – audience here meaning not only the one who watches but also, and perhaps primarily, the one who hears.[65]

◆

Silence does not represent Bloom's mind in 'Sirens', but is an occurrence in the external world. It is not a silence of the unsayable, nor of the unsaid; it is one of the unheard. The sounds Bloom subsequently imagines in the episode follow from his engagement with what he sees. By contrast, the silence of Stephen's 'mental world' represents his inner experiences. The difference in how Joyce presents silence in relation to Stephen and Bloom, respectively, corresponds with developments in his writing; the style of *A*

Tap./ Ben Dollard's voice. Base barreltone'; *U*, XI, 1007-11), and again in lines 1037-8 and 1084-5 with listening ('Tap./ They listened'; 'Tap. Tap./ Thrilled, she listened').

64 In her article on Joyce and nineteenth-century sound theory, Plock suggests that this line refers to the acoustic theories advocated by Helmholtz and Tyndall: 'Bloom, it seems, knows that sound has to travel through air and, under certain circumstances, will have to cover long distances. When the sound is heard or "felt" by the human ear, the actual object producing it might have already stopped vibrating'; 'Good Vibrations', p. 484.

65 The word 'audience' has its roots in the Latin verb 'audire', meaning to hear, thus putting the emphasis on the role of the ear, not the eye (*OED*).

Portrait and the 'Telemachia' section in *Ulysses* differs vastly from 'Sirens' and the later parts of *Ulysses*. No longer strictly a realist, Joyce's later writing – in the second half of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* – is characterized by an experimentation focused on language rather than representation. While Joyce's use of silence in his early fiction – and especially in *A Portrait* – is rooted in a crisis of realism, as discussed in chapter one, his later work responds to an extended crisis and appears to reject the possibility of mimesis. 'Silence' becomes one word among others, part of what Sam Slote refers to as 'the mendacious cadences of multilinguistically polyvalent word-plays'.[66] Within Joyce's *oeuvre*, then, the movement from realism to postmodernism can be traced.

In Joyce's early fiction, however, as in Richardson's *Pilgrimage*, silence is primarily linked to the representation of consciousness and various states of mind. The similarities in the presentation of silence in *Pilgrimage* and *A Portrait* connect the two novels and suggest that the association between silence and inner worlds is characteristic of the early modernist novel. In the following chapter, I examine the silence of *A Portrait* further, arguing that its function in Joyce's first novel is connected to the modernist aesthetics he developed there.

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66 Slote, p. 235.

Chapter 5
A Portrait of the Artist as a
Young Edwardian

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Joyce's first novel, has repeatedly been labelled a *Bildungsroman* or a *Künstlerroman*.[1] When read as a novel about an emerging artist, the last chapter of *A Portrait* supposedly represents the apotheosis of Stephen's development: here, Stephen defines his own aesthetic ideas and writes a poem, seemingly putting his theory into practice. This, then, would be the point where boy turns into man or apprentice turns into artist.

Such readings are problematic, however, primarily because the work of art in which Stephen himself appears does not seem to fit his theories of art. Throughout the final chapter of *A Portrait*, there is a strange confusion between Stephen's aesthetics and the novel in which he is himself a character; as David Trotter argues, Stephen's ideas about the spiritual stasis created through beauty are undermined by the novel he appears in, where

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1 Criticism on *A Portrait* as *Bildungsroman/Künstlerroman* is too extensive for a mere footnote. Some useful discussion can be found in Gregory Castle, *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006), pp. 159-91, 197-212; Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *Season of Youth: The* Bildungsroman *from Dickens to Golding* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 225-47; Jed Esty, *Unseasonable Youth: Modernism, Colonialism, and the Fiction of Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 127-31, 142-159; Weldon Thornton, *The Antimodernism of Joyce's* Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994), pp. 65-81; and Tobias Boes, '*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and the Individuating Rhythm of Modernity', *ELH*, 75.4 (2008), 767-85. In an earlier article, Boes also provides a useful survey of criticism on the modernist *Bildungsroman* in general; see 'Modernist Studies and the *Bildungsroman*: A Historical Survey of Critical Trends', *Literature Compass*, 3.2 (2006), 230-43.

he is portrayed as both 'kinetic and physical' when he introduces his theory to Lynch during their walk.[2] Moreover, Stephen's spiritual attitude towards art stands in sharp contrast to the squalor and bodily misery portrayed throughout the novel. In this chapter, I build on Trotter's argument and look at the contradictions between Stephen's theories of art and the form of *A Portrait*, arguing that the novel's narrator not only mocks Stephen but also plays games with the reader.

The contradictions between Stephen's theories and the form of *A Portrait* become even more striking when they are traced through the different versions of Joyce's first novel, from the prose sketch 'A Portrait of the Artist' (1904) to the remaining fragment of *Stephen Hero* and then finally to the published novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Indeed, the change in the published novel's title illustrates Joyce's growing distance to his subject; where the initial prose sketch is a portrait 'of the Artist', the final novel portrays this artist not as a 'Hero', but as a 'Young Man'. This distance is confirmed both by the portrayal of Stephen and by the novel's form; subtly, the finished portrait appears not only to reject Stephen's aesthetic theories, but to mock them. The fifth chapter of *A Portrait* thus

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2 Trotter, 'The Modernist Novel', in *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*, ed. by Michael Levenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 70-99 (p. 75). Some of the ideas Trotter develops in this essay also appear in *The English Novel in History 1895-1920* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 291-2. Several other critics have found an ironical distance towards Stephen (and his aesthetic theories) in *A Portrait*. David G. Wright, especially, anticipated some of Trotter's ideas; see *Characters of Joyce* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan; Totowa: Barnes & Noble Books, 1983), pp. 30-48. See also Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1961; repr. London: Penguin Books, 1983), pp. 323-36; Bonnie Roos, 'Refining the Artist into Existence: Pygmalion's Statue, Stephen's Villanelle, and the Venus of Praxiteles', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 38.2 (2001), 95-117; Joseph A. Buttigieg, *A Portrait of the Artist in Different Perspective* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1987); and James H. Druff, 'The Romantic Complaint: The Logical Movement of Stephen's Aesthetics in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*', *Studies in the Novel*, 14.2 (1982), 180-7. Thornton discusses irony in the portrayal not only of Stephen's aesthetic theories but also in his 'view of reality and of the self'; this irony, Thornton argues, reveals that *Portrait* is essentially an antimodernist work (p. 3 *et passim*). By contrast, Zack Bowen reads *A Portrait* as being about its own composition and Stephen's villanelle in chapter five (discussed further below) as 'the microcosm and artistic epiphany of the entire novel'; see *Bloom's Old Sweet Song: Essays on Joyce and Music* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995), p. 85.

embodies an implicit struggle between different aesthetic paradigms: on the one hand the aestheticism of Stephen's art theory and on the other the realist aesthetics that is represented by the novel itself, but also by the journal at the end of the chapter – an ending that indicates that Stephen himself is turning his back on his previous theories, choosing grime over beauty (or, perhaps, finding grime beautiful).

This chapter examines the competing aesthetic paradigms in *A Portrait* by looking specifically at their respective relation to silence. While Stephen's theory of art is grounded in the silence of his 'mental world', as discussed in the previous chapter, the realist aesthetics towards which he veers at the end of the novel is associated with a different kind of silence, connected to the 'arms' Stephen introduces just before his journal begins: 'silence, exile, and cunning' (*PA*, p. 208). My claim is not that Stephen's art theory or the modernist aesthetics of *A Portrait* is essentially characterized by silence; as with the discussion of nineteenth-century, Edwardian, and modernist fiction in chapter one, I am mainly interested in what an examination of silence can reveal about the competing literary paradigms in *A Portrait*'s fifth chapter. The discussion ends with a consideration of Joyce's revision of the predominantly Edwardian aesthetics of *Stephen Hero* into the modernist *A Portrait*. Here, too, the discussion is focused on silence, contrasting descriptions of silence in the published novel with those in the earlier draft. It is useful, however, to begin with a look at Stephen's own ideas about art, as he introduces them in the first half of *A Portrait*'s chapter five.

'The Luminous Silent Stasis of Esthetic Pleasure': Stephen Dedalus's Aesthetic Theory

As discussed in the previous chapter, Stephen is frequently unaware of his surroundings. His philosophical speculations and his inclination to situate the world around him intellectually – for example through constant references to his vast mental library – define him as thoroughly cerebral: a man living in his head rather than in the physical world. Unsurprisingly, then, Stephen's theory of art construes the apprehension of beauty as a mental activity: an intense inner experience, characterized by a concentrated si-

lence. His theory, which has its roots in his readings of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, reportedly seeks to define 'the essence of beauty' (*PA*, p. 148).[3] As he develops his aesthetics, however, he appears mostly interested in the effect of beauty on the beholder rather than in its essence.

Beauty, Stephen argues, 'arrest[s]' the mind, causing a moment of aesthetic stasis that confirms that an object is a work of art (*PA*, p. 179). This moment of arrest or stasis is an experience very similar to those silent moments when Stephen grows unaware of his physical surroundings, discussed in the previous chapter:

> The instant wherein that supreme quality of beauty, the clear radiance of the esthetic image, is apprehended luminously by the mind which has been arrested by its wholeness and fascinated by its harmony is the luminous silent stasis of esthetic pleasure, a spiritual state very like to that cardiac condition which the Italian physiologist Luigi Galvani […] called the enchantment of the heart. (*PA*, p. 179)

The 'enchantment of the heart' refers to Galvani's experiments with frogs, whose hearts momentarily stopped beating when he inserted a needle. In Joyce's passage, the temporary lapse of bodily function serves as a comparison for the seemingly involuntary loss of physical awareness that the beholder of art experiences, as he or she becomes all mind and no body while

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3 On Stephen's aesthetics, see, for example, Jacques Aubert, *The Aesthetics of James Joyce* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Marguerite Harkness, *The Aesthetics of Dedalus and Bloom* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1984); Colleen Jaurretche, *The Sensual Philosophy: Joyce and the Aesthetics of Mysticism* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), pp. 63-83; Jackson I. Cope, 'The Rhythmic Gesture: Image and Aesthetic in Joyce's *Ulysses*', *ELH*, 29.1 (1962), 67-89; Fritz Senn, 'Esthetic Theories', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 2.2 (1965), 134-6; David E. Jones, 'The Essence of Beauty in James Joyce's Aesthetics', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 10.3 (1973), 291-311; Maurice Beebe, 'Joyce and Aquinas: The Theory of Aesthetics', in Dubliners *and* A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: A Casebook*, ed. by Morris Beja (London: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 151-71; Robert Scholes and Marlena G. Corcoran, 'The Aesthetic Theory and the Critical Writings', in *A Companion to Joyce Studies*, ed. by Zack Bowen and James F. Carens (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984), pp. 689-705; and Sandra Tropp, '"The Esthetic Instinct in Action": Charles Darwin and Mental Science in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 45.2 (2008), 221-44.

'arrested' by the work's essence: its 'whatness' or '*quidditas*' (*PA*, p. 180).

To Stephen, then, beauty should cause a reaction in the mind of the beholder. By contrast, objects that instead cause some sort of physical reaction belong to the 'improper arts' (*PA*, p. 172). While true art will arrest its beholders and cause them to move inwards, away from the physical world, the improper arts are instead kinetic, urging their beholders to act on 'desire' or 'loathing', to go 'to something' or 'from something' (*PA*, p. 172). Stephen defines these improper arts as either 'pornographical or didactic' (*PA*, p. 172). Woolf's indictment of the Edwardian writers she so loved to loathe comes to mind here; the Edwardians, she asserts, wrote novels that leave the reader with 'so strange a feeling of incompleteness and dissatisfaction' that 'to complete them it seems necessary to do something – to join a society, or, more desperately, to write a cheque'.[4] To Stephen, the improper arts are instead tied to bodily sensation: 'Our flesh shrinks from what it dreads and responds to the stimulus of what it desires by a purely reflex action of the nervous system' (*PA*, p. 173). The stasis caused by what Stephen asserts is true art lifts the self above these baser feelings, making the beholder of beauty unaware of the physical body and its sensory equipment.

Inherent in Stephen's theory of aesthetics as expressed in both *A Portrait* and *Stephen Hero*, and in his theory of the senses as expressed in 'Proteus', is the notion that we have to struggle to come to some sort of understanding of the external world, to grasp the '*quidditas*' of things. There is a gap between the world and the self, and so objects and our surroundings do not readily reveal their essence to us. As discussed in the previous chapter, Stephen in 'Proteus' may prove to himself that the world is 'at least [visual] if no more', but what is seen still appears to need processing and analysis before it can be understood ('read'), an analysis similar to grasping an object's '*quidditas*' (*U*, III, 1). There are thus similarities between how Stephen construes aesthetic experiences and how he understands perception at large.

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4 Woolf, 'Character in Fiction', *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Andrew McNeillie and others, 6 vols (London: The Hogarth Press, 1986-2011) III: 1919-1924, ed. by Andrew McNeillie (1988), 420-38 (p. 427).

These similarities turn out to be important not only for contemplating works of art but for creating them, too. To Stephen in *A Portrait*, an artist is a person who can first grasp and then represent a thing's 'whatness' in his art:

> To speak of these things and to try to understand their nature and, having understood it, to try slowly and humbly and constantly to express, to press out again, from the gross earth or what it brings forth, from sound and shape and colour which are the prison gates of our soul, an image of the beauty we have come to understand – that is art. (*PA*, p. 173)

Having grasped a thing's 'whatness' in a moment of silent stasis, the artist must then attempt to express this knowledge, transmitting the essence of the thing through 'sound and shape and colour'. In a sense, then, the artist must make sound from silence; he must put into words the unsayable experience of the '*quidditas*'. Through his art-work, the artist's experience of 'silent stasis' is perpetuated and passed on, as beholders of the work will similarly experience a moment of silent rapture.

Stephen's attempt to define the aesthetic experience is not just a philosophical enquiry into the nature of the apprehension of beauty but an initial step towards becoming an artist himself, within that art-form that he designates as the 'highest and most spiritual art': literature (*PA*, p. 180). It appears, though, as if Stephen has some problems with 'the prison gates' of his soul, as he cannot bridge the gap between himself and the world. Unwilling to leave his 'mental world', he seeks words to mirror his inner world rather than the world outside, a fact that he realizes when he contemplates the strange effect that Hugh Miller's line 'dappled, seaborne clouds' has on him:

> Words. Was it their colour? He allowed them to glow and fade, hue after hue: sunrise gold, the russet and green of apple orchards, azure of waves, the greyfringed fleece of clouds. No, it was not their colours: it was the poise and balance of the period itself. Did he then love the rhythmic rise and fall of words better than their associations of legend and colour? Or was it that, being as weak of sight as he was shy of mind, he drew less

pleasure from the reflection of the glowing sensible world through the prism of language many coloured and richly storied than from the contemplation of an inner world of individual emotions mirrored perfectly in a lucid supple periodic prose? (*PA*, p. 140)

It is not the 'glowing sensible world' that causes Stephen to have an aesthetic experience here, but rather the materiality of the language: its 'rhythmic rise and fall' and the placement of the period. This passage suggests that Stephen cannot use language to reach the essence of his subject, unless that subject is his own inner world. But here, too, he runs into problems. As Michael Levenson argues about Stephen's journal at the end of chapter five, a 'space opens between [Stephen's] self and its form of representation', because while Stephen may have 'high romantic intentions […] his language has intentions of its own'.[5] Words control Stephen more than he controls words, because their meaning stretches out into the world in uncontrollable ways. The world outside of him cannot be 'mirrored perfectly' as easily as Stephen's inner world, because it cannot be contained.

For all his talk of '*quidditas*' and aesthetic apprehension, it appears that Stephen cannot grasp the essence of anything beyond his own inner world.[6] Indeed, Stephen's own attempt at artistic expression – represented by the poem he writes in the fifth chapter – does not represent anything but the idealised world of his imagination. The complicated structure of the villanelle that Stephen composes in chapter 5, building on rhyme and repetition, emphasizes how the art that Stephen practises is divorced from the experience of life itself.[7] Stephen's poem is, in fact, many times re-

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5 Levenson, 'Stephen's Diary in Joyce's *Portrait*: The Shape of Life', *ELH*, 52.4 (1985), 1017-35 (p. 1026).

6 To Patricia Meyer Spacks, Stephen's theory of art 'constitutes a mode of separation from his companions and his environment', as he comes to reject 'the significance of everything external to him'; *The Adolescent Idea: Myths of Youth and the Adult Imagination* (London: Faber & Faber, 1982), p. 253. Bonnie Roos similarly argues that 'it is precisely Stephen's distance from the experience of the "real," the experience of "life" that prevents him from becoming the artist he aspires to become' (p. 326).

7 To Christine Froula, the depiction of Stephen's writing in *A Portrait* is important precisely for this reason; to her, it represents how 'Joyce moves from narrating external events to dissecting the artist's inner life' as he similarly 'abandons traditional realist narrative for

moved from actual life. Its subject is the idealized image of the girl with whom he is infatuated; the poem is moreover a reflection of something that happened, or could have happened, in a dream: 'The instant of inspiration seemed now to be reflected from all sides at once from a multitude of cloudy circumstance of what had happened or of what might have happened' (*PA*, p 182). As Stephen wakes up, he takes whatever happened in the dream further in his fantasy, mixing his desire not with memory but with composition, thereby intensifying the mood brought about by the dream. Neither the fantasy nor the poem seems connected to the reality of Stephen's life – during his 'inspiration' he conceives earth itself as 'a swinging smoking swaying censer, a ball of incense, an ellipsoidal ball', which links the experience to the religious nature of Stephen's temple of art (*PA*, p. 183). Ironically, the fantasy and the writing both culminate with what appears to be Stephen masturbating, his writing thus coming to be associated with the 'improper arts' of which he speaks with Lynch.[8]

In other ways, the composition of the poem connects to Stephen's theory of art. It has its genesis in a moment of 'esthetic stasis', an 'enchantment of the heart' (*PA*, p. 182). The moment of aesthetic ecstasy has occurred while he was sleeping, but he wakes up to 'a tremulous morning knowledge, a morning inspiration' characterized by an absence of sound,

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the scalpel of modernist realism'. Through writing the villanelle, Froula argues, Stephen 'recovers his buried femininity'. See *Modernism's Body: Sex, Culture, and Joyce* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 65, 66.

8 To Vike Martina Plock, the fact that Stephen masturbates in this scene suggests that his artistic aspirations are doomed to failure. Her argument is based on late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century medical descriptions, which often connected the 'young masturbator's specific pathology' with the 'psychological and physiological traits attributed to the would-be teenage artist'; she sees Stephen as determined by 'a domineering medico-moral discourse' that has left him in 'social and artistic paralysis'. See *Joyce, Medicine, and Modernity* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010), pp. 46, 67. John Paul Riquelme, on the other hand, sees a 'connection between lovemaking and writing' in *A Portrait*, a connection that becomes explicit in the scene where Stephen writes the villanelle; *Teller and Tale in Joyce's Fiction: Oscillating Perspectives* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), pp. 73-7.

indicating that Stephen is blocking out the material world in a similar manner to how, a couple of pages later, he makes 'a cowl of the blanket' to secure his privacy for a few more moments (*PA*, p. 186). Indeed, once the magic of the moment has broken, Stephen can hear a bell and the twittering of some birds, disrupting not only the moment of 'enchantment' but making him afraid of forgetting the lines he has already composed. As the creative mood once more comes over him, so does the silence: 'No sound was to be heard: but he knew that all round him life was about to awaken in common noises, hoarse voices, sleepy prayers' (*PA*, p. 186). It is to protect himself from these 'common noises' that Stephen hides under his blanket.

Moreover, Stephen's idealized conception of E– C– is very much linked to his aesthetic theory, and in more ways than one she plays the role of his muse. During his final walk with Cranly, for example, the mere thought of her creates a moment of aesthetic stasis for Stephen:

> She had passed through the dusk. And therefore the air was silent save for one soft hiss that fell. And therefore the tongues about him had ceased their babble. Darkness was falling. [...] A trembling joy, lambent as a faint light, played like a fairy host around him. But why? (*PA*, p. 196)

Because he thinks of E– C–, Stephen grows unconscious of the world around him, an unconsciousness signalled by the fact that he perceives the world as silent. Moreover, he confuses his thoughts about E– C– with poetry, being unclear as to the reason for the sudden shift in his mood: 'Her passage through the darkening air or the verse with its black vowels and its opening sound, rich and lutelike?' (*PA*, p. 196). Both explanations refer to occurrences in his mind and have little to do with what is transpiring around him in his actual life.

Of Lice and Men:
Stephen Dedalus versus Modernism

Before the publication of *Stephen Hero* in 1944, the portrayal of Stephen in *A Portrait* was rarely discussed as satire.[9] While the existence of the *Stephen Hero* fragment should not change how we read *A Portrait*, it seems clearer in the earlier draft that the narrator's stance towards Stephen is ironic. Stephen's aesthetic theories, for example, are introduced in *Stephen Hero* as 'set forth plainly with a naïf air of discovering novelties' (*SH*, p. 77). There is nothing new, the earlier draft suggests, about applying Aristotle or Aquinas to the apprehension of art, or even about Stephen's theory as a whole. Instead, the portrait of the hero as a young intellectual satirizes the youth's search for difficult words to use as shields against the world.

The published novel also includes hints of scepticism towards Stephen and his ambitions. The one most commonly brought up is the protagonist's name; the allusion to the Icarus myth – along with Stephen's fear of water – implies that Stephen will, like his namesake, fail and drown, if only metaphorically. As Hugh Kenner points out, 'in the myth the son's role is to fall', and thus the text implies 'that Joyce sees Stephen as a lad who is going to fall'.[10] Arguably, his imminent failure is the result of his idealism; like Daedalus in the myth, Stephen is developing into a 'fabulous artificer', but, as Bonnie Roos argues, 'his skills are limited to the "artificial" and "unreal" precisely because Stephen remains uninformed by experience'.[11] While this is true to a certain extent, there are also indications that Stephen abandons his aestheticism towards the end of the novel, rethinking the relationship between art and world on the one hand and between artist and world on the other. Here, I trace Stephen's changing view of art, and

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9 Booth suggests, though, that the idea that *A Portrait* might be ironic first appeared with the serialization of *Ulysses* in *The Little Review*, where 'Icarus-Stephen is shown with his wings clipped' in the first scene (p. 333).

10 See Kenner, 'The Cubist *Portrait*', in *Approaches to Joyce's* Portrait: *Ten Essays*, ed. by Thomas F. Staley and Bernard Benstock (London: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976), pp. 171-84 (p. 177).

11 Roos, p. 108.

argue that his journal at the end of the novel indicates his changing conceptions, representing an aesthetics rooted in failure.

Stephen's idealism in chapter five stands in sharp contrast to the naturalism of *A Portrait* itself.[12] The palaces that he erects in his 'mental world' seem very much at odds with his living conditions. This contrast is emphasized from the start: on the very first page of chapter five, Stephen drinks 'watery tea' at the kitchen-table, next to a box 'speckled with lousemarks' and filled with pawn tickets for such essentials as pants and coats (*PA*, p. 146). While Stephen seeks to construct an inner temple in which to worship literature, he walks around filthy, 'stumbling through [...] mouldering offal' and picking lice off his body (*PA*, p. 147). In many ways, Stephen's inner world and his aesthetic theory serve the function of shielding him against the 'despair' of his everyday life; as Trotter points out, Stephen's way of dealing with the disturbances around him is to 'evolve a literary style capable of abstract order'.[13] In other words, Stephen is not seeking to perpetuate his own experiences of life by turning them into poetry; he is seeking to escape them.

At times, the protagonist of *A Portrait* appears to be staging a break-out from the novel in which he appears, by propounding aesthetic theories and writing poetry that do not fit with the form and subject of the novel he inhabits. Stephen's idea of literature is constantly punctured in the text in which he is the subject, and at poignant moments. For example, the silence of his lofty 'mental world' is frequently contrasted with the vulgar sounds of the 'real'. When, at the end of chapter four, Stephen experiences a moment of ecstasy as he embraces his newly-found ambition of becoming an artist, his '[commingling] with the element of the spirit' is interrupted by the sound of young men bathing: '"O, Cripes, I'm drowned!" [...] "Me

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12 Trotter suggests that there is a dialectic between naturalism and symbolism in the novel, arguing that Stephen's 'symbolist poems, and symbolist theories' have often been misconstrued as 'modernist doctrine'; 'Modernist Novel', p. 75.

13 Trotter, 'Modernist Novel', p. 75. Wright makes a similar point, arguing that Stephen's escape into a 'detached and contemplative life' might be compared to the sermons in *Portrait*'s chapter three, sermons that are 'highly kinetic in Stephen's sense' and might explain his aversion to similar discourses (p. 41).

next! Me next"' (*PA*, p. 142).[14] The sound/silence dichotomy – repeatedly used in Joyce's works to contrast outer and inner worlds – serves, here as elsewhere, to emphasize the distance between Stephen's inner experiences and the crudeness of the outer world. Stephen may try to hide in his own inner silence, but he cannot avoid being disturbed by the outer world, which constantly draws attention to itself through sound. The sounds on the beach do more than just break into Stephen's reveries, however; they also evoke the idea of drowning, connecting the budding artist's ambitions with the Icarus myth and suggesting Stephen's imminent failure.

A Portrait is full of contrasts between Stephen's own ideas of literature, love, and beauty on the one hand and representations of his own dismal reality on the other. A significant example of such a disparity appears in the scene preceding Stephen's conversation with Cranly, a scene in which he contemplates E– C– in connection to Thomas Nashe's poem 'A Litany in Time of Plague' (1592). If the thought of E– C– makes Stephen turn inwards towards a 'trembling joy, lambent as a faint light', his reveries are soon interrupted by a louse crawling across his neck (*PA*, p. 196). His idealized inner life is thus crudely contrasted with the rude realities of his life: 'The life of his body, illclad, illfed, louseeaten, made him close his eyelids in a sudden spasm of despair: and in the darkness he saw the brittle bright bodies of lice falling from the air and turning often as they fell' (*PA*, p. 197).[15] The passage echoes the ending of 'The Dead', where Gabriel watches the snow fall; as in the short story, it is an image of hopelessness.

A question posed by Stephen earlier in the chapter foreshadows this scene. While discussing his aesthetic theory with Lynch, Stephen asks: '*Can excrement or a child or a louse be a work of art?*' (*PA*, p. 180, emphasis in the original). While this question is implicitly understood to be ludicrous – a louse can surely not cause the stasis that Stephen associates with

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14 See Trotter, 'Modernist Novel', p. 75.

15 To Jean-Michael Rabaté, this passage is presented as 'a scene of hallucination': 'Stephen believes that he can directly think lice, that his thoughts have become grotesquely embodied as lice, which blurs the boundaries between humanity and animality, and also between the body and thinking'. See *James Joyce and the Politics of Egoism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 94. Rabaté's whole discussion of lice in Joyce's works can be found on pages 85-106.

beauty – the later scene provides him with another answer, suggesting that Stephen might have to re-evaluate his earlier theories. While the louse itself might not constitute a work of art, the scene in which it appears demonstrates that lice might at least be the subject of art, as can excrement, as the last scene in the 'Calypso' episode in *Ulysses* implies. The louse fills Stephen with loathing and a wish to escape his physical sensations – feelings that Stephen associates with kinetic art – but it also appears to bring him an important insight.

The passage that describes the louse creeping on Stephen's neck marks an important moment in the fifth chapter, a moment that constitutes something of an epiphany. It might appear strange that a moment of illumination would originate in a louse, but the Joycean epiphany is associated precisely with the trivial and the ordinary. In *Stephen Hero*, for example, Stephen introduces the epiphany concept in relation to a clock:

> By an epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself. He believed that it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments. He told Cranly that the clock of the Ballast Office was capable of an epiphany. (*SH*, p. 211).

The clock of the Ballast Office is 'epiphanised', Stephen continues, when the 'spiritual eye' of the beholder manages to find an exact 'focus'; 'to focus', he finds, means to grasp 'the supreme quality of beauty', that which the Stephen of *A Portrait* defines as '*quidditas*' (*SH*, p. 211; *PA*, p. 180).[16] While this kind of epiphany does not appear to mean much more than to grasp the full nature of the thing contemplated, elsewhere Joyce redefined the epiphany so as to make it point towards moments of illumination. In

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16 As Jones has pointed out, there are several parallels between what Stephen describes in both *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait* as '*quidditas*' and the famous definition of 'epiphany' in the novel draft (pp. 302-4). What Stephen presents as beauty – the moment of mental arrest or stasis – appears something akin to grasping the '*whatness*' of the object in question. Elsewhere, Joyce also relates beauty to 'truth', but asserts that this is a relation without 'meaning' (*PA*, p. 179).

A Portrait, when Stephen turns his 'spiritual eye' on the louse, his 'sudden spasm of despair' hence appears to lead to some form of insight as the image of the lice 'falling from the air' alters into '*Brightness falls from the air*', a reference to a poem by Thomas Nashe (*PA*, p. 197, emphasis in the original).

The louse epiphany indicates a turn towards the real, no matter how disgusting that reality proves to be. The reference to Nashe's poem concretely associates the passage with illness and with poverty, but also with the passing of beauty: 'Beauty is but a flower/ Which wrinkles will devour' (ll. 15-16). The reference should perhaps be read as a comment on Stephen's transient feelings for E– C–, but it also suggests an acknowledgment of the circumstances of his actual life.

The line from Nashe's poem also connects the louse epiphany with Stephen's literary ambitions, and it is significant that it is the louse that leads him to remember the correct words; contemplating E– C– a moment earlier, he first misquotes the line as '*Darkness falls from the air*' (*PA*, p. 196). The passage suggests a turn from Stephen's aesthetic theories towards something less idealized: 'He had not even remembered rightly Nashe's line. All the images it had awakened were false. His mind bred vermin. His thoughts were lice born of the sweat of sloth' (*PA*, p. 197). While the line as Stephen first remembers it is associated with his ideal mental world – described earlier in the chapter as a 'strange dark cavern of speculation' – the correct line correlates with the grime of his actual life (*PA*, p. 149-50). Somewhat ironically, the brightness – indicative of a moment of illumination – is connected both to the lice and to Nashe's poem, suggesting that what Stephen realizes is that the only truth accessible to him – the only truth he can write – is to be found in the squalor and immediacy of his life. The idea that Stephen has reached an insight is confirmed in the preceding paragraph, where he decides to stop pretending to be anything other than what he is, even if it means losing E– C–: 'let her go and be damned to her. She could love some clean athlete who washed himself every morning to the waist and had black hair on his chest. Let her' (*PA*, p. 197). The reference to the 'clean athlete' presumably also refers to Stephen's parents and their hopes for him. At the beginning of the chapter, Stephen's mother scrubs him clean over the sink in the kitchen, and in

Stephen's journal at the end of chapter five, he writes that his father wants him to 'join a rowingclub' (*PA*, p. 211).[17] At the end of *A Portrait*, then, Stephen seems to leave all expectations behind, including his own.

Along with Ireland and religion, Stephen apparently abandons his earlier aesthetics as well, moving towards the circumstances of his actual life as a topic for his writing, thus essentially embracing realism as his literary 'mode'. The journal that ends *A Portrait* is important for several reasons; one of these is the journal's function as a representation of how Stephen's literary ambitions have veered away from his previously idealized aesthetics, grounded in his reading of Aristotle and Aquinas. In contrast to the poem Stephen writes earlier in the chapter, the basis for the journal entries is his own reality.[18] There, he describes himself as '[s]oulfree and fancyfree', writes of his life as a '[d]ark stream of swirling bogwater', and describes the realization that he likes a girl as a 'new feeling' (*PA*, pp. 209, 211, 213). Stephen's new writing stems from the deep uncertainties of his actual life. It represents an aesthetics rooted in failure: the failure to fly, to achieve success, to have money for flowers, to separate his 'mental world' from the grime in which he is forced to live, to keep his body clean.

The constant anticipation of Stephen's failure in the novel should be read in connection to the louse epiphany, discussed above. The louse moment not only leads to Stephen's accepting the squalor of his life, it is also connected to all his life-changing decisions at the end of the novel, as is revealed in his conversation with Cranly, directly following the epiphany. It is during this discussion that Stephen decides that 'it is time to go' and reveals his new-found persuasion 'not [to] serve that which [he] no longer believe[s]' (*PA*, pp. 206, 208). Significantly, Stephen reveals at the end of his talk with Cranly that he is not afraid of failure: 'I am not afraid to make a mistake, even a great mistake, a lifelong mistake and perhaps as long as eternity too' (*PA*, p. 208). By seemingly embracing the idea of failing,

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17 Rabaté, however, contends that Stephen's mother is the 'only person who seems to be entitled to have him all, body, lice, and soul', because she repeatedly appears 'in connection with lice' in *Ulysses*; *James Joyce and the Politics of Egoism*, p. 95.

18 To Riquelme, however, the journal at the end of *A Portrait* is one of three elements in the novel that make it 'only marginally a *novel*' (the other two being the title and the epigraph); *Teller and Tale*, p. 50.

Stephen subverts the notion of an imminent fiasco. Unlike his namesake, he will not let a fall stop him; instead his fall appears to be a necessity for his eventual success.

Stephen's realism is built on freedom and on the idea that literature is not an artist's only expression, but that life is too: 'I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can' (*PA*, p. 208). Stephen at the end of *A Portrait* is not only seeking to realize a realistic literature but also finds that his very life has the potential of becoming art if lived in the right way. In sharp contrast with his earlier, idealized theories of art, this is realism taken to extremes, seeking not only to represent the real in art but to find art in the real. Having come out on the other side of his 'mental world', Stephen does not look back, striving instead 'to encounter [...] the reality of experience' (*PA*, pp. 173, 213). In *A Portrait*, Stephen might be 'uninformed by experience', but he does not intend to stay that way.[19]

Other important aspects of Stephen's aesthetics of failure are to be found in his 'arms' against that in which he does not believe: 'silence, exile, and cunning' (*PA*, p. 208). Stephen is quite vague about all three 'arms'. How 'exile' could be a weapon is not clear, but the word surely alludes to Stephen's imminent departure from Ireland. Living and writing 'freely' is presumably easier at a distance from those threatening institutions that lay claim to being his 'home', 'fatherland', and 'church' (*PA*, p. 208). 'Cunning' apparently refers to Stephen's intelligence and his ability to outmanoeuvre his opponents. The word appears six times in *A Portrait*; three of those occurrences are found in chapter five. Especially noteworthy is its appearance in Stephen's conversation with the dean at his college. The dean, Stephen notes, uses 'the shifts and lore and cunning of the world [...] for the greater glory of God, without joy' (*PA*, p. 156). Having the 'silent soul of a jesuit', performing a 'silent service', the dean appears to love neither the 'master' nor 'the ends he served' (*PA*, p. 156). The passage reveals something about Stephen's silence-as-weapon, if only by contrast. Unlike the dean, whose silence suggests hypocrisy, Stephen refuses to say or do anything of which he is not convinced. Silence may thus be under-

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19 Cf. Roos, p. 323.

stood as part of his veneration of the real, which encompasses his aim of expressing himself 'freely and wholly' not only in art, but 'in some mode of life'; he simply refuses to put words to what he does not believe is true (*PA*, p 208). Unlike the dean, who is 'above all, subtle', Stephen seeks clarity; to find his 'unfettered freedom', he needs to leave Ireland (*PA*, 201, 207). His practice of 'silence' and 'cunning' does not aim to dissemble his true beliefs, but to seek and express truth, and to remain silent about that which he knows to be wrong.

Throughout chapter five, the dean of studies fills an important symbolic function for Stephen's decision to leave Ireland and to abandon his religion; the dean comes to represent everything Stephen wishes to leave behind, and especially the church. Faced with the choice between the possibility of eternal damnation for leaving the church and an 'eternity of bliss in the company of the dean of studies', Stephen chooses the former (*PA*, p. 202). Indeed, the proclamation of his three 'arms' comes at the end of a discussion where he has announced his decision to leave the church. As part of his 'easter duty', his mother has wanted Stephen to confess, a sacrament he has refused despite the fact that it would 'save her from suffering more' (*PA*, pp. 201, 203). Stephen thus chooses 'silence' over 'false homage to a symbol behind which are massed twenty centuries of authority and veneration' (*PA*, p. 205). While he might be leaving his earlier beliefs, however, he is retaining something of their form; as many critics have noted, there is a religious dimension in Stephen's literary practice.[20] His three arms serve the function of commandments and cannot be broken, even to save his own mother from suffering. Form is essential to Stephen, both in art and in life.

As Stephen refuses to articulate what he does not believe in, his silence is in some sense a silence of the 'unsaid'. As actual life becomes the topic of his writing, however, silence also becomes associated with the unsayable. Stephen's journal indicates that the 'real' is not so easily captured in words.

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20 Jaurretche, for example, argues that in *A Portrait*, Joyce 'uses the language and concepts of mystical literature to describe the mental, physical, and spiritual revelation of the artistic mind to itself' (p. 63). See also Buttigieg, 'Aesthetics and Religion in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*', *Christianity and Literature*, 28 (1979), 44-56.

Earlier in chapter five, Stephen claims that it is not only his country and his religion that hold him back, but also language: 'When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets' (*PA*, p. 171). How does a writer 'fly by' language? Here, too, 'silence' seems to function as a weapon, aimed against the imprecision of words, against their political connotations, and, again, against the dean of studies. In fact, Stephen's three weapons loosely correspond to these three institutions, although listed in a different order: against nationality, language, and religion he aims his exile, silence, and cunning.

Like religion, language is a problem for Stephen, holding him back and imposing its connotations and implicit power structures on him. His struggle with words is associated with his anger towards the dean of studies, to whom he returns again on the journal's last pages. During their meeting at the college earlier in the chapter, they discuss the correct term for the part of the lamp through which the oil is poured. The English dean refers to it as a 'funnel' while Stephen calls it a 'tundish' (*PA*, p. 158). The exchange troubles Stephen, revealing his growing anxiety about language:

> The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words *home*, *Christ*, *ale*, *master*, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language. (*PA*, p. 159)

Stephen returns to his conversation with the dean in his journal, noting that he has looked up 'tundish' in the dictionary only to discover that this word, too, is English and not Irish: 'Damn the dean of studies and his funnel! What did he come here for to teach us his own language or to learn it from us?' (*PA*, p. 212). This passage has frequently been read as a comment on the nationalistic theme in *A Portrait*. Marjorie Howes, for example, suggests that the lines reveal 'a classic colonial condition' associated with 'dispossession and resentment'; moreover, Howes, along with other scholars, reads Joyce's 'linguistic virtuosity' as a 'project to re-colonize the

English language'.[21] From this perspective, Stephen's 'unrest of spirit' is caused from an identity crisis related to imperial power structures.

The issue at stake is not only 'national', however, but, as Kenner argues, also 'metaphysical'; it is 'by submitting himself […] to the mysteries of language', Kenner suggests, that Stephen can 'probe the significance of the cosmos'.[22] That significance is not easily probed, it appears. What Stephen takes away from his exchange with the dean is the insight that language will never allow him to represent the particularity of his experiences with exactness, for there are no words that are not someone else's before they are his, no words that are not already tainted by their previous usage. With their uncontrollable connotations, words constitute a threat to Stephen's will-to-expression. For a man looking to express himself as 'freely' and 'wholly' as he can, Stephen's lack of words is a considerable problem.

Or is it a problem? Stephen's silence-as-weapon could be taken to suggest something else. As a weapon, silence is not only to be used in instances when Stephen does not want to say what he knows is not true (the 'unsaid'), it also indicates a search for a whole new language that is completely Stephen's own.[23] If this sounds like a futile endeavour, *Finnegans Wake* illustrates what such a search might entail when taken to extremes. Even so, Stephen's search for a 'mode' with which to express himself does not appear to include the kind of linguistic playfulness on which the *Wake* is built. His ambition to express himself as 'wholly *as he can*' indicates that language might not always suffice to represent the 'real' as he understands it – at the end of *A Portrait*, he might have found his own voice, but he is still without a language. The result is that his aesthetics of failure includes not only the grime of the 'real', but also the failing of language to properly represent the experience of grime.

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21 Howes, 'Joyce, Colonialism, and Nationalism, in *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, ed. by Derek Attridge, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 254-71 (p. 257). Colin MacCabe presents a similar argument about *Finnegans Wake*; see '*Finnegans Wake* at Fifty', *Critical Quarterly*, 31.4 (1989), 3-5 (p. 4).

22 Kenner, 'The *Portrait* in Perspective', in *Joyce's* Portrait*: Criticisms and Critiques*, ed. by Thomas Connolly (London: Peter Owen, 1964), pp. 25-60 (p. 34).

23 To Randy Malamud, too, the 'silence' of 'silence, exile, and cunning' refers to Stephen's search for a new language: 'he will use silence to advance communication; exile to achieve *nostos*; and cunning to discover straightforward external reality'. See *The Language of Modernism* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1989), p. 147.

Silence as the unsayable is thus a part of Stephen's aesthetics of failure. Significantly, silence is made to represent his emotions in the journal, in which the silence/sound dichotomy is used to portray what at first appears to be a dream but is eventually revealed as an attempt to capture a feeling:

> Faintly, under the heavy night, through the silence of the city which has turned from dreams to dreamless sleep as a weary lover whom no caresses move, the sound of hoofs upon the road. Not so faintly now as they come near the bridge: and in a moment as they pass the darkened windows the silence is cloven by alarm as by an arrow. They are heard now far away, hoofs that shine amid the heavy night as gems, hurrying beyond the sleeping fields to what journey's end – what heart? – bearing what tidings? (*PA*, p. 212)

This silence is one of stasis, but it is not a stasis associated with the apprehension of beauty – on the contrary, it is the kind of paralysis of which Joyce wrote in *Dubliners* and used elsewhere to describe Dublin in general, discussed in the previous chapter. The increasing sound from the hoofs breaks the silence 'as by an arrow', again suggesting the presence of a weapon, possibly raised against 'the soul of that hemiplegia or paralysis which many consider a city'.[24] A 'dreamless sleep' is the sleep of the exhausted, but the line is also a description of an existence without hope. In this journal entry, sound represents hope, arriving to cleave the paralysing silence.

Still, it is not quite clear what the sound represents: 'what tidings?' Beyond the jubilatory nature of the arrival of sound and its attack on silence, the description is imprecise. The horses' hoofs on the road suggest Stephen's imminent departure, but also his ambition to break Dublin's silence through his 'free' expression – that is, by 'forg[ing] in the smithy of [his] soul the uncreated conscience of [his] race', Stephen aspires to wake his countrymen from their 'dreamless sleep' (*PA*, p. 213). 'A voice is a sound which expresses something', Joyce noted in his 1903-04 notebook.[25] Is there

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24 Joyce in a letter to Constantine Curran in 1904; *Letters of James Joyce*, I, 55.

25 The note refers to Joyce's reading of Aristotle. Quoted in Richard F. Peterson, 'More Aristotelian Grist for the Joycean Mill', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 17.2 (1980), 213-16 (p. 213).

a voice behind the sound of the hoofs? If so, what is it saying?

Stephen is himself aware of the vagueness of what he writes, for in the entry following the description of silence and sound he comments that the passage represents '[v]ague words for a vague emotion' (*PA*, p. 212). Both the concrete reference to silence in this passage and the vagueness of the metaphorical description in its entirety invoke silence as the unsayable, rather than silence as the unsaid. Stephen cannot be more precise because he is describing something for which there are no concrete words. He is not unsatisfied with his words, though, noting that 'she' would probably like the lines. At other times in the journal, Stephen is less pleased with the words he has used. 'Disapprove of this last phrase', he writes about a previous overstatement, and at other times ellipses mark moments when he cannot arrive at an exact expression or finds himself exaggerating (*PA*, p. 211). If the young Stephen Daedalus of *Stephen Hero* thinks 'that it was possible to arrive at a sane understanding of so-called mysteries if one only had patience enough', Stephen in *A Portrait* finds that mysteries might possibly be understood, but they can rarely, if ever, be expressed (*SH*, p. 36).

If Stephen cannot illuminate others through his writing because he does not have the right words, he will instead opt for an obscure language, using it to describe 'vague emotion'. Silence is a central aspect of Stephen's aesthetics of failure, indicating his aim to represent his own 'vague emotion' about concepts like '*home*' or '*Christ*' rather than using the 'acquired speech' that does not belong to him. This silence is not one of aesthetic rupture or beauty but one of obscurity, arising out of a strong belief in the sacredness of individual expression.

Rethinking the Edwardian Novel: From Hero to Boy-Artist

It is at the end of chapter five that Stephen appears to abandon his idealized aesthetics, turning instead towards a literature rooted in the real; his journal at the very end of the novel signals that Stephen has found his own voice and that his future writing will include more 'I' and, presumably, less in the way of badly rhymed villanelles. However, Stephen's aesthetic theories in chapter five are not only contrasted with his journal at the end of

the chapter but also with the form of *A Portrait* itself. Here, I consider some aspects of Joyce's revision of the *Stephen Hero* manuscript into the published novel *A Portrait*, arguing that there is a parallel between Stephen's aesthetic turn at the end of chapter five and the changes Joyce made to the early draft. I begin, however, by looking at Joyce's re-conception of silence in the two versions of the novel.

To a large extent, the changes between the two versions relate to questions of economy and style. The approximately 230 pages that comprise the *Stephen Hero* fragment – all of which belong to what became chapter five in the revised version – were considerably pruned as they were revised for the published version. In the World's Classics edition of *A Portrait*, for example, this chapter encompasses approximately 67 pages.[26] Moreover, the changed perspective in the published novel meant that Joyce cut out most explanations regarding Stephen's relationships, coming closer to the aesthetics that characterizes *Ulysses*; 'I want the reader to understand always through suggestion rather than direct statement', Joyce told Frank Budgen about his later novel.[27] Stephen in *A Portrait* may offer some vague comments regarding his friendships, but he will not do so unless there is a reason. For example, the brief comments about Cranly in his journal at the end of *A Portrait* are caused by his sense of betrayal on seeing his friend with 'her brother': 'Well, I discovered him' (*PA*, p. 211). These lines are nothing like the lengthy passages discussing Stephen and Cranly's vacillating friendship in *Stephen Hero*. Other relationships that are barely mentioned in *A Portrait* are also described in detail in the earlier draft. These include Stephen's flirtation with Emma Clary, and his relationship with his mother, whom *Stephen Hero* portrays as an intelligent and curious woman who sits down to read Henrik Ibsen simply because the playwright interests her son. Moreover, Stephen's brother Maurice, who is an important presence in *Stephen Hero*, is almost completely absent from *A Portrait*.

The largest discrepancy between *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait* is hence that Joyce's first attempt to chart Stephen's development at length is fo-

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26 *A Portrait*, pp. 146-213.

27 Budgen, *James Joyce and the Making of* Ulysses*, and Other Writings* (London: Grayson and Grayson, 1934; repr. London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 21.

cused on his relationships, not on his inner life. Silence, consequently, is not directly connected to his inner experiences, but is mainly a social phenomenon. While *Stephen Hero* is not as focused on the surface as the Edwardian novels discussed in chapter one and the narrator's perspective is not as limited, the manuscript fragment shares its focus on social relations with Galsworthy and Bennett. It is largely through his interaction with the world that the reader encounters Stephen, and not in his inner world.

In fact, Stephen's inner world is hardly ever represented in *Stephen Hero*. On the few occasions when it is referred to, it is described by the narrator, who – like the Edwardian narrator – seldom knows more than Stephen himself.[28] For example, the narrator reveals that sometimes when out walking, Stephen 'lost the train of his thought and whenever the void of his mind seemed irreclaimable he forced order upon it by ejaculatory fervours' (*SH*, p. 69). This apparent silence is nothing like the silent moments experienced in *A Portrait*, but is merely indicative of a problem with focusing for any longer period of time. The silence also presents Stephen's mind as something not completely under his control. It is typical of *Stephen Hero* that the narrator refers to this loss of thought in the same practical manner as he/she describes the direction in which Stephen is headed. Readers do not learn anything else about his 'void' or of what, exactly, the 'ejaculatory fervours' consist, just that his 'morning walks were critical' (*SH*, p. 69).

In *A Portrait*, by contrast, the focus is constantly placed on Stephen's inner world, which is often represented by moments of silence, as discussed in the previous chapter. It is also here that differences regarding the function of silence become most conspicuous. Unlike in *Stephen Hero* – where silence is a 'void', both in Stephen's mind and in his conversations – silence in *A Portrait* represents mental activity, however abstract and unsayable. It often represents intense moments of insight and beauty. This Stephen, too, is sometimes silent in conversation, not (only) because he is full of disdain, but because sudden 'lightnings of intuition' make 'the

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28 Riquelme argues that in *Stephen Hero*, Joyce has not yet learned to 'move with assurance toward the intimate presentation of mind that characterizes the later works', including *Dubliners*; *Teller and Tale*, p. 89. Instead, the narrator becomes too dominant in the text, giving rise to a 'feeling of distance' between 'reader and character' (p. 89).

world [perish] about his feet as if it had been fireconsumed' (*PA*, p. 148). During such silent moments, his tongue 'grew heavy', making him almost physically unable to speak (*PA*, p. 148). These moments are referred to as Stephen's 'brief pride of silence' and appear to represent the kind of 'silent stasis' that he associates with aesthetic experiences (*PA*, p. 148).

There are thus few similarities between the earlier manuscript and the published novel concerning how silence is presented. Even when Stephen's artistic ambitions are associated with silence in *Stephen Hero*, there are notable differences in the function that the silence has. In a manner similar to that in which a religious disciple practises silence 'in obedience to a commandment', Stephen is described as '[schooling] himself to silence lest words should return him his discourtesy' (*SH*, p. 30). Waiting for 'his Eucharist' to come to him in the form of phrases that he 'then set about translating […] into common sense', Stephen builds 'a house of silence for himself', in which he can better hear the voice of his Eucharist, a voice that suddenly '[agitates] the very tympanum of his ear, a flame leaping into divine cerebral life' (*SH*, p. 30). Silence does not necessarily indicate a turn inwards here, however, as Stephen appears to practise silence only in order to be able to use his senses better, having his 'ears and eyes ever prompt to receive impressions'; his silence is thus a way to open up to the outer world (*SH*, p. 30). Moreover, the fact that he is 'hammering noisily' while building his 'house of silence' suggests that the silence Stephen seeks to achieve is conversational and does not necessarily indicate something unsayable (*SH*, p. 30). The 'hammering' implies that while Stephen might aim for silence, his path there is rather social, or at least characterized by expression of some kind.

In *Stephen Hero*, silence appears to be a tool for exploration, but not for probing the depths of Stephen's own self. He instead uses silence to make sense of the external world, and the passage describing his 'house of silence' indicates how he engages with his surroundings. He seeks to be quiet so that he can better hear the world, a world that he moreover often perceives through language; walking through Dublin, he fills his 'treasure-house' with words that he finds 'at haphazard in the shops, on advertisements, in the mouths of the plodding public' (*SH*, p. 30). In a manner similar to Stephen in *Ulysses*, who uses his senses to interpret the 'signs' and 'signa-

tures' of the external world, as discussed in the previous chapter, Stephen in *Stephen Hero* is a reader rather than a writer: he seeks to make sense of the words that he stumbles upon, rather than to find words of his own (*U*, III, 1, 3).

Even so, it is not primarily in order to 'read' the world surrounding him that Stephen keeps silent. Throughout *Stephen Hero*, he cultivates silence when he is with others in order to escape their conversation. Silence is his shield, used against those whom he considers less intelligent: 'Many risked the peril of rebuff to engage the young eccentric in talk but Stephen preserved a disdainful silence' (*SH*, p. 39). Silence does not always protect him against the threat of those less gifted, however; for example, a young reporter, wishing to discuss Maeterlinck, 'wounded Stephen deeply', simply by stating that he had read the play *The Intruder* (*SH*, p. 40). The reporter's comment forces a 'noncommittal banality' out of Stephen, who 'did not like to offend by the silence which the remark and the tone and the intention all seemed to deserve' (*SH*, pp. 39-40). Wounded, possibly because his banal words 'returned[ed] him his discourtesy', Stephen's inclination to be silent suggests that words should be used cautiously (*SH*, p. 30). In *Stephen Hero*, too, silence thus appears to be a weapon against the world, indicating Stephen's unwillingness to bother with 'banalities' and to articulate anything that he does not believe in wholeheartedly. While the curious reporter might not get to hear anything but banalities, the reader is in a more privileged position, as the narrator frequently clarifies Stephen's motives as far as Stephen is aware of them himself.

This chapter ends with a brief consideration of how Joyce's first novel emerged, specifically in relation to Stephen's discussion of artistic forms in *A Portrait*, in which he seeks to define the art work through its relationship to both artist and beholder (*PA*, p. 179). These forms, I argue, are possible to relate to how Joyce's 'portraits' developed, from the short, semi-fictional essay 'A Portrait of the Artist' (1904) through *Stephen Hero* to, finally, the published novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. These three texts correspond in different ways to the three artistic forms that Stephen lists in chapter five.

In conversation with Lynch, Stephen defines these three forms in relation to how the art work's 'image' is placed between 'the mind or senses of

the artist himself and the mind or senses of others' (*PA*, p. 179). The forms are: 1. lyrical, in which 'the artist presents his image in immediate relation to himself'; 2. epical, in which the artist 'presents his image in mediate relation to himself and to others'; and 3. dramatic, in which the artist 'presents his image in immediate relation to others' (*PA*, p. 180). The words 'immediate' and 'mediate' are crucial here, referring to the mediation of the literary text. The 'immediate' nature of the lyrical and dramatic forms suggests that there is no narrator present to introduce the artist's image; there is thus no distance between the image and the artist, 'no intermediary or intervening member, medium, or agent'.[29] The epical form, however, suggests the presence of someone or something between the artist and his audience. The work of art is hence '[d]ependent on or involving an intermediate person, thing, or action'.[30] Readers are apparently invited to think of these three art forms in relation to *A Portrait* itself, as Stephen implicitly draws attention to their relevance by mentioning the ballad 'Turpin Hero' as an example of a text that progresses from lyrical to dramatic form. The ballad 'begins in the first person and ends in the third person', in contrast to *A Portrait*, which is largely narrated in the third person, albeit in free indirect discourse, and ends in the first (*PA*, p. 180). Stephen's forms do not necessarily correlate with literary genre, as the forms progress 'from one to the next' within the same work, and more than one form can thus be found within the same work, as in 'Turpin Hero', and *A Portrait* itself (*PA*, p. 179).[31]

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29 'Immediate, *adj*', *The Oxford English Dictionary*, <http://www.oed.com> [accessed 11 July, 2014].

30 'Mediate, *adj*', *The Oxford English Dictionary*, <http://www.oed.com> [accessed 11 July, 2014].

31 In *Stephen Hero*, Stephen Daedalus defines the literary forms in almost exactly the same way, although here he, or possibly his creator, appears less sure of the relevance of his theory, as the list of aesthetic forms has been crossed over, as though Joyce intended to cut the passage from the manuscript. According to Theodore Spencer, who edited *Stephen Hero*, Joyce 'slashed strokes beside, under or across certain phrases, sentences and paragraphs' with a blue and a red crayon, possibly, according to Spencer, because 'he did not like them and intended to change them or get rid of them'; 'Editorial Note', in *Stephen Hero*, ed. by Theodore Spencer, John J. Slocum, and Herbert Cahoon (New York: New Directions Books, 1959), pp. 18-19 (p. 18). Stephen instead goes on to name poetry as the highest literary form, which appears equivalent to the dramatic form in *A Portrait*: the

Stephen's poem appears to be an example of the lyrical form: it uses religious imagery to describe the speaker's sexual fantasies about an unnamed woman, 'uttered' by someone who is 'more conscious of the instant of emotion than of himself as feeling emotion' (*PA*, p. 180). It is more difficult to define the form of *A Portrait* itself. If 'Turpin Hero' progresses from lyrical to dramatic, are readers of Joyce's novel to assume that *A Portrait* progresses – or regresses – from the dramatic to the lyrical, as it ends in the first person? Or should we read the journal as the 'simplest epical form', a form that, according to Stephen, 'is seen emerging out of lyrical literature when the artist prolongs and broods upon himself as the centre of an epical event and this form progresses till the centre of emotional gravity is equidistant from the artist himself and from others' (*PA*, p. 180)? Stephen in his journal does seem to consider himself at the 'centre of an epical event' as he lingers over the development of his relationship with the unnamed woman and continues to plan for his departure. The journal does not present an 'instant of emotion, a rhythmical cry', but a series of instances that in turn form a narrative (*PA*, p. 180).

It is difficult not to consider Joyce himself in relation to the theories of literature proposed by the two Stephens; the discussion of the connection between the artist's personality and the 'esthetic image' in *A Portrait* invites the comparison, as does the semi-autobiographical nature of the novel. All art, Stephen suggests, has its basis in the artist's own emotion. As the artistic expression progresses from lyrical to epical to dramatic form, the artist develops more and more distance to his emotion, so that the 'esthetic image' becomes 'purified' from the artist's personality and then 'reprojected' from his imagination (*PA*, p. 181). In the highest literary form, the dramatic, the artist's personality 'finally refines itself out of existence, impersonalises itself' (*PA*, p. 181). In the literary work that remains, the artist, 'like the God of the creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails' (*PA*, p. 181). Has Joyce 'refined' himself out of *A Portrait*? And

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'supreme artist' is the one who can 'disentangle the subtle soul of the image from its mesh of defining circumstances' and subsequently reimagine the image in 'artistic circumstances' instead (*SH*, p. 78).

if so, is he more present in the earlier versions of the novel?

It is certainly interesting to consider the genealogy of *A Portrait* in relation to Stephen's list of forms, as the different versions of the text demonstrate a development in Joyce's ideas about silence and language. The first manifestation of what was to become *A Portrait* was Joyce's short essay 'A Portrait of the Artist', written for the newly-started journal *Dana* and subsequently rejected, as W. K. Magee, the editor, found it 'incomprehensible', an assessment that quite frankly is easy to understand.[32] There is not much distance in this essay, which is autobiographical to a large extent. It is his own portrait that Joyce presents: his own image, in immediate relation to himself.[33] Germs of ideas that are developed in *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait* can be found in this essay, however, as well as in Joyce's notebooks from Paris, Pola, and Trieste.[34] For example, the 'portrait' that is presented in the text is described as not 'identificative' but 'rather the curve of an emotion', an attempt to 'liberate from the personalised lumps of matter that which is their individuating rhythm, the first or formal relation of their parts'.[35] This idea is germane to Stephen's aesthetic theory in *A Portrait*, where he discusses the 'rhythm of beauty' as the 'first formal esthetic relation of part to part in any esthetic whole' (*PA*, p. 173).

In *Stephen Hero*, the perspective has changed; the unnamed 'artist' of the earlier essay is now named Stephen Daedalus and is no longer a clear portrayal of Joyce himself. Moreover, the narrative includes a strong 'mediate' voice, a narrator, who describes and makes sense of Stephen's actions and motives. If the first essay represents Joyce's portrait in a lyrical form, in *Stephen Hero* the 'individuating rhythm' has developed into a narrative, and into a narrative which comes close to the epical form. Joyce has more

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32 Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 203.

33 Richard Ellmann describes this essay as 'an autobiographical story that mixed admiration for himself with irony', the tone of which is 'belligerent' (pp. 144, 145).

34 Joyce's notebooks have been reprinted in *The Workshop of Daedalus: James Joyce and the Raw Materials for* A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, ed. by Robert Scholes and Richard M. Kain (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965), pp. 52-5 (Paris), 80-91 (Pola), and 92-108 (Trieste).

35 Joyce, 'A Portrait of the Artist', in *James Joyce: Poems and Shorter Writings*, ed. by Richard Ellmann, A. Walton Litz, and John Whittier-Ferguson (London: Faber & Faber, 1991), pp. 211-18 (p. 211).

distance to his subject, but not enough to see himself as anything other than a 'hero': he is still 'brood[ing] on himself as the centre of an epical event', and what is depicted is still 'personal' (*PA*, p. 180)

It is *A Portrait* itself, then, that presents Joyce's portrait in a dramatic form: he has developed enough distance to his narrative to be able to represent it as an impersonal subject. Some of the cuts that Joyce made to the *Stephen Hero* manuscript make sense from this perspective. By pruning the long passages about Stephen's friendship with Cranly and by downplaying the presence of the family, for example, Joyce 'impersonalises' his narrative, cutting details that obviously connect his novel with his own circumstances:

> The personality of the artist, at first a cry or a cadence or a mood and then a fluid and lambent narrative, finally refines itself out of existence, impersonalises itself, so to speak. The esthetic image in the dramatic form is life purified in and reprojected from the human imagination. (*PA*, p. 180-1)

As Kevin J. H. Dettmar suggests, *A Portrait* is 'a novel about a devotee of an anachronistic literary cult, written by a writer who has himself outgrown his infatuation with that same cult'.[36] Through the series of versions that constitute Joyce's portraits – and that present him first as an 'artist', then as a 'hero', and, finally, as a 'young man' – we can trace not only his work's progression from the lyrical form to the epical to the dramatic, but Joyce's growing distance to himself.

In the final version of his portrait, Joyce has distanced himself enough from his own life to be able to 'purify' it and to 'reproject' it from his imagination. He is the presence who 'remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring

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36 Dettmar, 'The Materiality and Historicity of Language in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*', in *James Joyce*, ed. by Sean Latham (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2010), pp. 67-82 (p. 75). J. Mitchell Morse comments somewhat similarly on Stephen's artistic ambitions that 'Stephen Dedalus never succeeds. Only Joyce will succeed'. See 'Proteus', in *James Joyce's* Ulysses*: Critical Essays*, ed. by Clive Hart and David Hayman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 29-49 (p. 31).

his fingernails' (*PA*, p. 181).[37] What Stephen appears to describe in these lines is the absence of an overt narrator in the novel, a narrative presence that he associates with the writer of the work. Like a drama, *A Portrait* does not have a narrator who explains or comments on the action. Joyce might have stated his truth about himself in the essay 'A Portrait of the Artist'; in his final version, he no longer states but represents, having arrived at an aesthetics built on 'show, don't tell'. He is a silent presence between the lines, much like the kind of author Richardson's Miriam seeks through her reading.

While the title of Joyce's final portrait reveals that Stephen Dedalus will develop into an artist, it also implies that he is not there yet. Joyce might have been 'indifferent' to his 'impersonal' narrative, but Stephen is far from indifferent to his, and his attempts at writing in chapter five of *A Portrait* suggest that he is just beginning the journey that Joyce has himself concluded. *A Portrait* thus ends, not where the novel begins, but where Joyce began: with a couple of pages about himself, pages on which he fancies himself an artist.[38]

♦

A comparison between the silences in *A Portrait* and those in Joyce's earlier versions reveals several interesting changes. There are, for example, many more stated silences in *A Portrait* than in the earlier versions. Moreover, the 'house of silence' that Stephen Daedalus builds for himself in *Stephen*

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37 Riquelme argues that *A Portrait* is 'both the author's autobiographical fiction and the autobiography of the fictional character' Stephen, and thus a 'portrait of both artists'; *Teller and Tale*, p. 51. He reads Stephen as the text's narrator, which would, Riquelme suggests, explain 'the narrator's recurring presentation of Stephen's consciousness' (p. 52). It would also strongly imply that Stephen's artistic aspirations would eventually 'yield more valuable work than the writing he produces within the narrative' (p. 52). As Riquelme points out himself, the notation at the end of *A Portrait*, specifying place and date as 'Dublin 1904/ Trieste 1914' (*PA*, p. 213), complicates the question of the narration: do both of these dates refer to the composition of the novel or to the novel's content? Do they refer to character or author, or both (p. 61)?

38 To Levenson, the final entry in Stephen's journal at the end of *A Portrait* does tie back to the novel's beginning by reversing the sequence of events narrated on the first two pages; 'Stephen's Diary', p. 1031.

Hero indicates the young intellectual's engagement with the external world; since he wishes to be an observer, he is focused outwards. In *A Portrait*, by contrast, silence indicates that Stephen has shut the world out. Here, it is Stephen's 'mental world' that is characterized by silence, a silence that is both sought by Stephen and presented as a natural feature of thought and aesthetic pleasure. In revising the *Stephen Hero* fragment into what was to become *A Portrait*, Joyce's conception of silence consequently appears to have changed.

The published *A Portrait* is also characterized by another kind of silence: there is no longer a clear narrative presence that explains Stephen's actions and thoughts to the reader. Instead, such information is conveyed through implication. *A Portrait* presents a double perspective, in that the older artist/narrator subtly juxtaposes Stephen's aesthetic theories with his own, which are present in the shape of the novel itself. The ensuing uncertainties are part of what John Paul Riquelme describes as a 'hybrid style that, through mimicry, amalgamation, and transformation, allows us to occupy multiple perspectives virtually simultaneously'.[39] Joyce complicates the reading of his first novel by offering not *a* portrait of Stephen Dedalus, but several. The narrator in *A Portrait* may be subtly mocking Stephen, but it appears that he is simultaneously playing with the reader.

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39 Riquelme, '*Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait of the Artist*', in *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, ed. by Derek Attridge, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990; repr. 2004), pp. 103-21 (p. 106).

Chapter 6
A Silence of One's Own:
Soundscapes and Silence in the
Works of Virginia Woolf

'Because everyone I most honour is silent – Nessa, Lytton, Leonard,
Maynard: all silent; and so I have trained myself to silence; induced to it
also by the terror I have of my own unlimited capacity for feeling' [1]

'Life stand still here, Mrs Ramsay said.'
(*TL*, p. 133)

'There was complete silence in the bedroom.
Is this death? Delia asked herself'
(*Y*, p. 41)

Early in *To the Lighthouse*, Mrs Ramsay looks up from the shopping cata-
logue she is perusing with her son, suddenly seized by 'an impulse of terror'
(*TL*, p. 17). A murmur in the background has disappeared and the unex-
pected absence of one sound exposes another: the rhythm of the waves
beating against the shore. The abrupt shift in the layered soundscape – a
soundscape in which the murmur of a conversation blends with the sounds
of children playing cricket and the 'monotonous fall of the waves on the

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[1] Letter to Ethel Smyth, 29 December, 1931, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Nigel
Nicolson, 6 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1975-80), IV: 1929-31 (1978), 422.

beach' – causes Mrs Ramsay a great deal of anxiety (*TL*, p. 16). For while the waves had 'for the most part beat a measured and soothing tattoo to [Mrs Ramsay's] thoughts', they now suddenly 'thundered hollow' like 'a ghostly roll of drums [which] remorselessly beat the measure of life [and] made one think of the destruction of the island' (*TL*, pp. 16-17). A moment later, she moves from this 'tension' to 'the other extreme which […] was cool, amused, and even faintly malicious' (*TL*, p. 17). In this brief passage, then, Mrs Ramsay moves from calm to terror and then back to calm. The soundscape is her touchstone, constantly revealing the state of affairs in the household she is running. When she is gripped by terror, it is because her ears intuitively react to a change; the small shift in the sound-setting makes her instinctively apprehensive of a snag in her machinery of domesticity. Because she fears that the machinery is threatened, she senses death and destruction.

This passage from *To the Lighthouse* reveals that there is nothing constant about either sound or listening. What we hear depends on our mood, and conversely, our mood depends, at least partly, on what we hear. Mrs Ramsay's reactions to what she hears reflect her mood-changes, but are also dependent on an implicit idea of how sounds should relate to one another and on earlier associations between certain sounds and events. These associations are not stable but keep evolving; the interrupted conversation between Mr Ramsay and Charles Tansley, for example, at first appears to be a snag in Mrs Ramsay's machinery but is immediately reassessed in terms of amusement. Moreover, there is an inherent doubleness to some of the sounds that Mrs Ramsay hears. For instance, the sound of the waves carries associations both of the peacefulness of 'some old cradle song' and of 'destruction' (*TL*, p. 17).

Silence in Woolf's fiction is part of the intricate patterns that characterize her aural settings and is linked to some of her central themes, such as the life of the mind, alienation, creativity, death, and mourning. Like sound, silence frequently has to be understood in relation to the soundscape as a whole as well as to the specific circumstances and associations that affect the character who perceives it. Each occurrence of silence functions according to its own logic, representing a particular moment and a particular feeling. It is therefore difficult to discuss silence in Woolf's

oeuvre as a whole, and throughout this chapter, I return to *To the Lighthouse* as an example of one particular Woolfian soundscape, charting the novel's structure of sound, silence, and listening. As can be seen in the passage from that novel discussed above, the soundscape constantly moves between different sounds, and between silence and sound.

In Woolf's writing, the movement between silence and sound – and between different interpretations of the same sound – is paralleled by concomitant movements between inner and outer selves, individuality and society, inner and outer worlds, being and nothingness. Gillian Beer uses the word 'oscillation' to describe how Woolf's writing 'offers constant shifts between discourses from moment to moment'.[2] Such shifts can be clearly seen both in Woolf's soundscapes and in the nature of her characters' listening. In the passage discussed above, for example, Mrs Ramsay's listening oscillates between sound and absence of sound, and then back to another sound. She 'fall[s] in one second from the tension which had gripped her to the other extreme' (*TL*, p. 17). This fluctuation between different, often opposing, states of mind creates a complex web of interrelations in Woolf's *oeuvre*. Indeed, the movement itself appears to be in continuous progression, shifting between different configurations and changing definitions of life and self, thus suggesting a permanent state of restlessness and ambiguity.

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2 Beer, *Virginia Woolf: The Common Ground* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), p. 13. Bryony Randall similarly finds a frequent tension between opposing states, such as 'chaos and order, the random and the structured, movement and stasis, the transitory and the enduring'; see *Modernism, Daily Time, and Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 156 *et passim*. In her reading of *Orlando*, Laura Marcus connects the notion of identity oscillating 'from one state of being to another' with modernity: 'in the twentieth century Orlando veers between a singularity and a multiplicity of selves and subjectivities'; *Virginia Woolf* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1997), pp. 121, 122. Geoffrey H. Hartman discusses a rhythm that is characterized by a 'stop and go pattern' in Woolf's writing; 'Virginia's Web', in *Beyond Formalism: Literary Essays 1958-1970* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), pp. 71-84 (p. 72). Patricia Ondek Laurence finds a rhythm specifically between sound and silence in Woolf's texts, which is part of 'an embodiment of her vision of mind and life and reality'; *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 190. See also pp. 119-20, 188-9. Lucio P. Ruotolo characterizes Woolf's oscillation as a series of interruptions; *The Interrupted Moment: A View of Virginia Woolf's Novels* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), p. 2 *et passim*.

At the same time, none of these states ever seems complete in its own right; on the contrary, the very idea of remaining still is regarded by Woolf as highly suspect and incongruous with the nature of reality. Life moves and so, evidently, must the self. In fact, movement appears to be an essential aspect of being to Woolf. Unlike Richardson's Miriam, who finds silence and stillness in her unchanging, inner core, and unlike Joyce's Stephen, who would rather exist in his silent 'mental world' than in his noisy surroundings, Woolf's characters are seldom content – or, indeed, able – to remain in silence for any longer period (*PA*, p. 173). They are not presented as having unchanging inner cores and they need movement in order not to stagnate. While sound and silence are frequently juxtaposed in Richardson's and Joyce's works as well, their soundscapes do not present the same kind of vibrant oscillations. In Woolf's fiction, by contrast, sound and silence are intertwined, immanent within each other as a constant possibility.

Although Woolf famously claimed that '[l]ife is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged' but a 'luminous halo', her presentation of sound and listening suggests something else; the oscillations between sounds and silences in her writing – and the movements between different states of minds – present consciousness in Woolf's fiction as a series of seemingly opposing states.[3] Although these opposing states sometimes strive to merge, their incompatibility is rarely considered problematic but is presented as the self's natural movement. In *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Woolf questions the concept of a 'unity of the mind', as she writes of her sense of being: 'Why do I feel that there are severances and oppositions in the mind, as there are strains from obvious causes on the body?'[4] The nature of listening in Woolf's fiction builds on both kinds of strains, for

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3 Woolf, 'Modern Fiction', *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Andrew McNeillie and others, 6 vols (London: The Hogarth Press, 1986-2011), IV: 1925-1928, ed. by Andrew McNeillie (1994), 157-65 (p. 160).

4 Woolf, *A Room of One's Own and Three Guineas*, ed. by Morag Shiach (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 126. In her long essay, Woolf adopts Coleridge's idea of the androgynous mind to find a solution to the mental division: 'in each of us two powers preside, one male, one female […] It is when this fusion takes place that the mind is fully fertilized and uses all its faculties' (p. 128). Woolf imagines this androgynous mind as a whole bigger than its two parts.

sound affects body and mind alike, constantly revealing the complex interplay between self and world. Describing how characters listen and how they relate to silence and sound is thus an important method for characterization in Woolf's writing.

There are some general tendencies concerning silence and sound in Woolf's fiction that are worth noting. One is the association between silence and inner worlds. As in the works of Richardson and Joyce, Woolf's silent moment often represents instances of insight and a sense of self-discovery. There is an ambivalence concerning the silent moment in Woolf's fiction, however, and while her earlier novels often favour the personal, silent space as one necessary for freedom, contemplation, and mental expansion, her texts from the 1930s tend to move away from the 'I' of the individual space towards the 'we' of the shared space.[5] Such a shared space is, for example, the city, whose sounds are frequently described with reference to wholeness and harmony, and increasingly so in Woolf's later work, which reflects her increased political awareness in the years preceding World War Two, an awareness that is, I argue, also reflected in her soundscapes.[6]

Woolf's use of silence has received considerable critical attention. Most notably, Patricia Ondek Laurence's full-length study of silence in Woolf's works, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition* (1991) – already discussed in the introduction – examines a number of aspects of Woolf's silence. It is primarily focused on absent speech-acts, which Laurence summarizes in her three categories 'the unsaid', 'the unspoken', and 'the unsayable'.[7] Before Laurence, Harvena Richter argued that 'what people do *not* say, through the silence "between the acts" of spoken thought

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5 On Woolf's move from the individual to the collective, see for example Rachel Blau DuPlessis, *Writing beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1985), pp. 162-77.

6 On Woolf's later fiction and politics, see for example Alex Zwerdling, *Virginia Woolf and the Real World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 271-323; Christine Froula, *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Avant-Garde: War, Civilization, Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), pp. 259-324; Marina MacKay, *Modernism and World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 22-43; and John Whittier-Ferguson, 'Repetition, Remembering, Repetition: Virginia Woolf's Late Fiction and the Return of War', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 57.2 (2011), 230-53.

7 Laurence, p. 1.

or symbolic action', is one of three central methods Woolf uses to present her characters.[8] Charlotte Walker Mendez has argued that silence is important in Woolf's work in 'three major ways': I. Communication between characters; II. Style; and III. '*The Mystery of Being*', which is an 'exploration of the metaphysical dimensions of silence' that Woolf's characters often experience.[9] I return to the first of Mendez's categories below and to the others in the next chapter, where I discuss the unsayable in Woolf's works. Beyond Richter, Mendez, and Laurence, a number of full-length studies, essays, and articles discuss some or several aspect(s) of silence in one or more of Woolf's novels; these discussions have largely focused on silence as opposed to language.[10]

In contrast, this chapter focuses on silence in relation to Woolf's soundscapes. While sound in Woolf's fiction has received considerable critical attention in recent years, silence has rarely been discussed other than in

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8 Richter, *Virginia Woolf: The Inward Voyage* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 42. It should be noted that Richter does not examine silence at great length in her study, beyond a brief discussion of the 'conjunction of "space" with "silence"' in Woolf's writing, primarily in *Between the Acts*; see pp. 228-31 (p. 228).

9 Mendez, 'Virginia Woolf and the Voices of Silence', *Language and Style*, 13.4 (1980), 94-112. See also 'I Need a Little Language', *Virginia Woolf Quarterly*, 1 (1972), 87-105.

10 In a series of articles, for example, Edward Bishop explores 'the problem of how words can encompass and communicate human experience', which he (rightly) regards as a recurrent theme in Woolf's fiction; see 'Toward the Far Side of Language: Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out*', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 27.4 (1981), 343-61 (p. 343). See also 'The Subject in *Jacob's Room*', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 38.1 (1992), 147-75; 'Writing, Speech, and Silence in *Mrs Dalloway*', *English Studies in Canada*, 12.4 (1986), 397-423; and 'Pursuing "It" Through "Kew Gardens"', *Studies in Short Fiction*, 19.3 (1982), 269-75. Lyndall Gordon compares Woolf to T. S. Eliot, and argues that they both 'use silence to light up the more elusive corners of experience'; 'Our Silent Life: Virginia Woolf and T. S. Eliot', in *Virginia Woolf: New Critical Essays*, ed. by Patricia Clements and Isobel Grundy (London: Vision Press; Totowa: Barnes & Noble Books, 1983), pp. 77-95 (p. 80). In *The Singing of the Real World: The Philosophy of Virginia Woolf's Fiction* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1986), Mark Hussey considers how Woolf portrays the hidden patterns of reality in the unspoken, unseen, and unheard. Recently, Hussey has revisited related issues in '"Thoughts without Words": Silence, Violence, and Memorial in Woolf's Late Works', *Le Tour Critique*, 2.2 (2013), 87-98.

fairly general considerations of soundscapes in her works.[11] My own examination attempts to situate Woolf's silences within the complex web of sound in her writing, but it also acknowledges the problems with doing so. The chapter begins with a review of Woolf's soundscapes and the oscillation between silence and sound in them. I am interested in how such oscillations might affect how we read individual passages in Woolf's writing, but also in the larger kind of movement mentioned above: one that comes to favour sound over silence. This preference is especially prevalent in Woolf's last two novels, in which silence increasingly becomes associated with rupture. A separate subsection discusses silence and sound in *To the Lighthouse*, in order to give an example of the complexity of the sound setting in one of Woolf's novels. Finally, I explore the connection between silence and death that reappears in Woolf's fiction. Focusing on *Jacob's Room* and, again, *To the Lighthouse*, I argue that Woolf's use of silence to represent absence and rupture is associated with silence as a communal symbol of loss in the post-war years.

Silence, Soundscapes, Wholeness

In the short story 'Kew Gardens' (1919) – one of Woolf's first experimental pieces of fiction – Woolf describes a scenario where a silence is broken by the sudden intrusion of sound: 'Voices. Yes, voices. Wordless voices, breaking the silence suddenly with such depth of contentment, such passion of

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11 On sound in Woolf's fiction, see Melba Cuddy-Keane, 'Modernist Soundscapes and the Intelligent Ear: An Approach to Narrative Through Auditory Perception', in *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, ed. by James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), pp. 382-98, and 'Virginia Woolf, Sound Technologies, and the New Aurality', in *Virginia Woolf in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, ed. by Pamela L. Caughie (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), pp. 69-96; Beer, *Virginia Woolf: The Common Ground*, pp. 112-24; Angela Frattarola, 'Developing an Ear for the Modernist Novel: Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, and James Joyce', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 33.1 (2009), 132-53, 'Listening for "Found Sound" Samples in the Novels of Virginia Woolf", *Woolf Studies Annual*, 11 (2005), 133-59; Michele Pridmore-Brown, '1939-40: Of Virginia Woolf, Gramophones, and Fascism', *PMLA*, 113.3 (1998), 408-21; and Rishona Zimring, 'Suggestions of Other Worlds: The Art of Sound in *The Years*', *Woolf Studies Annual*, 8 (2002), 127-56. There are also a number of articles and essays focused on individual novels and short stories; see further references below.

desire' (*CSF*, p. 95). Having acknowledged these voices, however, the narrator seems to take a step back, suddenly reappraising the soundscape: 'breaking the silence? But there was no silence; all the time the motor omnibuses were turning their wheels and changing their gear; like a vast nest of Chinese boxes all of wrought steel turning ceaselessly one within another the city murmured' (*CSF*, p. 95). What is first perceived as a silence turns out to be a conglomeration of city-sounds, diffused in the background so as not to be noticed; only the sudden interruption of voices breaks the appearance of silence and reveals it, when listened to more attentively, not as silence, but as sound.[12]

A silence revealed as a background 'murmuring': such soundscapes are common in Woolf's fiction, and are often associated with ideas of harmony and wholeness. In *The Years*, what is described as a 'lull – a silence' is immediately clarified as including 'the sounds of the London night; a horn hooted; a siren wailed on the river' (*Y*, p. 350). In *Mrs Dalloway*, 'silence' and 'hum' are used synchronously to describe the sound-setting of St James's Park (*MD*, p. 5). In *Between the Acts*, a description of silence includes the rustling of trees (*BA*, p. 109), and in *The Voyage Out*, a clock is ticking 'in the midst of the universal silence' (*VO*, p. 139). Indeed, it appears that what Mr Erskine claims in *Jacob's Room* could equally be applied to Woolf's own fiction: 'There's no such thing as silence' (*JR*, p. 79).

Indeed, Mr Erskine refers precisely to the human tendency to unconsciously ignore common and contextual background sounds; in the Durrants' garden, he claims to be able to 'hear twenty different sounds on a night like this without counting […] voices' (*JR*, p. 79). This kind of 'silent sound' is what Melba Cuddy-Keane defines as 'generalized' sound: a conglomeration of sounds that melt into one another and into the background, creating a soundscape that is easily passed over by a mind that is focused elsewhere.[13] The background noise in 'Kew Gardens' is a good example of generalized sound, which is a common feature of Woolf's

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12 To Cuddy-Keane, the 'absence or interruption of semantic content' in 'Kew Gardens' 'prompts us to read the narrative sonically'; 'Modernist Soundscapes', p. 386.

13 Cuddy-Keane, 'Modernist Soundscapes', p. 386. R. Murray Schafer refers to contextual background sounds as keynote sounds; *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Rochester: Destiny Books, 1977), p. 9, *et passim*.

soundscapes; it does not require active listening and is thus easily ignored by listeners who are not aware of it or who think of it as silence. Only when startled into listening by the unexpected intrusion of sudden sound does the narrator of 'Kew Gardens' realize that there was never any silence to break, just different sound layers of varying intensity, all melted into the background. Similarly, Mrs Ramsay – in the passage discussed at the beginning of this chapter – only actively notices the soundscape when one of the background sounds suddenly disappears.

In Woolf's fiction, generalized sound is particularly important for creating a sense of community. Background sound confirms the consistency of existence: that everything is as it should be and that nothing needs immediate attention. Woolf's characters seek unity through sound, finding their own place within the larger community by relating and listening to its background sound, a sound that often has a soothing effect. 'The roar of London […] is round us', says Louis in *The Waves*, and goes on to describe how '[m]otor-cars, vans, omnibuses' are all 'merged in one turning wheel of single sound' and how all 'separate sounds – wheels, bells, the cries of drunkards, of merry-makers – are churned into one sound, steel blue, circular' (*W*, p. 106). The circularity of the sound suggests something that envelops and includes the listener. Louis is placed at the centre of the 'wheel'; he is part of its movement as, indeed, it is part of him.

The link between background soundscapes and wholeness is somewhat stronger in Woolf's city-novels.[14] In *Night and Day*, *Mrs Dalloway*, and *The*

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14 Cuddy-Keane suggests that the city 'plays a formative role in stimulating' a general 'increased auditory awareness' in the modern period, and most commentators on Woolf and sound focus on her city-novels; see 'Modernist Soundscapes', p. 382. See also Frattarola, 'Developing an Ear' (focused on *The Years*); Zimring, 'Suggestions of Other Worlds' (focused on *The Years*); Anne Lovering Rounds, 'Dissolves in *Mrs Dalloway*: The Soundscapes of a Novel', *Literary Imagination*, 13.1 (2011), 58-70; and Christopher A. Sims, 'The Function of Technological Sound in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*: Touchstones of Reality and Summons from Daydreams', *The Scientific Journal of Humanistic Studies*, 3.4 (2011), 120-9. Generalized sound is also part of the rural and nautical settings of Woolf's novels set outside London: *The Voyage Out*, *To the Lighthouse*, *Between the Acts*, and parts of *Night and Day*. The perpetual sound of the sea in *To the Lighthouse* – mixed with the voices of the children and the guests – creates the generalized soundscape that Mrs Ramsay only realizes is there when it is disrupted.

Years, sound is often presented as the essence of city life and movement. Indeed, Woolf's British capital is generally presented in a positive light.[15] London's 'streets, parks, and gardens [are] breeding grounds of liberty and communality' in Woolf's novels, David Bradshaw asserts; moreover, her characters 'are swept up in the inclusive embrace of London's teeming streets as soon as they leave their homes'.[16] London imparts a sense of belonging to Woolf's characters – or, as Rishona Zimring argues, 'release' – and of being at the centre of some undecided action.[17] When Mary Datchet is on her way to her office at Russell Square, she likes 'to pretend that she [is] indistinguishable from the rest', and when Clarissa Dalloway steps out on to the street, what she finds there is life: 'in the swing, tramp, and trudge; in the bellow and the uproar; the carriages, motor cars, omnibuses, vans, sandwich men shuffling and swinging; brass bands; barrel organs; in the triumph and the jingle and the strange high singing of some aeroplane overhead was what she loved; life; London' (*ND*, p. 76; *MD*, p. 4). Woolf's capital is often presented as a place to lose any restricting sense of self, a place where her characters are able to disappear into something larger – something beyond the self.

While generalized sound is often associated with a sense of wholeness and community, stated silences are frequently associated with disruption: they break the weave of the general soundscape, displace focus, and separate the listener from his or her surroundings. Such disruptions are far from always presented as something undesirable, for the kind of alone-ness that is associated with silence also implies independence and individuality.

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15 Deborah Longworth places Woolf among a number of female writers in the period 'for whom the city operates as not just as setting or image, but as a constituent of identity, and who translate the experience of urban space into their narrative form'; *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City, and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 7. Andrew Thacker asserts that unlike E. M. Forster's 'critique of the alienating city, Woolf associates the incessant buzz of urban life with an integral sense of human subjectivity'; *Moving Through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 158.

16 Bradshaw, 'Woolf's London, London's Woolf', in *Virginia Woolf in Context*, ed. by Bryony Randall and Jane Goldman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 229-42 (p. 229).

17 Zimring, p. 133.

Even so, an understanding of silence in Woolf's fiction depends on many things, for example the nature of the perceiving character's listening, his or her mood, and the associations pertaining to certain sounds. Neither sound nor silence has a fixed meaning; both depend on the nature of the soundscape as a whole, on the context, and on who listens. Silence thus constitutes a shifting metaphor that at times accentuates emotionally charged scenes and at other times represents alienation or even danger.

As in Richardson and Joyce's fiction, internal silences signal a turn inwards and a shifting focus. In Woolf's novels, such silent moments are often presented as a form of metaphorical space – a room of one's own in the mind, as it were. This space constitutes something inherently private, allowing Woolf's characters to reach a secret, inner place that is frequently described in terms of exploration or travel, reinforcing the idea of the metaphorical space.[18] In *Night and Day*, Katharine Hilbery, while ostensibly working on the biography of her grandfather, is all the while taking part 'in a series of scenes such as the taming of wild ponies upon the American prairies, or the conduct of a vast ship in a hurricane round a

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18 External silences are also connected to creativity for Woolf. When she famously asserted in 1928 that a woman needs £500 a year and 'a room of one's own' in order to be able to write, she implicitly suggested that what was actually needed was a silence of one's own; the room of one's own needed in order to create is tantamount to a space where the writer will not be disturbed (*A Room of One's Own and Three Guineas*, p. 3 *et passim*). Jane Austen, Woolf suggests, had neither room nor silence, and consequently wrote prose instead of poetry, as it required '[l]ess concentration'; Woolf quotes from a memoir by Austen's nephew, in which he marvels at his aunt's productivity, given that she had no room of her own and thus had to write 'in the general sitting-room, subject to all kinds of casual interruptions'; *A Room of One's Own and Three Guineas*, p. 86; James Edward Austen-Leigh, *A Memoir of Jane Austen* (London: Richard Bentley, 1870; repr. London: The Folio Society, 1989), p. 91. In his memoir, Austen-Leigh writes that the door to sitting-room 'creaked when it was opened', a disturbance Austen did not wish to have removed as it 'gave her notice when anyone was coming' (p. 91). In Woolf's fiction, the need for a room of one's own frequently recurs, and often in connection to silence. In *The Voyage Out*, for example, Helen realizes that Rachel needs 'a room cut off from the rest of the house', a room that subsequently becomes a 'sanctuary' for Rachel during her visit with the Ambroses, and where she experiences a 'universal silence': 'when she shut the door Rachel entered an enchanted place, where the poets sang and things fell into their right proportions' (*VO*, p. 136). Katharine in *Night and Day*, like Austen, '[slips] her paper between the leaves of a great Greek dictionary' at the mere sound of steps on the staircase (*ND*, p. 42).

black promontory of rock'; and Mrs Ramsay is able to travel 'anywhere' through her 'core of darkness', discussed further below (*ND*, p. 42; *TL*, p. 53). Both these examples are linked to silence and to an unawareness of the external world.

While interaction and communication are predominantly related to sound in Woolf's fiction, there are significant instances of silence as a representation of intimacy. Rachel and Terence's love-scene, for example, is essentially characterized by silence, a silence that not only serves a dramatic function but also communicates the intensity of the charged moment. Both proposal scenes in *The Voyage Out* are accompanied by such silences. The long silence that ensues between Susan and Arthur after she has accepted his proposal is paralleled by a more intense silence between Rachel and Terence before they profess their love for each other. The 'profound' silence that is described as having 'fallen upon the world' in this scene 'weigh[s] upon them' until they confirm their mutual love, after which the silence is broken by 'their voices which joined in tones of strange unfamiliar sound which formed no words' (*VO*, p. 316).

As their engagement is finally confirmed, the silence between Rachel and Terence loses its edge and becomes – as it did for Susan and Arthur – a shared space of intimacy that emphasizes the couple's strong bond: 'Long silences came between their words, which were no longer silences of struggle and confusion but refreshing silences, in which trivial thoughts moved easily' (*VO*, pp. 329-30). Allison Pease reads Rachel and Terence's silence in this scene as one of 'profound boredom'.[19] While Terence's proposal in the jungle certainly does not belong within 'the setting of clichéd romance', as Pease puts it, it is hard to read this scene – so charged with the non-verbal presence of intense emotion – as presenting any 'alienation of boredom' or

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19 Pease, *Modernism, Feminism, and the Culture of Boredom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 115. Mark Wollaeger similarly reads the engagement scene as signalling a misguided union, and as a 'prolonged moment of surreal dislocation in which the pair seems drugged and confused, the landscape uncanny and disorienting'; 'The Woolfs in the Jungle: Intertextuality, Sexuality, and the Emergence of Female Modernism in *The Voyage Out*, *The Village in the Jungle*, and *Heart of Darkness*', *MLQ*, 64.1 (2003), 33-69 (pp. 56-7).

a 'diminishment of [Rachel's] individual existence'.[20] On the contrary, shared silences in Woolf's early novels often suggest intimacy and romantic communion, as though strong emotions resist sound and, in particular, language. In *Night and Day*, too, Katharine's feelings for Ralph are represented by a silence that 'wrapt her heart in its folds' (*ND*, p. 485).

The strong presence of silence in these love-scenes captures the characters' infatuation and their feeling of expectation of something yet to come. Moreover, it construes the intimacy between the women and the men as more than just a close relationship. As silence often represents that which is essentially private in Woolf's fiction – such as the inner worlds of individual characters – the couples do not only appear to be in deep communion in these scenes, but to actually merge, each partner reaching into the other's core. Unlike Edward Bishop – who argues that the bond between Rachel and Terence has to be 'reaffirmed in words' – I read Woolf's representation of emotions and inner turmoil as consistently defying the limits imposed upon them by linguistic expression; this is an issue I return to and discuss at length in the next chapter.[21]

Woolf's external silences – that is, silences that are described as belonging to the external world – receive their full significance only when they are contrasted with sound. During Rachel and Terence's love-scene, this can be seen in how the silence between them becomes more pronounced because it is framed by and interspersed with sounds; the 'grasses and breezes sounding and murmuring all round them' reveal the couple's silence as an inner experience, unrelated to their noisy external surroundings (*VO*, p. 330). These sounds emanate from the forest and its animal life; while the sounds appear to situate Rachel's and Terence's intimacy in the external world, they are also described as coming from 'a remote world' (*VO*, p. 317).[22] The sounds also help 'bridge' the distinct and separate na-

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20 Pease, pp. 115, 114.

21 Bishop, 'Toward the Far Side of Language', p. 353.

22 There is a strong echo of Conrad in *The Voyage Out*, and especially in the depiction of the jungle's silence, which is somewhat reminiscent of the silence in *Heart of Darkness* – discussed briefly in chapter one of the present study – although in Woolf's version, the silence is far from threatening or unpleasant. For discussions of Conrad's influence on Woolf, see Wollaeger; Rosemary Pitt, 'The Exploration of Self in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Woolf's

ture of the silences and make them form a larger whole: 'Sounds stood out from the background making a bridge across their silence; they heard the swish of the trees and some beast croaking in a remote world' (*VO*, pp. 316-17). Here as elsewhere, it is the contrast between silence and sound that reveals the soundscape's metaphorical attributes rather than any individual instance of silence.

As was pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, the world Woolf presents in her fiction is associated with an idea of oscillation; in her writing, movement between various states of mind appears an essential aspect of life. Consequently, the silent moment does not constitute a 'mental world' to inhabit permanently, as it does for Stephen Dedalus (*PA*, p. 173). Woolf's fiction instead depicts experiences of inner silences as threatening if they cannot be disrupted; the inner world is a place where her characters risk getting lost. In such cases silence signals danger, indicating that essential connections with the outer world have disappeared. There are several examples of such scenarios in Woolf's fiction. The next chapter looks at the threatening inner silence of Rhoda in *The Waves*. Here, instead, Rachel's experience of silence in *The Voyage Out* is in focus.

The silence in Rachel's room – her 'sanctuary' – first liberates her from the constraints of the social world. Soon, however, it appears that when alone, Rachel severs essential ties with the world and becomes unable to concentrate her mind enough to perceive and interpret the shapes of her external surroundings. Silence is a significant component of this experience; as Rachel grows more conscious of her inner self, she perceives the space surrounding her as a 'universal silence' (*VO*, p. 139). That the silence is 'universal' indicates an overpowering experience that drowns out any external stimuli. Indeed, just a few lines earlier, Rachel was contemplating the 'regular rhythm' of the 'small noises of midday' (*VO*, p. 139). Alone in her room, Rachel grows oblivious of her surroundings and even of her own body, turning her attention inwards instead:

The Voyage Out', *Conradiana*, 10 (1978), 141-54; Jed Esty, *Unseasonable Youth: Modernism, Colonialism, and the Fiction of Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 132-9; and Shirley Neuman, '*Heart of Darkness*, Virginia Woolf and the Spectre of Domination', in *Virginia Woolf: New Critical Essays*, ed. by Patricia Clements and Isobel Grundy (London: Vision Press; Totowa: Barnes and Noble Books, 1983), pp. 57-76.

> Her dissolution became so complete that she could not raise her finger any
> more, and sat perfectly still, listening and looking always at the same spot.
> It became stranger and stranger. She was overcome with awe that things
> should exist at all... She forgot that she had any fingers to raise... The things
> that existed were so immense and so desolate. (*VO*, pp. 138-9)

During the 'universal silence', Rachel's conception of the outer world breaks down, as though the reality surrounding her no longer makes any sense to her, or as if the shapes and sounds around her are enigmas that signify some inner shape.

The experience of silence as something essentially mental – something that closes Rachel's senses and her perception of the external world – seems a premonition of what is to come in one of the last chapters of the novel: the depiction of Rachel's fatal fever, during which she is unable to perceive or connect to the surrounding world. During her illness, Rachel is described as seeing and hearing 'nothing but a faint booming sound, which was the sound of the sea rolling over her head' (*VO*, p. 397). Lost in the labyrinth of her feverish mind, Rachel projects her hallucinations and inner experiences on the external world so that her inner visions appear to be part of her room.

While Rachel's hallucinatory experience of silence is an inner one, it is generally external silences that are associated with alienation and isolation in Woolf's fiction – an association that is at times quite pronounced. For example, silent interiors are often linked to women's isolated position in a society in which they are not allowed to participate fully, exemplifying what Andrew Thacker calls Woolf's 'houses in the brain': a connection between the spatial configuration of the private room and a character's inner world.[23] The silence that Woolf's female characters often perceive in their homes correlates to the inertia and isolation of their minds. For example, the Chelsea house in *Night and Day*, where Katharine guides literary tourists among the objects of the dead great man ('What! His very own slippers!'), is more a museum than a home, and certainly more attuned to the dead than to the living; here, Katharine is expected to serve the mem-

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23 Thacker, p. 152.

ory of her dead grandfather rather than define her own self (*ND*, p. 333).[24] No wonder, then, that Ralph Denham feels as if 'a thousand softly padded doors had closed between him and the street outside' when he enters Katharine's home for the first time, a feeling that emphasizes the difference between the stagnant atmosphere on the inside and the moving life outside (*ND*, p. 4).[25]

A similar but even more striking sound/silence dichotomy appears in *The Years*, where the silent home of the young Pargiter girls symbolizes their isolation while the social world they long to join is represented by street-sounds. Delia and Eleanor look longingly out of the window of their silent living-room, hearing a world that they cannot share. Reluctantly, they turn their backs to the window and return to their silent existence in the stuffy house, where, as Delia says, they have 'nothing whatever to do' (*Y*, p. 19):

> Then she went, creaking in her cheap shoes, to the window and drew the curtains. [...] When she had drawn the curtains in both rooms, a profound silence seemed to fall upon the drawing-room. The world outside seemed thickly and entirely cut off. Far away down the next street they heard the voice of a street hawker droning; the heavy hooves of van horses clopped slowly down the road. For a moment wheels ground on the road; then they died out and the silence was complete. (*Y*, p. 18)

The silent torpor in this passage stands in stark contrast to the exterior world of the cityscape, from which the girls intermittently hear the sounds of freedom. It is a world these women cannot join, at least not yet.

Clarissa Dalloway is described as experiencing a similar sense of exclusion as she re-enters her home after her city-excursion, finding it to be a

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24 For a discussion of the Hilberys' home as a museum, see Andrea P. Zemgulys, '"*Night and Day* is dead": Virginia Woolf in London "Literary and Historic"', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 46.1 (2000), 56-77.

25 Ralph represents the new generation, and his strong-minded opinions on the merit of the Victorians stand in stark contrast to the Hilbery home: 'No, we haven't any great men [...] I'm very glad that we haven't. I hate great men. The worship of greatness in the nineteenth century seems to me to explain the worthlessness of that generation' (*ND*, p. 12).

'vault' and herself 'a nun who has left the world and feels fold round her the familiar veils and the response to old devotions' (*MD*, p. 26). Going up to her private room to rest, she experiences 'an emptiness about the heart of life' (*MD*, p. 28). Involuntarily isolated in her silent attic, Clarissa remembers how the sound of a 'violin next door' could make 'the world come closer', for 'so strange is the power of sounds at certain moments' (*MD*, p. 29). In the attic, by contrast, Clarissa is set apart from the communal sound-web outside.

The instances above indicate a pattern in Woolf's writing, a pattern in which external silences suggest an involuntary breach in communication with the world. Characters who experience such silences long for sounds that would enable them to connect and once more belong to the world. Often such silences indicate a blurring between inner and outer worlds, so that it is somewhat unclear where exactly the silences occur. Walking through London, for example, Peter Walsh has an intense experience of silence that at first appears to describe the setting but is soon revealed as an inner absence:

> As a cloud crosses the sun, silence falls on London; and falls on the mind. Effort ceases. Time flaps on the mast. There we stop; there we stand. Rigid, the skeleton of habit alone upholds the human frame. Where there is nothing, Peter Walsh said to himself; feeling hollowed out, utterly empty within. Clarissa refused me, he thought. (*MD*, p. 44)[26]

Silence and hollowness represent Peter's moment of sudden despair, brought about by the memory of how Clarissa rejected him. This is an

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26 Peter's experience of silence in this passage seemingly alludes to the 'extraordinary silence and peace' that is described earlier in the novel when the crowd along the Mall watches the airplane: 'As they looked the whole world became perfectly silent' (p. 18). Both of these silences have been connected to the two-minute silence that became part of the Armistice day commemorations (discussed further below): at 11 o'clock on 11 November, everything came to a standstill for two minutes. See Laura Marcus, *Virginia Woolf*, pp. 72-3, and Bradshaw, '*Mrs Dalloway* and the First World War', *The British Library*, [n.d.] https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-literature/articles/mrs-dalloway-and-the-first-world-war [accessed 13 September, 2016], and '"Vanished, Like Leaves": The Military, Elegy and Italy in *Mrs Dalloway*, *Woolf Studies Annual*, 8 (2002), 107-25 (pp. 117-18).

inner silence, suddenly '[falling] on the mind'. Significantly, before this moment of silence and grief, Peter was content as he 'stepped down the street [...] with the flow of the sound, the direct downright sound of Big Ben striking', feeling that he is part of a bigger whole (*MD*, p. 43). The silence perforates the unifying weave created through the city soundscape; it isolates Peter, emphasizing his lonely, mute despair. Sound also breaks the moment of silence, allowing Peter to continue through London once more as a part of the city, 'as if the random uproar of the traffic had whispered through hollowed hands his name, not Peter, but his private name which he called himself in his own thoughts' (*MD*, pp. 47-8). Peter's attention moves between the city and his inner self – a movement paralleled by shifts between sound and silence.

'All is Harmony, Could We Hear It': Silence and Sound in Woolf's Late Fiction

Woolf's last two novels bring a Utopian dimension to her generalized soundscapes. In *The Years* and *Between the Acts*, a change is discernible in how the characters generally relate to sound, suggesting a change in the presentation of self and community and a shift towards a preference for 'we' over 'I'.[27] While still offering relief to the characters, silence is predominantly associated with isolation in these novels, leaving the individual vulnerable at a time of social upheaval. Instead, generalized sound is presented as the preferred sound-setting: even more than in the earlier works, characters who willingly turn their ears towards the background are apt to experience a sense of harmony and social unity. Sound represents wholeness – not only for the community at large, but for the individual.

Woolf's last two novels paint a rather dark picture of the inter-war period. An important theme in *The Years* is the rise of fascism in England in the years following the First World War and *Between the Acts* is set in the

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27 The political dimension of Woolf's novels from the 30s has elicited extensive critical commentary, a commentary that sometimes but not always includes *The Waves*. See for example Linden Peach, 'No Longer a View: Virginia Woolf in the 1930s and the 1930s in Virginia Woolf', in *Women Writers of the 1930s: Gender, Politics and History*, ed. by Maroula Joannou (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 192-204.

period immediately before World War II, making war a strong presence for the reader, if not necessarily for the characters.[28] But while both novels are pessimistic in their depiction of (imminent) social disruption, there is also a suggestion of a Utopian ideal, characterized by a sense of unity, as several critics have noted. Christine Froula, for example, sees in Miss La Trobe's pageant an idea of democracy, represented by a '"we" of orts, scraps, and fragments' that constitute 'the people, the demos, the community'; in *Between the Acts* as a whole she finds a movement to 'water and replenish a fighting force' for civilization.[29]

The preference for generalized sound is connected to this sense of to-getherness. While silence isolates and alienates the individual, the ideal soundscape incorporates all sounds into one big web, one big hum, similar to Mrs Ramsay's rhythm of domesticity. The soothing background sound in *The Years* lets the self merge with something bigger, thereby replacing, in the words of Zimring, 'an anxiety over incompleteness and disintegration with a sense of possible coherence'.[30] Time and again, generalized sound is not the image but the signal of social unity, of safety, and of belonging: 'The uproar, the confusion, the space of the Strand came upon [Eleanor] with a shock of relief. She felt herself expand'; 'the roar of London encircled the open space in a ring of distant but complete sound' (*Y*, pp. 99, 218). By listening to the city's soundscape and by letting this sound enter the body as sound-waves, the individual character becomes part of the web, experiencing a sense of belonging and relief.

That sense of belonging often remains out of reach for the characters. The final party in *The Years* – in the 'Present Day' chapter – illustrates the intrinsic difficulty of achieving unity. Longing to experience togetherness at the party, Peggy has to push herself to stop thinking – instead forcing

28 On fascism and antisemitism in *The Years*, see Bradshaw, 'Hyams Place: *The Years*, the Jews and the British Union of Fascists', in *Women Writers of the 1930s: Gender, Politics and History*, ed. by Maroula Joannou (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 179-91.

29 Froula, *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Avant-Garde*, pp. 319, 318.

30 Zimring, p. 138. Zimring's main argument, however, is that sound 'disrupts unity'; she reads *The Years* as 'an attempt to negotiate and inhabit [a fragmented culture] in spite of the silence and solitude that beckon with illusions of unity and coherence' (pp. 136, 130)

her mind 'to become a blank', accepting 'quietly, tolerantly, whatever came' – in order to be able to laugh with the others: 'But her laughter had had some strange effect on her. It had relaxed her, enlarged her. She felt, or rather she saw, not a place, but a state of being, in which there was real laughter, real happiness, and this fractured world was whole; whole, and free' (*Y*, p. 351). Peggy's laughter gives her insight, opening up a 'state of being' previously unavailable to her.

Significantly, this insight is connected to sound, not to silence. By listening to the sound of laughter and by joining in that sound herself, Peggy perceives the world as 'whole and free' and herself as part of it. Only a moment later, she loses the feeling, however: 'Yes, it was over; it was destroyed she felt. Directly something got together, it broke' (*Y*, p. 354). Peggy's failure to maintain the feeling of wholeness is linked to her inability to abandon her sense of self in order to merge with the surroundings. Attempting to describe her vision, she manages to '[break] off only a little fragment', causing an embarrassing silence that disrupts the moment of shared gaiety (*Y*, p. 352). Her attempt to acknowledge her feelings in words also constitutes the kind of disruption that Zimring argues is typical of the novel's soundscape.[31] Words are too specific; it is the general nature of the laughter that allows Peggy to escape her sense of restriction.

The connection between sound and wholeness is even more conspicuous in *Between the Acts*, where William and Isa imagine Lucy Swithin's (religious) tendency to 'one-making' – that is, to perceiving everything as part of one big whole – by thinking of a gigantic ear that is able to unify all the disparate sounds of the world:

> 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. 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. (*BA*, p. 125)

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31 Zimring, pp. 129-30, 136.

This 'gigantic ear' appears to serve the same function that Mrs Ramsay does in *To the Lighthouse*: it unites sounds, creating a harmonious whole. While William and Isa dismiss the idea of wholeness as mistaken – 'Well, if the thought gave her comfort [...] let her think it' – it is only because they seem unable to experience anything similar (*BA*, p. 126). They are separate, 'unhappy', and 'caught and caged; prisoners' (*BA*, p. 126). They cannot abandon themselves in generalized sound, but perceive all sounds distinctly and painfully:

> All their nerves were on edge. They sat exposed. The machine ticked. There was no music. The horns of cars on the high road were heard. And the swish of trees. They were neither one thing nor the other; neither Victorians nor themselves. They were suspended, without being, in limbo. Tick, tick, tick went the machine. (*BA*, p. 127-8)

In this passage, too – a passage where there are many sounds, but, significantly, no music – there is a sense of losing oneself, but the experience does not result in any sense of wholeness. Something essential is lost, but nothing is gained.

While wholeness and unity represent desirable states of mind, they are also hard to achieve, at least for any length of time. Woolf's characters struggle to find a sense of wholeness but often fail. This failure is signalled by unnerving silences, of which there are many in *The Years* and *Between the Acts*: 'They ate in silence [...] Somewhere there's beauty, Delia thought, somewhere there's freedom' (*Y*, p. 11); 'She knocked and waited. There was no sound [...] she could just hear paperboys crying death... death... death' (*Y*, p. 102); 'the clocks were irregular, as if the saints themselves were divided. There were pauses, silences.... Then the clocks struck again' (*Y*, p. 202); 'Empty, empty, empty; silent, silent, silent. The room was a shell, singing of what was before time was; a vase stood in the heart of the house, alabaster, smooth, cold, holding the still, distilled essence of emptiness, silence' (*BA*, p. 27); 'The picture looked at nobody. The picture drew them down the paths of silence' (*BA*, p. 33). The same sense of disruption is noticeable in the perception of concrete sounds that pierce through generalized sound and refuse to blend into one whole, as with William and

Isa in *Between the Acts*, and as with Peggy during the final party in the 'Present Day' chapter in *The Years*: 'Far away she heard the sounds of the London night; a horn hooted; a siren wailed on the river [...]. On every placard at every street corner was Death; or worse – tyranny; brutality; torture; the fall of civilization; the end of freedom' (*Y*, p. 350). The generalized sound in the background might entail a loss of individuality but the sense of comfort and togetherness that it generates also offers protection in a world where the particularity of each sound and each silence is attended by its own individual horror.

While the silent moment in Woolf's earlier fiction is generally presented as a relief and the inner self as a place to seek adventure and knowledge, her last two novels present silence as disrupting the generalized soundscape. Silence not only perforates the sound weave, it also represents the individual's isolation as threatening at a time of great social unrest.[32] An example of such a silence occurs in the 1917 chapter of *The Years*, where Renny and Maggie are hosting a dinner party when the siren suddenly wails, announcing the threat of an air raid. As the dinner guests wait for something to happen, an ominous silence settles on the room, representing the collective fear. The phrase 'There was profound silence. Nothing happened' is repeated twice, with some variation, emphasizing the duration of the experience and the tension in the room as the characters wait for any sound (*Y*, p. 262). This unnatural silence signals danger by obliterating the generalized sound in the background. It isolates the individual and prevents the dinner guests from finding comfort in one another. The oppressive silence in the room does not lift even after the threat has passed: 'Nobody spoke. It was very quiet. The clocks that used to boom out the

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32 To Sanja Bahun, the silences in *Between the Acts* represent 'occlusions' from history, such as, for example, the role of peasants. Bahun argues that 'a profound emancipation of the un-recorded arises' through various kinds of silences in the novel, as Woolf 'empower[s] those whose voices have remained out of history's earshot'. See 'Broken Music, Broken History: Sounds and Silence in Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts*', in *Virginia Woolf and Music*, ed. by Adriana Varga (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), pp. 229-58 (pp. 248, 250).

hour in Westminster were silent' (*Y*, p. 266). No one can break this silence, it seems, for conversation does not pick up again during the rest of the scene: 'They were silent'; 'He did not answer'; 'there was silence in the room'; 'Again they sat silent, looking at the fire' (*Y*, pp. 266, 267, 268). Any urge towards wholeness and unity has been suppressed, as the menacing silence isolates the characters from one another and from the rest of the city as well.

My argument here is that Woolf's apparent preference for generalized sound over silence in *The Years* and *Between the Acts* reflects not only her growing political engagement in the years leading up to and during World War Two, but the sense of community that the war engendered. Woolf clearly felt ambivalent about that experience of togetherness. In her journal, for example, she repeatedly describes and mourns the loss of individuality that was brought by the war. A journal entry soon after the outbreak of war in 1939 describes her dejection: 'Everybody is feeling the same thing: therefore, no one is feeling anything in particular. The individual is merged in the mob'.[33] Yet Woolf's fiction suggests that the 'mob' also offered a sense of comfort during the war years. Becoming part of the larger wholeness – losing the sense of self and merging with the generalized soundscape – provides Woolf's characters with a shelter against the experience of rupture. As a consequence, silence in Woolf's last two novels becomes associated with fragmentariness and a sense of claustrophobia: there is no space for expansion.

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33 22 October, 1939, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Anne Olivier Bell, 5 vols (London: The Hogarth Press, 1977-84), V: 1936-41 (1984), 242. Similarly, in an entry following the Armistice in 1918, Woolf writes that the feeling of togetherness that the war had generated was already dispersed: '[m]entally the change is marked too. Instead of feeling all day & going home through dark streets that the whole people, willing or not, were concentrated on a single point, one feels now that the whole bunch has burst asunder & flown off with the utmost vigour in different directions. We are once more a nation of individuals'; 15 November, 1918, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, I: 1915-19 (1977), 217.

Mrs Ramsay's Murmur:
Listening to *To the Lighthouse*

So far, this chapter has offered a number of rather general observations regarding Woolf's use of silence and sound. Before moving on to discuss the connection between silence and bereavement in Woolf's writing, I return to the soundscape of *To the Lighthouse* in order to present a more detailed example, not only of the oscillation between silence and sound in an individual work but of how that soundscape may affect the interpretation of the work in question.

As discussed at the very beginning of this chapter, sound often signals harmony and togetherness in Woolf's fiction. Throughout 'The Window', the pulse of the background sound reassures Mrs Ramsay that her machine of domesticity is up and running; it is by relocating the background sound that Mrs Ramsay manages to silence her 'impulse of terror':

> She listened, as if she waited for some habitual sound, some regular mechanical sound; and then, hearing something rhythmical, half said, half chanted, beginning in the garden, as her husband beat up and down the terrace, something between a croak and a song, she was soothed once more, assured again that all was well [...]. (*TL*, p. 17)[34]

Disparate elements blend into Mrs Ramsay's 'mechanical sound', which constitutes what I refer to in the following as her 'rhythm'. Mrs Ramsay's love pulsates in and through this background rhythm, in which the fairy tale she reads to her son 'was like the bass gently accompanying a tune, which now and then ran up unexpectedly into the melody', and in which the thought of her marriage gives 'the solace which two different notes, one high, one low, struck together, seem to give each other as they combine' (*TL*, pp. 48, 34). Mrs Ramsay's constant returns to the throb of the blended background sounds illustrate not only her endless need of affirmation but the pervasiveness of her mission: to perpetuate the rhythm, to

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34 Hussey similarly observes that the sound of the sea is 'the base of the rhythmic pattern' that Mrs Ramsay perceives; *The Singing of the Real World*, p. 51.

secure her family's happiness, to marry off everybody else.

Throughout 'The Window', Mrs Ramsay struggles to keep the rhythm flowing; she falls in and out between its pulses, moving back and forth between sound and silence, and between the currents of life and a sense of immobility. Disappointed with and 'discomposed' by her husband, for example, Mrs Ramsay suddenly feels that 'the entire joy, the pure joy, of the two notes sounding together' diminished, and made 'the sound die on her ear now with a dismal flatness' (*TL*, p. 35). Similarly, during the dinner-party, Mrs Ramsay suddenly senses a lack of beauty, which reveals her failure to unify her family and guests into wholeness and harmony:

> Nothing seemed to have merged. They all sat separate. And the whole of the effort of merging and flowing and creating rested on her. Again she felt, as a fact without hostility, the sterility of men, for if she did not do it nobody would do it, and so, giving herself the little shake that one gives a watch that has stopped, the old familiar pulse began beating, as the watch begins ticking – one, two, three, one, two, three. And so on and so on, she repeated, listening to it, sheltering and fostering the still feeble pulse as one might guard a weak flame with a newspaper. (*TL*, p. 69)[35]

The rhythm that is needed to ensure the success – not only of the party but of life itself – depends on Mrs Ramsay's strength to keep it going.

The threat of things coming undone is constant, as though the ominous sound Mrs Ramsay sometimes hears in the waves is persistently threatening the bliss of family life. Watching the children playing catch, there is suddenly 'a sense of things having been blown apart, of space, of irrespon-

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35 In the 1914 chapter in *The Years*, Martin Pargiter's discomfort at Kitty Lasswede's dinner party is represented through similar auditory responses. As is the case for Mrs Ramsay, the fact that Martin can perceive individual sounds at the beginning of the party signals its failure: 'When a party worked all things, all sounds merged into one' (*Y*, p. 225). When he begins to relax, the uncomfortable distinctiveness of the street sounds begins to fade: 'He listened to the sounds in the street. He could just hear the cars hooting; but they had gone far away; they made a continuous rushing noise. It was beginning to work' (*Y*, p. 227). When he no longer perceives the outside sounds as distinct and separate, but rather as a whole, he feels himself blend together with the others into that atmosphere of wholeness that to him constitutes a successful social event.

sibility', during which all those present 'looked sharp-edged and ethereal and divided by great distances' (*TL*, p. 61). Significantly, Mrs Ramsay breaks the spell with the sound of her voice, 'bringing Prue back into the alliance of family life again', once more enveloping them all in the reassuring generalized sound of domesticity (*TL*, p. 61).

In its most extreme manifestation, the rhythm that Mrs Ramsay strives to generate and then to maintain vibrates into a point of stillness. The harmonious wholeness that Mrs Ramsay eventually achieves during her dinner-party is described as a 'profound stillness', which stays around the group 'like a fume rising upwards, holding them safe together'; during this moment of wholeness, Mrs Ramsay finds 'the still space that lies about the heart of things, where one could move or rest' (*TL*, pp. 85, 86). It is thus in stillness and not in sound that Mrs Ramsay finds the heart of the wholeness she constantly endeavours to create. While described as a stillness, this moment yet encompasses movement, as it is said to rise 'upwards, holding them'.

Mrs Ramsay is herself described as silent at several points in the narrative; '[s]he was silent always', it is claimed in 'The Window', and Lily returns to Mrs Ramsay's silence in 'The Lighthouse', describing her as 'silent' and 'glad [...] to rest in the extreme obscurity of human relationships' (*TL*, pp. 27, 147). To a certain extent, this silence parallels the 'murmuring' that Mrs Ramsay engenders – for her silence does not necessarily constitute the absence of sound, but rather suggests the absence of speech, or even just the absence of anything self-revelatory in her talk. When she is with others, Mrs Ramsay does not reach inside herself but focuses outwards. What she says is rarely personal: 'though she might have said at some moment of intimacy when stories of great passion [...] came her way how she too had known or felt or been through it herself, she never spoke' (*TL*, p. 27). The vague sound that surrounds Mrs Ramsay flows from the kind of general remarks that seem so 'silly, superficial, flimsy' to Mr Tansley (*TL*, p. 70). Mrs Ramsay might not say many things worth remembering, but the art of her conversation lies in its ability to bridge disparate elements, to unite fragments into wholeness. She 'put a spell on them all' with her 'vibration of love' (*TL*, pp. 82, 83). That vibration is generated by the flow of her unremarkable conversation. It is not only Mrs Ramsay's conversation that

generates the rhythm, however, but also her listening. 'The house seemed full of children sleeping and Mrs Ramsay listening', Lily muses (*TL*, p. 43). By acknowledging the other characters' 'sounds' – by being attuned to every nuance and shift of tone – Mrs Ramsay substantiates her family's and guests' existence and envelopes them into the wholeness that she weaves.[36]

It is only when she is not in the presence of others that Mrs Ramsay stops listening and instead turns her focus inwards to herself. Her experience of stillness when alone is not rooted in harmonious wholeness of the kind felt during the dinner-party. Instead, Mrs Ramsay's silent moments depend on her being able to step out of her surroundings and forget them completely for a minute:

> She could be herself, by herself. And that was what now she often felt the *need* of – to think; well not even to think. To be silent; to be alone. All the being and the doing, expansive, glittering, vocal, evaporated; and one shrunk, with a sense of solemnity, to being self, a wedge-shaped core of darkness, something invisible to others. (*TL*, p. 52)

It is fitting that such an experience is associated with silence rather than sound, as sound is intimately tied to Mrs Ramsay's machinery of domesticity. Her social self – described as a 'surface', 'what you see us by' – disappears in silence, allowing her to rest: 'Losing personality, one lost the fret, the hurry, the stir' (*TL*, p. 53). During her moment of silence, Mrs Ramsay experiences liberation from the pressures of being a wife, a mother, and a hostess. This silence at first appears to be an act of obliteration, for all that remains after the external circumstances of her life have 'evaporated' is silence and darkness. Indeed, there are suggestions that Mrs Ramsay thinks of her private moment as a kind of temporary death. These are thoughts of pleasure, not regret, for Mrs Ramsay's silent moment is a

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36 Indeed, in 'The Lighthouse', the memory of his mother suddenly *ceasing* to listen to him makes James remember how he wanted to kill his father: 'if there had been an axe handy, a knife, or anything with a sharp point he would have seized it and struck his father through the heart. His mother had gone stiff all over, and then, her arm slackening, so that he felt she listened to him no longer, she had risen somehow and gone away and left him there, impotent, ridiculous, sitting on the floor grasping a pair of scissors' (*TL*, p. 153).

'triumph over life', during which 'things came together in this peace, this rest, this eternity' (*TL*, p. 53). The bliss of the moment is connected to a brief experience of non-existence, of disappearance from the world.

As often with silent moments in Woolf's fiction, Mrs Ramsay's silence is associated with a sense of adventure. Indeed, there is something unreal, almost fantastic, about the world suddenly expanding inside Mrs Ramsay. It is not 'as oneself' that one finds rest, she concludes, but 'as a wedge of darkness' (*TL*, p. 53). This darkness – like the silence surrounding her – indicates that the experience is wholly unrelated to the senses or to the world as it is commonly experienced. A 'wedge of darkness' suggests something rather small, but the space opening up inside Mrs Ramsay appears infinite in its range: 'Her horizon seemed to her limitless. There were all the places she had not seen; the Indian plains; she felt herself pushing aside the thick leather curtain of a church in Rome. This core of darkness could go anywhere, for no one saw it' (*TL*, p. 53). For Mrs Ramsay, the silent moment is much more than an exploration of her inmost being. It lays her open to the 'strangest adventures' and a 'range of experience [that] seemed limitless' (*TL*, pp. 52-3). If her external world is characterized by a solid web of sound, her inner world is represented through silent, endless space.

In some ways, Mrs Ramsay's exploration of her inner self is reminiscent of the moment of silence in *Pilgrimage* (discussed in chapter two), during which Miriam senses a pattern underlying the whole of existence, connecting things that appear disparate. Similarly, Mrs Ramsay reveals that there is 'a summoning together, a resting on a platform of stability' in her inner darkness, suggesting that Woolf's novel also comprises an underlying pattern that connects and amalgamates discrete things and beings (*TL*, p. 53). Where Miriam in *Oberland* experiences a blurring between self and nature, unsure of where the mountain ends and she herself begins, there are no boundaries between Mrs Ramsay and her surroundings. Without the clear surface of her social self, the confines between herself and the world appear to have evaporated, too, allowing Mrs Ramsay to merge with the world.

The lighthouse plays an important part in this merging, because as she lifts her eyes to meet the third stroke of its beam, Mrs Ramsay feels as though she is 'meeting her own eyes' and as though the beam is 'searching as she alone could search into her mind and her heart' (*TL*, p. 53). The idea

of the 'beam' being directed at Mrs Ramsay has already been introduced in the novel. Earlier in 'The Window', Mr Bankes's 'worship' is presented as a 'beam': 'Looking along his beam [Lily] added to it her different ray, thinking that [Mrs Ramsay] was unquestionably the loveliest of people' (*TL*, p. 42). Neither beam nor ray appears to define Mrs Ramsay, however; while confirming her loveliness, Lily acknowledges that there is something incongruous about her, something 'different too from the perfect shape which one saw there' (*TL*, p. 42). Lily senses another 'shape' in Mrs Ramsay, a shape that cannot emerge when she is in company. Conversely, it is when '[leaning] to things, inanimate things' that Mrs Ramsay feels understood and in a sense realized, experiencing that the objects 'expressed one; felt they became one; felt they knew one, in a sense were one' (*TL*, p. 54). The outer world thus mirrors Mrs Ramsay's inner self, revealing an affiliation between herself and the world beyond what she is able to experience with other human beings.

In recognizing the lighthouse's beam as part of herself, there is also a suggestion of Mrs Ramsay not merging with her surroundings but becoming something different in order to be able to see herself. By becoming the beam, she can look at herself from the outside and receive a confirmation otherwise unattainable, since her inner self is 'something invisible to others' (*TL*, p. 52). It is significant that it is with her eyes and not with her ears that Mrs Ramsay communes with the lighthouse, as it is the ear that is her tool for wholeness. That she is using her eyes suggests a search for the particular, a mode of being that is associated with Lily in the novel; I return to this issue below. Through the strange act of approaching her self as not-self – as something essentially foreign and yet intimately particular – Mrs Ramsay performs an act of self-love.[37] Watching herself thus, she feels 'an

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37 Makiko Minow-Pinkney argues that this scene reveals a division in Mrs Ramsay that enables her 'auto-affection' in this scene: 'one part of the subject lovingly touching another'; *Virginia Woolf and the Problem of the Subject: Feminine Writing in the Major Novels* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1987), p. 95. To Laura Doyle, however, the sexualized description of Mrs Ramsay's engagement with the lighthouse beam reveals 'a power imbalance at the core' of her 'love relationship with the world', as she '[channels] her sexualized intercorporeal impulses into a patriarchal heterosexuality'; '"These Emotions of the Body": Intercorporeal Narrative in *To the Lighthouse*, *Twentieth Century Literature*, 40.1 (1994), 42-71 (p. 53).

irrational tenderness' for herself, as though 'there curled up off the floor of the mind, rose from the lake of one's being, a mist, a bride to meet her lover' (*TL*, p. 54). There is something decidedly erotic in this strange going to and turning back between Mrs Ramsay and the lighthouse's beam; remembering how she has seen it at night, 'stroking the floor', feeling that it was 'stroking with its silver fingers some sealed vessel in her brain whose bursting would flood her with delight', Mrs Ramsay recollects how she had 'known happiness, exquisite happiness, intense happiness' (*TL*, p. 54). For all her efforts to merge, it appears that bliss is something she experiences on her own when focused on herself as set apart from the wholeness.

Significantly, when Mrs Ramsay attempts to break her meditative state of mind, it is by turning her ear towards the external world, seeking for 'some sound, some sight' to guide her out of her 'solitude' (*TL*, p. 54). That solitude, however, adds an essential dimension to Mrs Ramsay, suggesting that she is more than just – in the words of Theresa L. Crater – 'the Angel in the House, the fertile all-providing earth mother to her children and husband, the creator of social comfort to her guests, the comforter of the sick and the poor'.[38] While Crater argues that Lily is 'the first of Woolf's characters' who 'dives into the underwater world of consciousness' and the first to 'survive the passage, to return and create from this gap', Mrs Ramsay's silent moment strongly suggests that she, too, dives and returns, and that she is in fact the more successful diver.[39] Before discussing similarities and differences between Mrs Ramsay and Lily further, however, I return briefly to Mrs Ramsay's pervasive rhythm, looking at its effects on the other characters in the narrative.

Several of the other characters appear to associate Mrs Ramsay with a pulse or a sound. This is especially the case with Lily, who describes how 'there hung about [Mrs Ramsay], as after a dream some subtle change is felt in the person one has dreamt of, more vividly than anything she said, the sound of murmuring' (*TL*, p. 44). But Mr Bankes, too, realizes that Mrs Ramsay's beauty rests on 'the quivering thing, the living thing' (*TL* ,

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38 Crater, 'Lily Briscoe's Vision: The Articulation of Silence', *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature*, 50.2 (1996), 121-36 (p. 125).

39 Crater, p. 125.

p. 27). In his turn, Mr Tansley feels the beauty of Mrs Ramsay in the way she expresses her enthusiasm over the circus, although he remains unable to merge with her rhythm; he 'could not say it right' and 'could not feel it right', and at the dinner-party 'felt extremely, even physically, uncomfortable', as all was 'in scraps and fragments' (*TL*, pp. 13, 74). And James, vaguely remembering his mother in 'The Lighthouse', thinks of 'voices, harsh, hollow, sweet [...], and brooms tapping; and the wash and hush of the sea' (*TL*, p. 139). While his memories also contain images, they are dominated by sound and by the rhythm of domestic life.

If domestic bliss is represented through an all-pervasive rhythm that weaves people closely together in 'The Window', in 'The Lighthouse', by contrast, things fall apart – quite literally so – for the novel's last section emphasizes distance and separateness rather than community and closeness. Following the death of Mrs Ramsay, there is no one to orchestrate disparate sounds into unity; sounds, and people, remain distant and separate. To Lily, the result is 'silence' and 'emptiness', as she privately strives to come to terms with the loss of Mrs Ramsay (*TL*, p. 157). Between Lily and Mr Ramsay 'an awful pause' ensues as she struggles against his 'insatiable hunger for sympathy', epitomized in the groan he lets out 'with the force of some primeval gust': a sound that has no other effect than to separate them further (*TL*, pp. 125-6). Trying to reach through to his daughter Cam, Mr Ramsay finds her 'so silent' (*TL*, p. 138). Cam, in turn, hears her father's voice repeat 'We perished, each alone' over and over in her head (*TL*, p. 137). Her brother James experiences a 'strain' that becomes 'acute' whenever he hears 'the rustle of someone coming, the tinkle of someone going' – he feels relief only as '[t]hey all seemed to fall away from each other again and to be at their ease' (*TL*, p. 152-3). These examples all constitute disparate sounds with pauses and silences in between, emphasizing the characters' isolation and loneliness. Without Mrs Ramsay, nothing unites fragments into wholeness.

To Lily, that dissolution is not an altogether unfavourable experience, as she, unlike Mrs Ramsay, is drawn to the spaces between things. Her attitude to sound and listening serves as an interesting contrast to the harmony that Mrs Ramsay seeks through her ears. Instead of perceiving wholeness, Lily experiences sounds individually, with pauses in between; she often notices silences. This disparateness is linked to her painting, which demands not

only that she focuses on the individual thing rather than experiencing the whole, but also that she separates herself from the rest:

> drawn out of gossip, out of living, out of community with people [...]. Always [...] before she exchanged the fluidity of life for the concentration of painting she had a few moments of nakedness when she seemed like an unborn soul, a soul reft of body, hesitating on some windy pinnacle and exposed without protection to all the blasts of doubt. (*TL*, p. 131)

Unlike Mrs Ramsay, who folds everything – every sound and every person – into her harmony, Lily unfolds sounds and people, separating them from one another. '[R]oused as usual by something incongruous', she is drawn not to harmony but to divergence (*TL*, p. 149).

The difference in how Lily and Mrs Ramsay relate to sound and silence is germane to the implicit struggle at the heart of the novel. This struggle has often been connected to the emergence of a female independence; with the Mrs Ramsays of the world dead, no one is there to soothe the Mr Ramsays, a role Lily quite clearly does not want to play.[40] Lily's choice of

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40 As Gabrielle McIntire points out, in her novel, Woolf stages 'a symbolical killing of the abstract ideal of the "Angel in the House", because 'Mrs. Ramsay could literally not make it past World War I into the brave new world of a (gradual) reconceptualization of what and who women could be'; 'Feminism and Gender in *To the Lighthouse*', in *A Cambridge Companion to* To the Lighthouse, ed. by Allison Pease (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 80-91 (p. 88). Brenda R. Silver complicates McIntire's argument (and those of others) in her examination of the shifting attitudes to Mrs Ramsay over time, in 'Mothers, Daughters, Mrs. Ramsay: Reflections', *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 37.3-4 (2009), 259-74. From being predominantly perceived as 'the idealized vision of womanhood, motherhood, unity, continuity, and fertility' up until the late 1970s, Silver points out, Mrs Ramsay has instead gradually been re-conceptualized as an outdated version of womanhood and a threat to female independence (p. 259). The very different readings of Mrs Ramsay and of the novel as a whole that Silver draws attention to remind us first and foremost that literary interpretation often belongs in specific contexts (such as, for example, second-wave feminism). An interesting aspect of Silver's article is her discussion of how personal readings of Mrs Ramsay often are, relating to implicit ideas of what both womanhood and motherhood ought to be. In Ann Banfield's words: 'Nurse, fate and siren mingle in this mother'; *The Phantom Table: Woolf, Fry, Russell, and the Epistemology of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 226.

art over marriage is significant, for to practise her art, she requires silence and not sound. In fact, the phrase with which Mrs Ramsay describes her moment of silence ('To be silent; to be alone') has already been alluded to by Lily in her unvoiced response to Mrs Ramsay's desire for her to get married: 'she liked to be alone; she liked to be herself' (*TL*, p. 43).[41] The sense of wholeness that is required for Mrs Ramsay's domesticity makes individuality unachievable, and, consequently, renders artistic creation impossible. In 'The Lighthouse', the mere idea of having to interact with Mr Ramsay makes painting impossible for Lily. Her artistic pursuits constitute a separate reality for her; she cannot merge the distinct parts of her own life into wholeness, let alone anyone else's.

Lily's ambivalence towards Mrs Ramsay – how she is both drawn to and sceptical of Mrs Ramsay's 'deceptiveness of beauty' – has been much discussed and is noticeable in her attitude towards her hostess's harmonizing sounds (*TL*, p. 43).[42] Lily both invites Mrs Ramsay's 'murmuring' – indeed, at one point tries to 'start the tune of Mrs Ramsay in her head' – and tries not to become dependent on it (*TL*, p. 42).[43] Like many other sounds in Woolf's fiction, this 'murmuring' suggests intimacy. Hearing it, Lily longs for wholeness and communion: 'Could loving, as people called it, make

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41 The similarities in the phrase imply an affinity between the two scenes and between Lily and Mrs Ramsay, suggesting that Mrs Ramsay's secret self – her 'wedge of darkness' – would have preferred a life similar to Lily's: 'She took a look at life, for she had a clear sense of it there, something real, something private, which she shared neither with her children nor with her husband. A sort of transaction went on between them, in which she was on one side, and life was on another, and she was always trying to get the better of it, as it was of her; and sometimes they parleyed (when she was alone)' (*TL*, p. 50).

42 See for example Laura Marcus, *Virginia Woolf*, pp. 94-6; Elizabeth Abel, *Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 68-83; and Jane Lilienfeld, '"The Deceptiveness of Beauty": Mother Love and Mother Hate in *To the Lighthouse*', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 23.3 (1977), 345-76.

43 As Emily Dalgarno observes, beauty is an obstacle, which 'prevents Lily Briscoe from integrating her aesthetic theory with the practice of painting'; *Virginia Woolf and the Visible World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 85.

her and Mrs Ramsay one? for it was not knowledge but unity she desired' (*TL*, p. 44).[44]

Not knowledge, but unity: these words illustrate Lily's ambivalent stance in relation to Mrs Ramsay. For even as she is swept along by Mrs Ramsay's rhythm, it is knowledge Lily longs for, as she imagines how the 'chambers of the mind and heart' of the older woman are filled with 'tablets bearing sacred inscriptions, which if one could spell them out would teach one everything' (*TL*, p. 44). But Mrs Ramsay is not interested in conveying theory; she only teaches through her practice. To Lily, 'the ineffectiveness of action' that she associates with Mrs Ramsay stands in contrast to the 'supremacy of thought' that she herself represents (*TL*, p. 160). Moreover, Lily appears unable to actually achieve wholeness even when she wishes for it: '[n]othing happened. Nothing! Nothing!' (*TL*, p. 44). Throughout the novel, Mrs Ramsay's rhythm, unity, and action are contrasted with Lily's silent focus, sense of distance, and thought.

The contrasts between the women appear distinctly in relation to what they actually have in common: the impulse to create. For Mrs Ramsay, too, is an artist of sorts, using her beauty and her murmur to create unity:

> There it was, all round them. It partook, she felt [...] in eternity; [...] there is a coherence in things, a stability; something, she meant, is immune from change, and shines out [...] in the face of the flowing, the fleeting, the spectral, like a ruby; so that again tonight she had the feeling she had had once today already, of peace, of rest. Of such moments, she thought, the thing is made that remains for ever after. This would remain. (*TL*, p. 85)

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44 This line has been the focus of some debate, often in relation to the novel's philosophical concerns. To Banfield, it presents Mrs Ramsay as an 'other-worldly mother' and relates to Lily's struggle with 'the reality behind appearances' and, ultimately, death (pp. 227-8). In opposition to Banfield, Timothy Mackin finds that Woolf imagines Lily's unity as an 'expansion of the powers of immediate, inner experience', an expansion that he sees as illustrative of 'a philosophical position that is neither empiricist nor idealist but which represents a more paradoxical state of affairs in which the world is at once inside and out, both certain and contingent'; 'Private Worlds, Public Minds: Woolf, Russell and Photographic Vision', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 33.3 (2010), 112-130 (p. 113).

Sound, rhythm, murmuring – these are Mrs Ramsay's methods for achieving her art of wholeness.[45] Using her body as a vessel, she merges isolated things into one entity, in a similar manner to how separate sounds come together to create one generalized soundscape. Lily herself recognizes how Mrs Ramsay turned 'this external passing and flowing [...] into stability', thus making 'something' that 'survived' – something 'like a work of art' (*TL*, p. 133). Emily Blair connects Woolf's representation of 'domestic management' to a nineteenth-century idea of a 'feminine aesthetic', rooted in an idea of 'creating aesthetically pleasing "wholes" in the domestic setting'.[46] As Blair points out, while Woolf has (rightly) been associated with a critique of such 'domestic practices', her works present an ambivalence towards female domestic creativity and, in *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, she does not treat the 'gift' of 'hostessing' ironically: '[t]he hostess and her creation become the moment in which things come to-

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45 To Marco Caracciolo, there are two aesthetics in *To the Lighthouse*, based on time and space, respectively; Mrs Ramsay's 'making of the moment something permanent' represents a formalist aesthetics to Caracciolo, one which 'imposes a shape on the shapeless' and is hence primarily spatial (*TL*, p. 133). Lily's painting, by contrast, constitutes an 'aesthetics of virtuality', an aesthetics that is somehow linked to the verbal narrative which describes it, and consequently to temporality. There are several problems with such a reading. For example, Mrs Ramsay's 'art work' is completed in 'The Window', while Lily's painting is an ongoing project; Caracciolo is thus contrasting the characters' respective arts at different stages in their development. Moreover, the contrast between eye and ear in the novel suggests that it is Mrs Ramsay's 'art' that should be associated with temporality; it is built on a continuous rhythm and builds on memory. As with Stephen's 'modalities' in the 'Proteus' episode in *Ulysses*, Lily's painting and her focus on sight link her art to spatiality: it is a case of '*Nebeneinander*', of objects being placed 'next to one another'. See 'Leaping into Space: The Two Aesthetics of *To the Lighthouse*', *Poetics Today*, 31.2 (2010), 251-84 (pp. 259, 264).

46 Blair, *Virginia Woolf and the Nineteenth-Century Domestic Novel* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), p. 1. To William R. Handley, Mrs Ramsay's art is the dinner she hosts, an art that is 'implicated' in the 'social world it feeds'; should that world fall apart, Handley argues, as it eventually does, it will also 'unravel' Mrs Ramsay. See 'The Housemaid and the Kitchen Table: Incorporating the Frame in *To the Lighthouse*', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 40.1 (1994), 15-41 (p. 33). Minow-Pinkney sees Mrs Ramsay as an artist 'whose raw materials are emotions' (p. 86). Ann Ronchetti argues that it is Mrs Ramsay herself who is the art work in the eyes of others, for example James and Mr Bankes; see *The Artist, Society, and Sexuality in Virginia Woolf's Novels* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 68.

gether for Peter Walsh, for Lily Briscoe, and for the reader'.[47] While Lily strives throughout the novel to create unity and wholeness on her canvas, Mrs Ramsay is actually the one who is more successful in bringing things together.

Lily focuses on the silence between disparate sounds and consequently has trouble merging sounds into wholeness while Mrs Ramsay seeks rhythm, finding stillness and riches at its core.[48] The way in which the two characters listen is also differentiated in that Mrs Ramsay appears naturally inclined to turn her ear towards the world while Lily mostly approaches the world through her eye.[49] For a painter, a tendency to separate shapes and constantly observe their distance from one another is natural. The eye is certainly important in *To the Lighthouse*, and especially in the novel's last section. Indeed, to Laura Marcus, the whole novel is essentially about 'looking, perspective, distance, its organization an extraordinarily complex interplay of eye lines and sight lines'.[50] While this is true, the contrast between Lily's and Mrs Ramsay's different senses invites us to read the novel as not only presenting a conflict between old and new ways of living but

47 Blair, pp. 2, 187. Lilienfeld, for example, has argued that *To the Lighthouse* is 'a successful reconsideration and rejection of Mrs. Ramsay's mode of life' (p. 346).

48 Pamela L. Caughie argues, however, that Lily is not primarily seeking to connect two things, but to maintain 'a balance between forces', with which she succeeds as she finishes the painting at the end of the novel. She 'solves' the painting by realizing that 'the distinction to be made is no longer between two things but *between different ways of relating things*'; '"I must not settle into a figure": The Woman Artist in Virginia Woolf's Writings', in *Writing the Woman Artist: Essays on Poetics, Politics, and Portraiture*, ed. by Suzanne W. Jones (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), pp. 371-97 (p. 375, emphasis in the original).

49 Indeed, as Jane Goldman points out, Lily worries not only that she will not be able to finish her painting but that it will eventually be lost from sight and hidden in an attic somewhere; 'From *Mrs Dalloway* to *The Waves*', in *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, pp. 49-69 (p. 64). Caughie suggests that Lily is not concerned with 'the status of her artwork', judging it 'not in terms of what it produces' but 'in terms of what it attempts' ('I must not settle into a figure', p. 376). Therefore, it does not matter to her where it will end up.

50 Marcus, *Virginia Woolf*, p. 97. Michael Levenson, too, argues that *To the Lighthouse* draws special attention the 'pervasive activities' of 'visual process and visual representation', activities that he connects specifically to Lily's painting; 'Narrative Perspective in *To the Lighthouse*', in *The Cambridge Companion to* To the Lighthouse, pp. 19-29 (p. 19).

also one between eye and ear. The old way of life – the domestic bliss presented in 'The Window' – is associated with the ear, while the new age in 'The Lighthouse' is an age of the eye. The novel's last section presents modern life as fragmented and uncertain, full of distinct shapes with silence in between; below, I return to the association between rupture and disparate sounds in 'Time Passes' and 'The Lighthouse'. In this new age, Mr Ramsay steps off the boat at the lighthouse as though 'leaping into space' and Lily finishes her painting at last (*TL*, p. 169). To Makiko Minow-Pinkney, Lily's painting 'carries the symbolic meaning of realising Mrs. Ramsay's essence', thus, in a sense, carrying her forward.[51] But it is rather Mrs Ramsay's absence that is emphasized by the line in Lily's painting, for just before painting it she observes how the steps – where she earlier glimpsed a phantom Mrs Ramsay – are empty.[52] The completion of the painting implies that Lily has come to terms with her loss; the painting in itself depicts the fragmentary new time. It is unclear what exactly is resolved as the novel ends, which in itself represents the uncertainty that characterizes 'The Window'. There is emptiness but also clearness; significantly, no sense of wholeness is achieved.

'Nothing! Nothing!': Silence and Bereavement in Woolf's Writing

Mrs Ramsay is seized by terror when a background sound suddenly disappears but relaxes when the background 'rhythm' returns, which to her confirms that the structure remains intact. Throughout 'The Window', sound certifies that Mrs Ramsay's machinery functions: when 'custom crooned its soothing rhythm', then 'domesticity triumphed' (*TL*, p. 28). It

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51 Minow-Pinkney, p. 102.

52 With reference to Woolf's later comment about the novel – 'One has to have a central line down the middle of the book to hold the design together' (*Letters of Virginia Woolf*, III: 1923-28 (1977), p. 385) – Kate McLoughlin makes a connection between the line at the centre of Lily's painting and the parenthetical sentences in 'Time Passes': the crotchets; 'Woolf's Crotchets: Textual Cryogenics in *To the Lighthouse*', *Textual Practice*, 28.6 (2014), 949-67 (p. 954). Goldman makes a similar connection, but points specifically to the brackets in which it is revealed that Mrs Ramsay has died; see '*To the Lighthouse*'s Use of Language and Form', in *The Cambridge Companion to* To the Lighthouse, pp. 30-46 (p. 35).

is fitting, therefore, that Mrs Ramsay's death in the 'Time Passes' section should be connected with external silence. In her absence, domesticity no longer triumphs and the silence that takes control over the house can be linked to the destruction she senses in the waves earlier in the novel. The link between death and silence in 'Time Passes' presents bereavement as constituting the most extreme kind of disruption in Woolf's fiction. Here, I examine this connection in *To the Lighthouse* and *Jacob's Room*, arguing that it is not death itself that is represented by this silence but the survivors' experience of loss.[53]

Woolf had considerable personal experience of bereavement and in criticism on *Jacob's Room* and *To the Lighthouse* it is commonplace to point out the novels' connections to her own losses. As she finished *Jacob's Room*, Woolf wrote her brother Thoby's name at the bottom of the last page, inviting a comparison between him and the novel's protagonist:

> Atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale
> Julian Thoby Stephen
> (1880-1906)
> Atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale.[54]

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53 Loss and mourning are themes in Woolf's writing that have attracted considerable critical attention. John Mepham, for example, claims that 'the theme of mourning' was Woolf's 'motive for modernism'; 'Mourning and Modernism', in *Virginia Woolf: New Critical Essays*, ed. by Patricia Clements and Isobel Grundy (London: Vision Press; Totowa: Barnes & Noble Books, 1983), pp. 137-56 (pp. 142, 141). Tammy Clewell reads *Jacob's Room* and *To the Lighthouse* in terms of a 'practice of anticonsolatory mourning', which is linked to Woolf's 'interest in using grief to foster feminist grievance rather than social complacency implied by healing'; 'Consolation Refused: Virginia Woolf, The Great War, and Modernist Mourning', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 50.1 (2004), 197-223 (p. 206). Laura Marcus reads *Jacob's Room*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *The Waves* as 'elegies for the dead', but also as 'elegies for the conventions of the novel itself'; *Virginia Woolf*, p. 84. By contrast, Banfield reads Woolf's engagement with death in her writing as constituting a wish to end mourning and as a protest against the 'egoism' of her father's 'exaggerated grief': 'to death as simply a limit the response cannot be a limitless grief'; *The Phantom Table*, pp. 237, 236.

54 Hermione Lee, *Virginia Woolf* (London: Vintage, 1996), p. 227. Woolf also thought of Thoby as she finished *The Waves*, possibly in connection to Percival: 'it is done; & I have been sitting here these fifteen minutes in a state of glory, & calm, & some tears, thinking of Thoby & if I could write Julian Thoby Stephen 1881-1906 on the first page'; *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, IV: 1931-35 (1982), 10.

Similarly, the largely autobiographical *To the Lighthouse* was written in an attempt to come to terms with the loss of her mother, on whom she based Mrs Ramsay.[55] In 'A Sketch of the Past', Woolf relates how she was 'obsessed' by her mother until she wrote *To the Lighthouse*: 'I wrote the book very quickly; and when it was written, I ceased to be obsessed by mother. I no longer hear her voice; I do not see her'.[56] 'All Woolf's dead gather in her novels like the ghosts in the Roman encampment at Scarborough in *Jacob's Room*', Ann Banfield writes, suggesting that 'Woolf wrote her novels to memorialize the dead'.[57] In private, Woolf recorded a wish to exchange the word 'novel' for 'elegy' as a generic description of her books, suggesting the commemorative function writing had for her.[58] However, the fact that the term is followed by a question-mark demonstrates a certain ambivalence about it.

Certainly, *Jacob's Room* and *To the Lighthouse* do not merely read as 'elegies'; they also explore the nature of bereavement. Mrs Ramsay's death, especially, is presented through its effect on her survivors. Silence serves several different functions in this context, and in the following pages I explore the idea that Woolf's use of silence in these two novels should be read in connection to the larger sense of rupture that characterized postwar society.

As several critics have claimed, Woolf presents mourning as a continuous process; in her novels, attachment to the dead cannot be severed.[59] Jay Winter distinguishes between grief, 'a state of mind', and bereavement, 'a condition'.[60] In the following discussion, I argue that Woolf's silences re-

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55 See Alexandra Harris, *Virginia Woolf* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2011), pp. 91-3. Lee both explores and challenges the correspondences between Julia Stephen and Mrs Ramsay; *Virginia Woolf*, pp. 80-2.

56 Woolf, 'A Sketch of the Past', in *Moments of Being*, ed. by Jeanne Schulkind (London: Pimlico, 2002), pp. 64-159 (p. 81).

57 Banfield, *The Phantom Table*, pp. 236, 235.

58 Woolf, *Diary*, III: 1925-1930 (1980), 34

59 See, for example, Susan Bennett Smith, 'Reinventing Grief Work: Virginia Woolf's Feminist Representations of Mourning in *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 41.4 (1995), 310-27 (p. 323), and Clewell, p. 198.

60 Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 29.

lates to a condition of bereavement that is at once private and communal. This condition entails a breach for which there is no apparent healing. The silences in *Jacob's Room* and *To the Lighthouse* represent this condition of bereavement as something unsayable; loss is an unspeakable trauma in both novels, so much so in *Jacob's Room* that Jacob's death is not mentioned until the last pages.

Woolf was attuned to the atmosphere that silence could bring to a text and she repeatedly used it to represent experiences of everyday horror.[61] An example of this can be seen in the 1880 chapter of *The Years*, in which silence represents the anxiety Rose experiences after she has encountered the flasher in the street: 'There was dead silence everywhere. The clatter of knives and forks in the next room had ceased. She was alone with something horrible' (*Y,* p. 36). To Rose, the man does not only appear to materialize physically in the room – the 'something' she senses in the darkness – but the pressure of the silence makes her unable to communicate her experience to Eleanor, as though naming it would make the horror real. Similarly, the silences in *Jacob's Room* and *To the Lighthouse* convey an element of everyday horror as they represent the constant and inescapable absence of a beloved person.

The connections between silence and bereavement in Woolf's fiction do

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61 That Woolf was aware how suggestive silence could be in a literary text is evident from her sporadic commentary on literary soundscapes in her essays. In her comments on Thomas de Quincey's *Autobiographic Sketches* (1853), for example, she notes that there is 'something awful' in the 'splendid summer's day' of his childhood, an awfulness that resides in the 'profound stillness' in which 'sounds strangely reverberate'; 'Impassioned Prose', in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, IV: 1925-8, ed. by Andrew McNeillie (1994), 361-9 (p. 365). Similarly, in her essay on Henry James's ghost stories (1921), she writes that silence is '[p]erhaps' what 'first impresses us' about *The Turn of the Screw*: 'Everything at Bly is so profoundly quiet. The twitter of birds at dawn, the far-away cries of children, faint footsteps in the distance stir it but leave it unbroken. It accumulates; it weighs us down; it makes us strangely apprehensive of noise. At last the house and garden die out beneath it. […] It is unspeakable'. Woolf recognizes silence as a presence in its own right in James's story, a presence that does not vanish because sounds appear – on the contrary, it 'stir[s]', 'accumulates'. When the light is turned off after reading, that silence is evidently still stirring, as Woolf admits to wanting to 'turn on the light' again – afraid of 'something, unnamed, of something, perhaps, in ourselves'. See 'Henry James's Ghost Stories', in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, III: 1919-1924, ed. by Andrew McNeillie (1988), 319-26 (p. 325).

not only reflect her personal experience of loss but are also bound up with the experience of silence in society following World War One. As numerous historians have emphasized, the post-war period was characterized by different kinds of silence.[62] First, silence quite concretely signified the end of the war, the noise of which had been loud and constant at the front.[63] Many soldiers have described the Armistice in terms of the silence that ensued when the sounds of war suddenly ceased. As Trudi Tate and Kate Kennedy write, the 'greatest war in history ended not with a bang, nor a whimper, but with the most profound sound of all: silence'.[64] Second, the horrors of life at the front constituted a trauma for the many of returning soldiers who were unable to speak of their experiences. Adrian Gregory relates how many soldiers, suffering from shell-shock, could not express what they had suffered during the war: 'For them the silence signified the inexpressible. It signified everything and nothing. This was the worst si-

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62 On silence and the post-war period, see, for example, Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day 1919-1946* (Oxford: Berg, 1994); *The Silent Morning: Culture and Memory after the Armistice*, ed. by Trudi Tate and Kate Kennedy (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013); Juliet Nicolson, *The Great Silence 1918-1920: Living in the Shadow of The Great War* (London: John Murray, 2009); and *Shadows of War: A Social History of Silence in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Efrat Ben-Ze'ev, Ruth Ginio, and Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

63 For the soldiers at the front during World War I, 'acoustic intrusions increased exponentially, and rose to an extreme level', according to historian Axel Volmar, who also reports that 'blast traumas and ruptured eardrums' were some of the most common war-related injuries. As Volmar argues, 'the sense of hearing among soldiers in World War I underwent a transformational process', from being a 'passive activity' to become an important tool for interpreting the battle field; 'In Storms of Steel: The Soundscape of World War I and its Impact on Auditory Media Culture during the Weimar Period'; in *Sounds of Modern History: Auditory Cultures in 19th- and 20th-Century Europe*, ed. by Daniel Morat (New York: Berghahn, 2014), pp. 227-255 (pp. 231-2, 236). On the noise of war, see also John Pegum, 'The Parting of the Ways: The Armistice, the Silence and Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End*', in Tate and Kennedy's *The Silent Morning: Culture and Memory after the Armistice*, pp. 17-35 (p. 25-6). Discussing Ford Madox Ford's depiction of the war in *Parade's End*, Seamus O'Malley notes how sound is elevated to become the dominant sense; 'Listening for Class in Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End*', *Modernism/Modernity*, 31.3 (2014), 689-714.

64 Tate and Kennedy, 'Introduction: "This Grave Day"', in *The Silent Morning*, pp. 1-16 (p. 1).

lence of memory'.[65] As *Mrs Dalloway* suggests, however, sick soldiers were not always encouraged to express their experiences; Sir William has little patience with Septimus Smith's mutterings, advising him to '[t]ry to think as little about [himself] as possible' (*MD*, p. 88).

Third, silence became a part of both public and private practices of mourning and commemoration following the war. During the years that followed the war, for example, a two-minute 'Silence' became a central part of the Armistice Day commemorations: a moment of tribute and respect, but also a representation of the silence that characterized the cease-fire on 11 November, 1918.[66] Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, who came up with the idea for the 'Silence', imagined that it would honour not only the men who had lost their lives, but also 'the women who have lost and suffered and borne so much, with whom the thought was ever present'.[67] In the inter-war years, silence thus became a communal symbol of loss and mourning, suggesting the unsayable nature of trauma and grief.

In the wake of the war, the condition of bereavement did not only affect the mourning individual but society at large. *Jacob's Room* and *To the Lighthouse* express a general sense of rupture in post-war society. Woolf's 'war fiction' reflects vast societal changes, building on a before/after dichotomy that was common in 1920s literature (and that several critics have argued was partly based on a myth).[68] Indeed, post-war society was characterized by many different kinds of fissures. As Juliet Nicolson points out, almost

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65 Gregory, p. 7.

66 It is still common to refer to this pause as 'the Silence'; Gregory, p. 9. In the inter-war year, the 'Silence' was signaled through sound; maroons and artillery gunfire were used – as well as sirens and church bells – and as they fell silent, everyone was to interrupt the business of everyday life.

67 Quoted in Gregory, p. 10. Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, who was High Commissioner in South Africa during the war, based his idea of the 'Silence' on the similar three-minute pauses that had been observed daily in South Africa during the war years: 'Silence, complete and arresting, closed upon the city – the moving, awe-inspiring silence of a great Cathedral where the smallest sound must seem a sacrilege'; Memorandum to the War Cabinet, 4 November, 1919 (quoted in Gregory, p. 9).

68 See for example Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: The Bodley Head, 1990), pp. 421-63. Chris Baldick both 'confirm[s]' and 'complicate[s]' the 'War Myth' in *Literature of the 1920s: Writers Among the Ruins* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), pp. 100-36.

every family in the country had lost a close relation; in addition, 41,000 men lost at least one limb in the war; 11,572 returning soldiers needed 'major facial operations' to remedy their war wounds; and, on a slightly different note, in the twelve months following the Armistice, three times as many couples decided to get divorced as during the year before the war began.[69] Moreover, death did not loosen its grip of society even when the war ended, as 1918 saw the outbreak of the so-called 'Spanish flu' in which two million Europeans lost their lives, and forty to fifty million world-wide. Only some of these fissures would heal. Tammy Clewell suggests that Woolf 'forged' and '[promoted] a new consciousness of death' in her fiction.[70] Woolf's novels were written in a society already permeated by a presence of death, however. To many contemporary readers, the fissures and grief that she portrayed would have been all too recognizable as a prevalent part of post-war life.

Mourning is to a large extent a private experience, and silence also surrounded the individual and inexpressible loss of husbands, sons, brothers, and friends.[71] In her autobiographical writing, Woolf describes her own experiences of death with reference to silence. In 'A Sketch of the Past', for example, the days following her mother's death are portrayed as 'still' and 'unreal': '[w]e lived through them in hush'.[72] When she went out with her sisters, they would sit 'silent under the trees', and the 'silence was stifling'.[73] 'We never spoke of [mother and Stella]', Woolf writes, '[t]his silence, we

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69 Nicolson, pp. 87, 62, 44-5.

70 Clewell, pp. 199, 201.

71 Winter discusses what he names as 'liturgical silence', which constitutes 'essential parts of mourning practices in many religious traditions, since not speaking enables those experiencing loss to engage with their grief in their own time and in their own ways'. Winter defines such liturgical silence primarily in terms of absent speech acts: a 'liturgical silence' is one of the 'unsaid', in which mourners are allowed to heal by refraining from talking about their loss. A similar silence can be seen in Lily's conclusion that 'one could say nothing to nobody', as '[l]ittle words that broke up the thought and dismembered it said nothing' (*TL*, p. 146). See 'Thinking about Silence', in *Shadows of War: A Social History of Silence in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 3-31 (p. 4).

72 Woolf, 'A Sketch of the Past', pp. 84, 92.

73 Woolf, 'A Sketch of the Past', p. 94.

felt, covered something; something that most families had not'.[74] The sense of rupture that Woolf refers to here – represented by a silence – may not have been something 'most families had' in 1897, the year Stella died; but society looked very different in 1922, when *Jacob's Room* was published. Winter describes how the fates of individual soldiers were often surrounded by a 'void of silence': '[i]nto these silent spaces, fears and rumours flooded. The same silences attended the terse official messages about men who died in uniform'.[75] Winter's description evokes an ineffable horror in the lives of those whose loved ones were lost in the war. Part of this silence might relate to a lack of evidence of death. After 1915, no bodies were brought back from the front and consequently mourning practices changed dramatically.[76] Without a body to grieve over, the sudden announcement of death was just followed by silence.

Bereavement in Woolf's 'elegies' is repeatedly connected to a pervasive absence, suggesting something unspeakable. In sharp contrast to the wholeness that characterizes 'The Window', 'Time Passes' suggests rupture not only by means of silence but also through its emphasis on nothingness and emptiness: '[n]othing [...] could survive the flood'; 'somebody laughed aloud as if sharing a joke with nothingness'; [n]othing stirred in the drawing-room'; 'Mr Ramsay [...] stretched his arms out one dark morning [...]. They remained empty' (*TL*, pp. 103, 105).[77] Mr Ramsay's arms remain empty, of course, because Mrs Ramsay 'died rather suddenly the night before' (*TL*, p. 105). This symbolic gesture – Mr Ramsay's hands having

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74 Woolf, 'A Sketch of the Past', p. 125.

75 Winter, *Sites of Memory*, p. 29.

76 See Nicolson, pp. 5-6.

77 Several critics have discussed absence and its presence as a central theme in *Jacob's Room* and *To the Lighthouse*. Roberta Rubenstein, for example, focuses on what she calls Woolf's 'poetics of negation' in relation to *To the Lighthouse* specifically, by which she means 'words as *no*, *not*, *never*, and, particularly, *nothing*', which she finds to appear in this novel 'in excess of their expected frequency', reinforcing the theme of grief and also aligning the novel with 'the spiritual void that persisted through the postwar period during which she wrote'; see '"I meant *nothing* by *To the Lighthouse*": Virginia Woolf's Poetics of Negation', in *Journal of Modern Literature*, 31.4 (2008), 36-53 (pp. 37, 50). See also Beer, 'Hume, Stephen, and Elegy in *To the Lighthouse*', in *Virginia Woolf: The Common Ground* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), pp. 29-47.

nothing to hold on to – demonstrates the void that his wife's death opens, a void that is circumscribed throughout the rest of the novel. 'Time Passes' suggests a whole new world order, characterized by chaos and fragments, where there are no Mrs Ramsays to merge whatever sounds and silences there might be.

The nothingness in the Ramsays' summer-house has been read as emphasizing the absence not only of Mrs Ramsay but of any perceiving subject. In connection to Mr Ramsay's research, mentioned early in the novel, the section has been understood as a 'gap between the realms of sense and physics which logical relations are meant to bridge via unoccupied perspectives'.[78] In the present discussion, the focus is on the relationship between the silence in 'Time Passes' and a phantom rhythm rather than a 'phantom table'; the emphasis on silence in the section indicates the absence of Mrs Ramsay's rhythm, as discussed above. Indeed, the fact that no one is there to listen any longer is highlighted: 'Listening (had there been anyone to listen) from the upper rooms of the empty house only gigantic chaos streaked with lightning could have been heard tumbling and tossing' (*TL*, p. 110). No one is present to make the disparate sounds of chaos merge into the soothing logic of generalized sound.

As discussed above, Woolf's writing comprises a sense of oscillation: her characters move to and from different states of mind, movements that often have parallels in shifts between various sounds or between sound and silence. In 'Time Passes', however, stillness 'reigns', suggesting stasis:

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78 Banfield, p. 142. Andrew explains his father's work to Lily with reference to a kitchen table: 'She asked him what his father's books were about. "Subject and object and the nature of reality", Andrew had said. And when she said Heavens, she had no notion what that meant. "Think of a kitchen table then", he told her, "when you're not there"' (*TL*, p. 22). 'Time Passes' can be read as a representation not only of that 'phantom table', but an entire house left on its own, without any mind there to perceive it. To Levenson, however, there is no phantom narrator in this section, as 'the all-seeing point of view of "Time Passes" shows, and knows, itself to be imaginary'; 'Narrative Perspective in *To the Lighthouse*', p. 26.

> Nothing it seemed could [...] disturb the swaying mantle of silence which, week after week, in the empty room, wove into itself the falling cries of birds, ships hooting, the drone and hum of the fields, a dog's bark, a man's shout, and folded them round the house in silence. (*TL*, p. 106)

There is no movement, nothing to 'disturb the peace', and the silence that controls the house engulfs all sounds: they are still there but without anyone to take them into account they are overcome by silence, woven into the stillness. Interestingly, the stillness appears associated with Mrs Ramsay, who even after her death is still present in the house in the form of 'loveliness': 'loveliness reigned and stillness, and together made the shape of loveliness itself, a form from which life had parted' (*TL*, p. 106). There is a connection here to the 'profound stillness' Mrs Ramsay experiences during her dinner-party, discussed above (*TL*, p. 85). In the course of the dinner-party, Mrs Ramsay feels that she exists 'in the still space that lies about the heart of things where one could move or rest', and that the moment of stillness 'partook [...] of eternity', (*TL*, pp. 86, 85).[79] The stillness that reigns in the house after Mrs Ramsay's death recasts this experience somewhat, presenting the 'still space' as spreading and the eternal stillness as something quite different from the moment of bliss during the party.

Even though it appears that nothing 'could break' her reigning loveliness, Mrs Ramsay's domesticity is slowly decomposed by the silence (*TL*, p. 106). Both silence and loveliness are finally broken by 'ominous sounds like the measured blows of hammers dulled on felt, which [...] with their repeated shocks still further loosened the shawl and cracked the tea-cups' (*TL*, p. 109). Signalling the advent of the war, these sounds disperse Mrs Ramsay's lingering loveliness, and in what follows no comfort is to be found in either sound or silence:

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79 As Hussey writes, 'stillness is the key to the ideal; movement is essential to life; stasis is death'; *The Singing of the Real World*, p. 111.

> Now and again some glass tinkled in the cupboard as if a giant voice had shrieked so loud in its agony that tumblers stood inside a cupboard vibrated too. Then again silence fell; and then […] there seemed to drop into this silence this indifference, this integrity, the thud of something falling. (*TL*, p. 109)

This passage marks an important shift in the novel: instead of Mrs Ramsay's careful and caring listening, a silence of indifference settles into which disparate sounds fall. From this point on, the novel's sound-setting is presented differently. First, during what appears to be a representation of the war, it is described as a 'gigantic chaos' of 'tumbling and tossing'; and then, in the post-war period, it appears to consist of disparate elements that cannot merge: 'there rose that half-heard melody, that intermittent music which the ear half catches but lets fall; a bark, a bleat; irregular, intermittent, yet somehow related' (*TL*, pp. 110, 115). In the new, post-Mrs Ramsay era, 'the ear […] is always on the verge of harmonizing' distinct sounds, but 'harmony falters, and silence falls' (*TL*, pp. 115-16). Consequently, Mrs Ramsay's absence is mostly noticeable through silence, a silence that reminds survivors of how the new era is shaped by loss.

Indeed, Mrs Ramsay's absence in 'The Lighthouse' implies a permanent chasm rather than a mere pause. No longer is stillness to be found at the heart of existence; instead, there is an inescapable void:

> how could one express […] that emptiness there? ([Lily] was looking at the drawing-room steps; they looked extraordinarily empty.) […] It had seemed so safe, thinking of her. Ghost, air, nothingness, a thing you could play with easily and safely at any time of day or night, [Mrs Ramsay] had been that, and then suddenly she put her hand out and wrung the heart thus. Suddenly, the empty drawing-room steps, the frill of the chair inside, the puppy tumbling on the terrace, the whole wave and whisper of the garden became like curves and arabesques flourishing round a centre of complete emptiness. (*TL*, pp. 146-7)

Like Mrs Ramsay at the beginning of the novel, Lily is attuned to the doubleness inherent in sound; the 'wave and whisper of the garden' sud-

denly reveal 'complete emptiness' to her. The terror of this emptiness is that it is no longer a mere threat, but a *fait accompli*. As discussed above, it is characteristic of Lily that she experiences even the absence of sound in terms of visual attributes. To her, the absence of Mrs Ramsay's rhythm is felt in how the spaces do not 'fill' and the 'empty flourishes' do not 'form into shape' (*TL*, p. 148). The passage literally illustrates that there is no healing, only silence and emptiness, in an atmosphere of eternal yearning.

Jacob's Room similarly centres on an emptiness, as its main character remains out of reach throughout the novel. Words do not suffice to capture the private self, or any aspect of the novel's central character; but at the same time, it appears uncertain that this is what the novel attempts to do. For the silence associated with Jacob does not primarily highlight the impossibility of depicting character – which is how the novel has often been read – but instead underscores the unattainability of the other, and especially of the *lost* other.[80] Silence in *Jacob's Room* is the silence of loss, and the elusiveness of the novel's central character – that 'silent young man' – is explained only in its last pages by his death (*JR*, pp. 78, 95).

One could claim, as Joseph Frank has done about *Ulysses*, that *Jacob's Room* should be reread rather than read, for it seems as though a 'knowledge of the whole is essential to an understanding of any part'.[81] In her essay 'On Re-Reading Novels', written the same year that *Jacob's Room* was published, Woolf asserts that on 'a second reading we are able to use our observations from the start, and they are much more precise'.[82] The example Woolf chooses to exemplify her ideas about the importance of readers'

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80 Edward Bishop claims that 'in the figure Jacob Woolf is not representing *character*; what she is exploring is the construction, and representation of, the subject'; 'The Subject in *Jacob's Room*', p. 148. In a discussion of the novel's narration, William R. Handley argues that Woolf's narrator is 'distanced and even powerless if she is not to reinscribe war's treatment of human beings as objects'; she cannot attempt to represent Jacob's subjectivity because to do so would be to use him to 'serve' her own 'totalizing version of reality'. See 'War and the Politics of Narration', in *Virginia Woolf and War: Fiction, Reality, and Myth*, ed. by Mark Hussey (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1991), pp. 110-133 (pp. 111, 131).

81 Joseph Frank, 'Spatial Form in Modern Literature', in *The Idea of Spatial Form* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991), pp. 5-66 (p. 21). Frank's essay was first published in three parts in *The Sewanee Review*, 53 (1945), pp. 221-40, 433-56, and 643-53.

82 Woolf, 'On Re-Reading Novels', in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, III, 336-46 (p. 340).

impressions is interesting to consider in relation to *Jacob's Room*. By discussing the difference between reading and rereading Gustave Flaubert's 'Un Cœur Simple' (1877), Woolf focuses on the scene where Madame Aubain and Félicité are sorting out the dead child's clothes, a scene that 'startles [her] into a flash of understanding' while reading the story.[83] 'On a second reading we are able to use our observations from the start', Woolf writes, and moreover, those observations are 'controlled' by 'moments of understanding'; the strong feeling awakened by the scene in which Madame and her maid share their grief over the dead girl governs a second reading of the story, in a similar manner to how knowledge of Jacob's death, also conveyed in a scene focusing on the clothes he left behind, comes to shape a rereading of *Jacob's Room*.[84]

Indeed, with the knowledge of Jacob's death, the entire novel emerges as a very different text, no longer being a failed attempt at a character study, which is how Arnold Bennett described it in 1923, or even, as S. P. Rosenbaum has suggested, an anti-novel.[85] From this perspective, *Jacob's Room* is not a *Bildungsroman* but a novel about survivors: those on whose lives Jacob has left an indelible trace.[86] Throughout the novel, these traces

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83 Woolf, 'On Re-Reading Novels', p. 340.

84 Woolf, 'On Re-Reading Novels', p. 340. Zwerdling suggests that the final scene in *Jacob's Room* is connected to an anecdote told by one of Woolf's friends; when Leonard went away, Woolf would at the sight of his shoes suddenly experience intense sadness over his absence (p. 82). The anecdote can be found in Frances Marshall, *Recollections of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Joan Russell Noble (London: Peter Owen, 1972), p. 76.

85 In 1923, Bennett published an article on the contemporary novel, arguing that the 'foundation of good fiction is character creating, and nothing else'. Using *Jacob's Room* as his example, he finds that the young writers of his age do not create characters who appear 'real' and he can therefore not 'descry any coming big novelists'; 'Is the Novel Decaying?', *Cassell's Weekly*, 47 (1923); repr. in *Virginia Woolf: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Robin Majumdar and Allen McLaurin (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 112-14 (pp. 112-113). Rosenbaum, *Aspects of Bloomsbury: Studies in Modern English Literary and Intellectual History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), p. 10. Edward Bishop writes that 'where it is usual for a central character to be surrounded by minor characters less complex and dynamic, the minor characters in *Jacob's Room* often have more interior life than Jacob', concluding that 'Woolf, far from creating character, seems to be going out of her way to *un*create character'; see 'The Subject in *Jacob's Room*', pp. 150, 151.

86 In his study of Woolf's revisions of her first draft of *Jacob's Room*, Bishop finds that Woolf rethought Jacob's presence in the novel. Unlike in the first draft, the second version

are concretely illustrated by blank spaces, sometimes separating brief lines and at other times whole passages.[87] While forming graphic illustrations of Jacob's absence, these spaces represent bereavement through constant implicit references to rupture and grief. *Jacob's Room* is hence a novel about bereavement, throughout which Jacob's absence is underscored by the blank spaces that separate passages. As the novel describes the survivors' attempts to recover Jacob through memory, it also destabilizes their remembrance by constantly drawing attention to their loss.[88]

The novel is both framed and interspersed by Jacob's absence. From the outset, he is sought for: '"Where *is* that tiresome little boy?" she said. "I don't see him. Run and find him." […] "Ja—cob! Ja—cob!!" Archer shouted' (*JR*, pp. 3-4). And in the last chapter, Archer's cry is echoed by Bonamy's 'Jacob! Jacob!', following the news of Jacob's death (*JR*, p. 247). The blank spaces that represent Jacob's absence are present from the very first, framing Archer's calls on the beach while the boys' mother is crying for her lost husband:

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presents him 'primarily from the outside', making him a character 'whose thoughts and emotions remain a matter of speculation'; 'The Shaping of *Jacob's Room*: Woolf's Manuscript Revisions', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 32.1 (1986), 115-35 (p. 126).

87 Bishop has previously discussed the blank spaces in *Jacob's Room* and briefly connects them to 'the larger chasm underlying the novel: that of the Great War'. The main part of his discussion, however, is focused on the ambiguity that specific spaces create in the novel, and their ability to bring unvoiced emotion into the text. The most interesting part of Bishop's discussion in light of the present discussion concerns both how careful Woolf was to include the blank spaces in her manuscript, illustrating how the blanks 'were part of the evolving shape of her novel'. In many later editions of *Jacob's Room*, the space breaks have been altered considerably. There are eighty instances, Bishop notes, where the first British edition has 'a space four times greater than that of the American text', and in certain online versions of the novel – the *Project-Gutenberg* version, specifically – the space breaks have been 'eliminated altogether'. See 'Mind the Gap: The Spaces in *Jacob's Room*', *Woolf Studies Annual*, 10 (2004), 31-49 (pp. 42, 34, 35, 32).

88 To Brad Bucknell, Jacob is a 'kind of ghost appearing in conventional character form throughout the novel'; 'The Sound of Silence in Two of Jacob's Rooms', *Modernism/modernity*, 15.4 (2008), 761-81 (p. 762).

> Tears made all the dahlias in her garden undulate in red waves and flashed
> the glass house in her eyes [...]. Mrs Flanders had been a widow these two
> years.
>
> 'Ja – cob! Ja – cob!' Archer shouted.
>
> 'Scarborough,' Mrs Flanders wrote on the envelope, and dashed a bold line
> beneath; it was her native town; the hub of the universe. (*JR*, p. 4)

Juxtaposed with Jacob's absence, Mrs Flanders's grief in this passage exemplifies the doubleness that characterizes *Jacob's Room*: how each scene reads differently with the ending in mind. If we read this passage with the knowledge of Jacob's imminent death, the focus of the scene shifts, reminding us that Jacob, too, will soon be placed in the position of a person mourned. Jacob's absence is thus first introduced with reference to his mother's grief and his brother's search for him, presenting a pattern in which the blank spaces are linked both to the other characters' quest for Jacob and to mourning: '[W]hat remains is mostly a matter of guess work', the narrator states, '[y]et over [Jacob] we hang vibrating. [Blank space]' (*JR*, p. 98).

   The novel repeatedly links the blank spaces to death: 'Yes, the chimneys and the coast-guard stations and the little bays with the waves breaking unseen by anyone make one remember the overpowering sorrow. And what can this sorrow be? [Blank space] It is brewed by the earth itself'; 'And now Jimmy feeds crows in Flanders and Helen visits hospitals. Oh, life is damnable, life is wicked, as Rose Shaw said. [Blank space]' (*JR*, pp. 63, 131). At times the blanks suggest an uncertainty surrounding memory: 'Then Jacob was left there, in the shallow armchair, alone with Masham? Anderson? Simeon? Oh, it was Simeon. The others had all gone. [Blank space]' (*JR*, p. 58). These examples imply that it is Jacob's absence rather than his character that forms the central 'flash of understanding' in *Jacob's Room*, to borrow Woolf's phrase from 'On Re-Reading Novels'.[89] The blank spaces remind the (re)reader of the novel's ending while modifying our understanding of the text as a whole.

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   89 Woolf, 'On Re-Reading Novels', p. 340.

In her essay, Woolf suggests that it is emotion rather than form that constitutes the 'book itself'.[90] Interestingly, the blank spaces in *Jacob's Room* appear to combine emotion and form. As graphical inclusions in the novel, the blanks constitute an essential part of the form of the text. But they also speak to the readers' emotions, evoking a feeling that is never explicitly expressed in the text. We 'have reached our conception of "Un Cœur Simple" by working from the emotion outwards', Woolf writes, 'and, the reading over, there is nothing to be seen; there is everything to be felt'.[91] The emphasis on feeling over form in this essay recalls Woolf's initial ideas for *Jacob's Room*. Her third novel, she imagined, was to be a novel without any 'scaffolding', in which 'scarcely a brick [would] be seen': 'all crepuscular, but the heart, the passion, humour, everything as bright as fire in the mist'.[92] The bright but vague blank spaces are germane to the idea of a 'crepuscular' novel: they speak silently of the trauma of bereavement and depend on 'heart' and feeling to be heard. Moreover, as Francesca Kazan argues, the blank spaces that surround passages create a rhythm in the novel, noticeable in how scenes continually emerge and then dissolve into the white frames; this rhythm builds on a movement correlating with Woolf's description of something 'bright' shining through the dark (the 'crepuscular').[93] Somewhat ironically, the spaces themselves are bright, but if we approach them as part of the novel's 'crepuscular' quality, as Kazan proposes, it is possible to read them as representing the darkness of bereavement, framing the survivors' attempts to recover Jacob through memory.[94]

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90 Woolf, 'On Re-Reading Novels', p. 340.

91 Woolf, 'On Re-Reading Novels', p. 340.

92 *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, II: 1920-24 (1978), 13-14.

93 To Kazan, too, the blank spaces invite the reader's 'contemplation' of the 'fragmentary narration'; 'Description and the Pictorial in *Jacob's Room*', *ELH*, 55.3 (1988), 701-19 (p. 703).

94 Somewhat similarly, Kathleen Wall sees Woolf as '[articulating] the fractures and silences of mourning and its elegiac expression in part through an omniscient narrator who embodies loss in the limitations to her omniscience and in the ekphrastic moments that freeze time momentarily, only to emphasize its inexorability'. Wall's discussion of *Jacob's Room* and ekphrasis does not centre on actual artworks described or represented in the novel, but on a more general 'exchange between text and picture', that is, pictorial descriptions. See 'Significant Form in *Jacob's Room*: Ekphrasis and the Elegy', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 44.3 (2002), 302-23 (pp. 307-8, 313).

In both *Jacob's Room* and *To the Lighthouse*, survivors' grief is connected to the First World War and subsequent social upheavals. In *Jacob's Room*, the connection is quite overt, as Jacob Flanders dies in the war; his death is emblematic of the many lives lost in the war, just as his survivors' grief reflects the condition of bereavement that imbued post-war society. In *To the Lighthouse*, Andrew, too, dies in the war, 'blown up in France' (*TL*, p. 109). His passing – as well as the deaths of Mrs Ramsay and Prue – is placed within square brackets in 'Time Passes', signifying the marginality of the individual death to the larger processes of history. The silences of *Jacob's Room* and *To the Lighthouse* go beyond representing the pain of the individual's loss; they relate to a condition of bereavement in society at large. The fragmentary soundscape of 'The Lighthouse' and the blank spaces interspersing *Jacob's Room* present worlds characterized by rupture. While that rupture is partly illustrated by the silence in the novels, the novels themselves are not as fragmentary as they are sometimes said to be. As with Richardson's most experimental instalments of *Pilgrimage* – which are likely to have influenced Woolf's inclusion of blank spaces in *Jacob's Room* – the silences in Woolf's 'elegies' should be considered to be nonverbal inclusions, forming significant parts of the whole.[95]

♦

Woolf's 'reality' is an elusive phenomenon; it constantly moves, even hides, and then suddenly manifests itself in unexpected places. In *A Room of One's*

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95 In April 1919 – just months before Woolf started to experiment with literary form in the short stories 'Kew Gardens' and 'The Mark on the Wall', often acknowledged as her first attempts at a new kind of writing – she reviewed Richardson's *The Tunnel*, the fourth instalment in *Pilgrimage*. Later the same year, Richardson published *Interim*, which was also serialized in *The Little Review*, next to episodes from Joyce's *Ulysses*. As discussed in chapter four, these two novel-chapters are Richardson's most formally experimental, and some of the techniques she uses – notably the blank spaces interspersed into the text – also appear in *Jacob's Room*, although their function there is somewhat different than in Richardson's novels. On Richardson and Woolf, see Minow-Pinkney, pp. 1-2, 5, 8, 16. See also Arianne Burford, 'Communities of Silence and Music in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* and Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*', in *Virginia Woolf and Communities: Selected Papers from the Eighth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf*, edited by Jeanette McVicker and Laura Davis (New York: Pace University Press, 1999), pp. 269-75.

Own, she describes its sudden appearance as an overwhelming experience:

> 'reality' [...] would seem to be something very erratic, very undependable – now to be found in a dusty road, now in a scrap of newspaper in the street, now in a daffodil in the sun. It lights up a group in a room and stamps some casual saying. It overwhelms one walking home beneath the stars and makes the silent world more real than the world of speech – and then there it is again in an omnibus in the uproar of Piccadilly. Sometimes, too, it seems to dwell in shapes too far away for us to discern what their nature is. But whatever it touches, it fixes and makes permanent.[96]

It is striking that 'the silent world' is 'more real than the world of speech' here – but just for a brief moment, until 'reality' instead appears in the 'uproar of Piccadilly'. As elsewhere in Woolf's writing, 'reality' oscillates between different kinds of being, an oscillation that is described in terms of silence and sound.

   In this chapter I have argued that Woolf's silences oscillate between different states of being; they sometimes signify disruption and alienation, and sometimes adventure and creativity. How they should be read depends on their context and on the character who perceives them. Generally, however, Woolf's silences and sounds are contrasted and defined against a background of generalized sound, a comprehensive sound that is at times also presented as a form of silence. By disrupting this background web of sound, Woolf shows how auditory events guide characters' attention and often affect their inner lives. In Woolf's late fiction, there is an increasing discomfort surrounding such disruptions, as her characters long for experiences of unity and wholeness at a time of social upheaval. The following chapter considers a different yet related aspect of Woolf's silence: how her attempts to capture the elusive 'silent world' of her characters eventually led her to a kind of writing that was characterized by a lack of precision that she herself associated with painting.

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96 Woolf, *A Room of One's Own and Three Guineas*, pp. 143-4.

Chapter 7
The Silent Phrases of the Mind: Writing the Inner World in the Works of Virginia Woolf

'There is a silence in life, a perpetual deposit of experience for which action provides no proper outlet and our words no fit expression'.[1]

'[M]eaning is just on the far side of language. It is the meaning which in moments of astonishing excitement we perceive in our minds without words'.[2]

In a journal entry from 1926, Woolf writes that 'one can't write directly about the soul. Looked at, it vanishes'.[3] In Woolf's fiction, the soul often does seem to vanish when approached directly. It cannot be pinpointed or labelled in words because it will not keep still but keeps evolving. Woolf often repeated her contention that words do not suffice to describe or represent the inner world, be it her own or that of her characters. Much

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1 Virginia Woolf, unpublished piece, quoted in Lyndall Gordon, 'Our Silent Life: Virginia Woolf and T. S. Eliot', in *Virginia Woolf: New Critical Essays*, ed. by Patricia Clements and Isobel Grundy (London: Vision Press; Totowa: Barnes and Noble Books, 1983), pp. 77-95 (p. 91).

2 Woolf, 'On Not Knowing Greek', *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Andrew McNeillie and others, 6 vols (London: The Hogarth Press, 1986-2011), IV: 1925-28, ed. by Andrew McNeillie (1994), 38-53 (p. 45).

3 27 February, 1926, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Anne Olivier Bell, 5 vols (London: The Hogarth Press, 1977-84), III: 1925-30 (1980), p. 62.

like Clarissa Dalloway, Woolf did not want to 'say of any one in the world now that they were this or were that' (*MD*, p. 7). Writing about the Carlyles' letters in 1909, she concludes that 'the more we see the less we can label', and in a letter to Roger Fry in 1927, she states that 'directly I'm told what a thing means, it becomes hateful to me'.[4] In a passage about her childhood in 'A Sketch of the Past', she notes that 'movement and change' belong to 'what is indescribable', a sphere that 'makes all images too static, for no sooner has one said this was so, than it was past and altered'.[5] While struggling when trying to 'write directly' about abstract phenomena such as the soul or the true nature of human existence, Woolf still attempted to represent intangible human experiences in her writing throughout her career.

This chapter examines some of Woolf's strategies for representing the inner world, that which she herself referred to as the self or the soul, meaning the individual's private experience of him- or herself.[6] I am primarily interested in Woolf's methods for suggesting what cannot be directly

4 Woolf, 'More Carlyle Letters', in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, I: 1904-12, ed. by Andrew McNeillie (1986), 257-62 (p. 257); letter to Roger Fry, 27 May, 1927, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann, 6 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1975-80), III: 1923-28 (1977), p. 385.

5 Woolf, 'A Sketch of the Past', in *Moments of Being*, ed. by Jeanne Schulkind (London: Pimlico, 2002), pp. 64-159 (p. 91).

6 Woolf used both 'soul' and 'self' to refer to the inner world of her characters or herself. In the journal entry quoted above, she uses the word 'soul', as does Mrs Dalloway when she refers to 'that leaf-encumbered forest, the soul' (*MD*, p. 11). At other times, Woolf chooses the word 'self'; in *To the Lighthouse*, for example, Mrs Ramsay refers to her 'self' during her silent moment and in *The Waves*, Bernard admits to needing 'the illumination of other people's eyes, and therefore cannot be entirely sure what is my self' (*TL*, p. 52-3; *W*, p. 91). For discussions of identity and the 'self' in relation to Woolf's writing, see for example Mark Hussey – who argues that the concepts of 'soul' and 'self' are used synonymously in Woolf's fiction (p. xix) – *The Singing of the Real World: The Philosophy of Virginia Woolf's Fiction* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1986), pp. 21-45, and Finn Fordham, *I Do I Undo I Redo: The Textual Genesis of Modernist Selves in Hopkins, Yeats, Conrad, Forster, Joyce, and Woolf* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 227-58. Emily Dalgarno discusses Woolf in relation to the term 'soul', which she connects to Woolf's interest in the Russian language and literature, and to her 'concerns with spirituality, the body/mind relationship, and the limitations of the public language'; see *Virginia Woolf and the Migrations of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 91-6 (p. 91).

named; in her work, a present 'something' – a present 'this' or 'that' – often hovers between the lines, constituting a silent dimension of the texts. The chapter argues that, beyond her struggle with language, Woolf's attempts to represent her characters' inner worlds led to a kind of writing that moves close to painting and the visual – not only in the sense that her novels often evoke visual images through suggestive descriptions, but that she at times approaches her craft as though it were a nonverbal medium. By examining different aspects of the pictorial in Woolf's novels, a fuller 'picture' emerges of how her approach to her craft changes as her writing becomes more experimental.[7] Later in her career, I argue, Woolf's representation of her characters' inner worlds is achieved by her applying words as paint: brushstroke on brushstroke.

In her experimental writing, Woolf constantly circumscribes the 'something' between the lines, enabling a form of representation that does not define or stipulate. My argument about silence and the unsayable in Woolf's fiction pertains to this development in her writing: in the early novels silence appears as a central theme, and later, in the more experimental fiction, silence becomes a form. The present chapter charts this development in Woolf's fiction by examining her approach to the unsayable in

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7 Many critics have discussed Woolf in relation to art, in general as well as with reference to specific painters and artists. See, for example, Diane F. Gillespie, *The Sisters' Art: The Writing and Painting of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1988); and 'Virginia Woolf, Vanessa Bell and Painting', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts*, ed. by Maggie Humm (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 121-39; Maggie Humm, *Modernist Women and Visual Cultures: Virginia Woolf, Vanessa Bell, Photography and Cinema* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002); Anthony Uhlmann, 'Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury Aesthetics', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts*, ed. by Maggie Humm (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 58-73; Ann Banfield, *The Phantom Table: Woolf, Fry, Russell and the Epistemology of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 247-357; Jane Goldman, *The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf: Modernism, Post-Impressionism and the Politics of the Visual* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 109-208; Frances Spalding, *Virginia Woolf: Art, Life and Vision* (London: National Portrait Gallery Publications, 2014), pp. 91-3, 106-8; Allen McLaurin, *Virginia Woolf: The Echoes Enslaved* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 70-84; and Jack F. Stewart, 'Spatial Form and Color in *The Waves*', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 28.1 (1982), 86-107.

Night and Day (1919) and *The Waves* (1931). A comparison between those two novels brings out a change in Woolf's fiction in terms of how she represents the inner worlds of her characters. In both books, there is a tension between private and social worlds, and between silence and language. While the two novels share a preoccupation with how to describe inner experiences, however, they differ greatly in how those inner experiences are represented.

'[I]nclined to be silent': Silence and Vision in *Night and Day*

Both of Woolf's two first novels are concerned with silence in somewhat similar ways. In *The Voyage Out* (1915), one of the characters professes a wish to write 'a novel about Silence' (*VO*, p. 249). This 'Silence' does not appear to be of an existential or a spiritual kind, but relates rather to 'the things people don't say', either out of a sense of propriety or from habit (*VO*, p. 249). The things that remain unsaid seem to Terence Hewet, the aspiring young author in question, to express the self and the true nature of human existence more truly than the things that are said, as if propriety were the main obstacle to mimesis. Throughout the novel, Terence returns to the question of *saying* – that is, to the problem of articulating the private inner world below the social surface of words.[8]

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8 Terence's aesthetics of silence has often been read as representing Woolf's own, and although many critics refer to Terence's 'novel about Silence' as anticipating Woolf's later fiction, his comment has also been read in relation to *The Voyage Out* itself. For example, Edward Bishop suggests that Woolf 'was already reaching toward the novel of silence' in *The Voyage Out*; see 'Toward the Far Side of Language: Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out*', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 27.4 (1981), 343-61 (p. 355). Christine Froula sees Woolf's revision of *Melymbrosia* – one of the first versions of *The Voyage Out* – as one that foregrounds 'censorship and self-censorship within the narrative by staging socially enforced silences that function as speech acts'. To Froula, 'the narrative shows silence performing ideological work more deftly than words could ever do' by '[f]raming the things people don't say'; see *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Avant-Garde* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 24. Patricia Ondek Laurence suggests that *Between the Acts* should be read as Woolf's realization of Terence's silent novel; *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), pp. 44, 91. Makiko Minow-Pinkney suggests that it is *The Waves* that realizes Hewet's aesthetics, 'to-

In *To the Lighthouse*, Mrs Ramsay describes the experience of her 'self' with reference to the 'unfathomably deep' inner world of her private self, from which 'now and again we rise to the surface and that is what you see us by' (*TL*, p. 53). A similar discrepancy between two kinds of reality re-appears throughout all of Woolf's fiction. On the one hand, there is the self as seen by others – the surface self – and on the other hand, there is the self relating to itself: the private self, associated with depth. In *The Voyage Out*, these two kinds of realities – surface and depth – are introduced and seen to be associated with language and silence, respectively, a pattern that returns throughout Woolf's writing. In her first novel, however, silence is not connected to ineffable inner experiences but rather to those thoughts and feelings that cannot be talked about because of social conventions. Helen's pragmatic distinction between 'pretences' on the one hand, and on the other '[w]hat really goes on, what people feel, although they generally try to hide it', exemplifies this division between surface and depth (*VO*, p. 183). Silence, 'the things people don't say', is hence that which cannot surface during afternoon tea at the San Marino hotel: a case of the unsaid rather than the unsayable.[9]

Terence's definition of 'Silence' develops slightly further than this, however; his growing interest in '[t]he mystery of life and the unreality even of one's own sensations' implies that silence to him is not only a question of 'social taboos' but also a matter of the abstruseness of the soul. To Terence, silence is associated with the unarticulated part of the self: a 'something' that needs expression to be grasped. To get at that 'something' is the busi-

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wards a "beyond" of the symbolic'; *Virginia Woolf and the Problem of the Subject: Feminine Writing in the Major Novels* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1987), p. 163.

9 To Laurence, this kind of silence, too, counts as a manifestation of the 'unsayable', which to her is not only 'something about life that is ineffable' but also 'something not sayable based on the social taboos of Victorian propriety' (p. 1). While propriety and inef-fability are both valid reasons for not being able to voice certain experiences or emotions, they are essentially different. If something remains unvoiced because of propriety, it is because of restraint and not because there are no words to describe the experience. The silence that is frequently referred to in *The Voyage Out* hence rather belongs with what Laurence defines as the 'unsaid': 'something one might have felt but does not say' (p. 1). In Woolf's first novel, feelings and inner experiences often remain hidden beneath social 'pretences'; they can still be linguistically represented.

ness of the artist and it is here that Terence finds his bond with Rachel: their shared interest and belief in the 'something' unheard allows them to communicate below the surface without words, within a sphere of private silence. Rachel does not write and Terence does not play any instrument but their aim is the same: 'What I want to do in writing novels is very much what you want to do when you play the piano, I expect. […] We want to find out what's behind things, don't we?' (*VO*, pp. 252-53). Rachel evidently shares this view of art and silence: 'It appeared that nobody ever said a thing they meant, or ever talked of a feeling they felt, but that was what music was for. Reality dwelling in what one saw and felt, but did not talk about' (*VO*, p. 35). Significantly, both Terence and Rachel attempt to find the *sound* that expresses the self, whether as music, a word, or just an unintelligible hum, as in their proposal scene. As an apprentice writer – seemingly more interested in talking about the novels he wants to write than in actually writing them – Terence realizes that the 'something' beneath the surface is yet beyond his skills to capture. Consequently, he does not aim to pierce the silence, only to write *about* its existence.

Writing *about* silence is also an apt description of Woolf's early fiction. Silence is a central theme in her first two novels, associated both with the unsaid and with the unsayable. Here, silence is especially strongly connected to the inner world of the characters. In contrast with her later fiction, the difficulty of describing inner experiences is openly acknowledged – especially in *Night and Day* – and there is little attempt to pierce the silence and to articulate the hidden 'something' below the surface. Both *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day* are dominated by traditional plot patterns, in which the interior world of the private self is held apart as something inherently incongruous with the social world. The inner worlds of Rachel Vinrace and Katharine Hilbery are presented as dream-states, or as 'unreality'; the 'dreams and realities' that Terence Hewet refers to in the Ambroses' garden was in fact a title Woolf considered for her second novel (*VO*, p. 211).[10] The struggle to unite the two worlds remains largely unresolved,

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10 See *VO*, p. 442*n*211. 'Dreams and Realities' was also the title of an essay on Walter de la Mare's poetry that Woolf wrote in 1918; see *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, II: 1912-18, ed. by Andrew McNeillie (1987), 252-5.

and in both novels there is an implicit suggestion of an unbridgeable gulf between two kinds of realities.

In *Night and Day*, these worlds are presented as the 'night' of Katharine's private, inner world and the 'day' of the social world of tea-parties and polite conversation.[11] The former is clearly linked to silence while the latter is associated with language. The novel's central conflict arises from the opposition between Katharine's two selves, which she cannot unite to form one whole:

> Why, she reflected, should there be this perpetual disparity between the thought and the action, between the life of solitude and the life of society, this astonishing precipice on one side of which the soul was active and in broad daylight, on the other side of which it was contemplative and dark as night? Was it not possible to step from one to the other, erect, and without essential change? (*ND*, p. 356)

That the question of bridging her two realities is Katharine's real challenge in the novel is suggested by the fact that nothing is resolved for her even after the question of who loves whom has been sorted out; having exchanged William for Ralph, it still takes Katharine another hundred pages to settle the problematic opposition between her conflicting selves. The fundamental questions that the novel asks are firstly which of the two selves is more 'real', and secondly whether or not they can be combined. Can Katharine give her inner silence a sound?

Several critics have interpreted the discrepancy between the two seemingly incompatible worlds as having to do with Katharine's situation as a woman in a patriarchal world.[12] In these readings, Katharine cannot assert

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11 For a discussion of Katharine's two modes of being, see Ann-Marie Priest, 'Between Being and Nothingness: "The Astonishing Precipice" of Virginia Woolf's *Night and Day*', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 26.2 (2003), 66-80.

12 Susan J. Leonardi, for example, argues that Katharine remains silent because she does not hold the 'power men have over language', and that it is only by refusing this language altogether that she can become a 'poetic genius'; 'Bare Places and Ancient Blemishes: Virginia Woolf's Search for a New Language in *Night and Day*', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 19.2 (1986), 150-63 (pp. 161, 162). To Elizabeth Cooley, *Night and Day* is built on a conflict between 'the young female protagonist and the patriarchal, word-laden culture in which

herself in the social world without submitting to patriarchal discourse. Seen thus, she is silent either because she is subdued or because no other language is available to her but that belonging to men. In contrast, I would like to suggest that Katharine's silence is an important part of how mind and self are presented in *Night and Day*, and in Woolf's fiction in general: silence should not be seen as a reaction on the part of a subdued self but as an existential condition, as the natural state of a conscious mind whose operations are largely wordless and whose content refuses categorization. While Katharine is often silent in social situations, she is not at all silent inside; nor does she live, as Alex Zwerdling suggests, 'in a state of perpetual silent rage'.[13] Katharine's problem, if that is the right word, is the fact that she is uninterested in words because they appear unrelated to the most essential aspects of her life. To her, language is unable to capture the ineffable experience – the 'something' – of her inner world.[14]

In the social world that Katharine inhabits, there is a proper name for every thing and every feeling. Moreover, words often come with social functions. The word 'love', for example, has clear implications; when Katharine accepts William's proposal, she indirectly also accepts the social definition of the word 'love' and what it entails in terms of marriage, a house, and tea parties. Katharine's social world is built around any number of 'names' defining who she is and what she should do: she is a 'Hilbery', a 'granddaughter' of the great poet, somebody's 'fiancée'. All these words refer to clearly defined social acts in a world where such acts define who someone is.

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she finds herself'. To her, Katharine's silence is indicative of her alienation from the social world. See 'Discovering the Enchanted Region: A Revisionary Reading of *Night and Day*', *The CEA Critic*, 54.3 (1992), 4-18 (p. 5). See also Priest, pp. 71, 79-80.

13 Zwerdling, *Virginia Woolf and the Real World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 221.

14 Several critics have argued that *Night and Day* is about the breakdown of an older language and the emergence of a new, modernist kind of expression. Randy Malamud, for example, sees the novel as embodying a 'full-fledged development of the modernist linguistic experimentation that infuses her later style', although possibly 'it does not completely overcome the Victorian repression Woolf describes'; 'Splitting the Husks: Woolf's Modernist Language in *Night and Day*', *South Central Review*, 6.1 (1989), 32-45 (pp. 34-5). See also Leonardi, 160-3, and Lucio P. Ruotolo, *The Interrupted Moment: A View of Virginia Woolf's Novels* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), pp. 47-50.

Katharine's inclination towards silence instead of words sets her apart from her social context, and it also suggests her repugnance against any situation associated with language:

> She did not like phrases. She had even some natural antipathy to that process of self-examination, that perpetual effort to understand one's own feeling, and express it beautifully, fitly, or energetically in language, which constituted so great a part of her mother's existence. She was, on the contrary, inclined to be silent; she shrank from expressing herself even in talk, let alone in writing. (*ND*, p. 40)

Katharine cannot trust words to describe her private self without fundamentally altering and possibly harming that self – without, as Ann-Marie Priest has suggested, 'being appropriated by the conventional models of identity which language itself underwrites'.[15] The difficulty is not only that she has trouble finding the right words to express certain experiences but that she feels that language cannot be used for connecting to other people. Because of these difficulties, Katharine's silent inner world is repeatedly described as one of 'loneliness'. She might not actively seek a new literary expression for her own purposes, but throughout *Night and Day*, she is searching for some mode of expression for the nonverbal experiences of her private self: a way out of her silence. This silence holds more than a threat of solipsism: its nonverbal, intuitive nature makes it almost impossible to share or to break free from, especially for someone like Katharine, who distrusts language as a means of communication.

In fact, it is largely because of her antipathy towards language and the inexactness of words that Katharine decides she cannot marry Ralph. Her feelings for him cannot be encompassed by any word, least of all 'love' and its siblings: 'Ah, but her romance wasn't *that* romance. It was a desire, an echo, a sound; she could drape it in colour, see it in form, hear it in music,

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15 Priest, 66. Linden Peach similarly notes that the 'real' suggests 'constraint' in *Night and Day*, constituting a 'socio-symbolic network or Order that oppresses and constrains'; 'Virginia Woolf and Realist Aesthetics', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts*, ed. by Maggie Humm (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp 104-17 (p. 105).

but not in words; no, never in words' (*ND*, p. 301, emphasis in the original). Although Ralph tries to convince her ('I assure you that we are in love – what other people call love') and although her mother urges her to accept the feeling if not the name ('Names aren't everything; it's what we feel that's everything'), Katharine refuses to define the intimacy she shares with Ralph as 'love' and instead comes to the conclusion that they cannot be married (*ND*, pp. 497, 505).[16] This conflict over how to define their relationship relates directly to the discrepancy between Katharine's two worlds and to her problems with combining them; while her feelings for Ralph belong to her inner world, settling what their relationship is to be is largely a social question.

Love, then, is music or colour and form to Katharine, and not a word. The same is true of her inner world, which is represented through a series of vague, dreamlike states throughout the novel. These states are repeatedly described as 'visions' that disappear like the wind at any attempt at description:

> [S]he could not reduce her vision to words, since it was no single shape coloured upon the dark, but rather a general excitement, an atmosphere, which when she tried to visualize it, took form as a wind scouring the flanks of northern hills and flashing light upon cornfields and pools. (*ND*, p. 444).

It is only when Katharine actively attempts to 'reduce' her inner world to words that it is given visual shape, suggesting that what is happening inside her evades both language and visualization. The word 'vision' in *Night and Day* should therefore not be taken to mean 'image', nor does it have any

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16 Adela Quested in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* has a similar problem, as she finds that she can only remove one 'label' by accepting another: 'Unlike the green bird or the hairy animal [which she had not been able to name], she was labelled now. She felt humiliated again, for she deprecated labels'. Thus she suddenly finds herself engaged, but unwillingly so, because what she had wanted was to 'revert to her former condition of important and cultivated uncertainty', no longer a possibility for her as she can only choose '[t]o be or not to be'; *A Passage to India*, 1924, ed. by Oliver Stallybrass (London: Penguin Classics, 2000), VIII, p. 109.

mystical properties; it is rather what the *OED* defines as a 'mental concept of a distinct or vivid kind'.[17] Woolf's use of the word 'vision' often refers to such 'mental concepts', and she uses it to denote silent states of mind and nonverbal thought-processes. 'Vision' refers to something that is intuitively grasped but difficult or impossible to put into words – sometimes, as in *Night and Day*, because language undermines the 'something' it is supposed to represent.

It is interesting to note, though, that Katharine's visions – her nonverbal mental activity – are described in a series of what may be called verbal paintings. Woolf repeatedly illustrates Katharine's inner world with depictions of landscapes and natural phenomena while making it clear that these do not properly represent the visions themselves. Critics have suggested that Woolf's descriptions of setting are largely impressionistic – that is, that they are focused on shifting light and subjective experiences of colours and shapes.[18] Her characters' inner worlds, however, are more suggestive of expressionist painting, defined by Shulamith Behr as 'response to the imperatives of an inner world'.[19] The vague images that are used to depict Katharine's inner world – that of the wind, for instance – are emblematic of her emotions and of the atmosphere of her mind and clearly have nothing to do with the external world.

Katharine's 'visions' also play a part in her relationship with Ralph, who is one of the few characters in the novel with whom she actually manages to communicate. Theirs is a sporadic, silent communication, repeatedly referred to in terms of seeing; it is a 'vision in a hurricane', a 'hallucination', and an implicit 'agreement', which Ralph suggests means that they are 'after something together; that we see something…' (*ND*, pp. 497, 406, 313). 'Seeing' here refers to an intimate, intuitive understanding of the

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17 'Vision, *n*', *OED Online*, <www.oedonline.com> [accessed 1 August 2013].

18 Gillespie, for example, suggests that Woolf's frequent use of changing light and colour indicates her awareness of French and British impressionists, citing *Jacob's Room*, *To the Lighthouse*, *The Waves*, and *The Years* as examples of novels where such descriptions appear; *The Sisters' Art*, pp. 286-7. See also Jack F. Stewart, 'Impressionism in the Early Novels of Virginia Woolf', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 9.2 (1982), 237-66.

19 Behr, *Expressionism* (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1999), p. 7. Behr defines impressionism as a 'recording of external appearances' (p. 7).

other, associated also with the visions that characterize not only Katharine's inner world, but Ralph's as well. As both can relate to the other's visions, there is no need to resort to language. To Elicia Clements, however, the connection between Katharine and Ralph is 'fundamentally aural'; it is only when Ralph stops thinking of Katharine as an image and instead recognizes the 'recuperative' properties of sound that she agrees to marry him.[20] While inarticulate sounds certainly carry more meaning for Katharine and Ralph than individual words do, their communication is still predominantly a matter of visual forms, suggesting a connection between the ineffable and the visual. Ralph's attempt to write a poem about his feelings for Katharine, for example, results in blanks on every line, subsequently turning into a drawing instead: '[i]n idleness, and because he could do nothing further with words, he began to draw little figures in the blank spaces, heads meant to resemble her head, blots fringed with flames meant to represent – perhaps the entire universe' (*ND*, p. 513). Ralph's doodles and, ironically, Katharine's mathematical symbols are not restrained by the same kind of definiteness that is associated with words, but leave room for suggestion.[21]

It is only by abandoning any attempt to communicate through language and by accepting their visions that Katharine and Ralph also come to accept each other. This acceptance is established when they show each other the physical manifestations of their inner worlds: Katharine's secret paper with mathematical symbols and Ralph's doodle-poem. These drawings and symbols constitute a form of embodiment of the couple's inner worlds, and an attempt to concretize the vagueness of their visions without having

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20 Clements, 'A Different Hearing: Voicing *Night and Day*', *Virginia Woolf Bulletin,* 11 (2002), 32-39 (p. 38). Leonardi similarly argues that Woolf in *Night and Day* writes her way towards a new language and suggests that it 'is perhaps the noises people make that come closest to the language one longs for' (p. 163).

21 Howard Harper points out that Katharine's supposed knowledge of mathematics appears rather scant, and the novel's 'narrative consciousness hasn't the faintest idea of what "mathematics" might be about: it is an unknown realm, an arcane language which, in this naïve view, has none of the ambiguities or uncertainties of literary language'; *Between Language and Silence: The Novels of Virginia Woolf* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), p. 63.

to use language.[22] They bring the inner world out into the outer world, where they materialize Katharine's and Ralph's visions and express them without the threat of any final definition. Thus, their relationship is settled in a way that does not require words. Instead, on the final pages of the novel, the couple falls into a gentle 'silence', where they '[travel] the dark paths of thought side by side towards something discerned in the distance', a 'something' that lacks 'the unity of phrases fashioned by the old believers': a 'difficult region, where the unfinished, the unfulfilled, the unwritten, the unreturned came together' (*ND*, pp. 532, 534)

Yet, the ending to the love story appears quite conventional: Katharine and Ralph do become engaged and Katharine is, after all, made to accept the material shapes that 'love' is given in the social world: a ring, plans for a house, tea cups. If the ending is a failure, which it has often been taken to be, it is partly, I believe, because it seems somewhat unclear whether or not Katharine's two realities are actually unified.[23] That she finally appears to accept the word 'love' can perhaps be understood as a compromise: the

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22 Katharine's mathematical symbols are interesting to consider in relation to George Steiner's ideas about language and modern mathematics. The 'spaces, relations and events' that are dealt with in advanced mathematics, Steiner writes, can be spoken about 'meaningfully and normatively only in the speech of mathematics' and can never be translated. This means, Steiner argues, that a division has appeared between knowledge that can be translated into 'common language' and that which can only be accurately defined through mathematics. Common language can only describe through metaphors and can only refer to subjective experience, an idea that fits in with Katharine's problems over the vagueness of words and that might be viewed in connection to her passion for mathematics. 'It is no paradox to assert that in cardinal respects reality now begins *outside* verbal language', Steiner writes, a statement that could be read as implying that there are two spheres of existence – perhaps comparable to Katharine's night and day – that can be thought of in terms of science (mathematics, precision) versus the humanities (common language, vagueness). Seen thus, Katharine's two worlds really do seem unbridgeable. See George Steiner, 'The Retreat from the Word', in *Language and Silence: Essays 1958-1966* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969), pp. 31-56 (pp. 34, 35, 37).

23 Steve Ellis argues that *Night and Day* presents 'a surprisingly limited version of modernity' and sees Katharine as being 'constantly seduced by the past'. Ellis finds the ending in particular to be 'extremely traditional' and suggests that it would 'be far too simplistic a reading to believe that the novel rejects [the] past in Katharine's discovering her future'. See *Virginia Woolf and the Victorians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 29, 19, 20.

formal engagement signals that Katharine and Ralph have accepted each other in both worlds – in their private spheres and in the social world.

'One Thing Melts into Another': Painting *The Waves*

Woolf sometimes expressed the opinion that painting is a more honest craft than writing. In her essay on Walter Sickert from 1934, for example, she states that '[w]ords are an impure medium' and that it would have been 'better far to have been born into the silent kingdom of paint'.[24] In an often-quoted line from this essay, Woolf claims that 'there is a zone of silence in the middle of every art' in which the artists themselves live, which recalls the 'zone of being' that Richardson's Miriam accesses during her moments of silence (cf. *P*, III, p. 322).[25] Like Richardson's, Woolf's 'zone' relates directly to that which cannot be put into words: it can only be seen, if just for the mind's eye.[26] This 'zone of silence' can be found in all art forms, however, not just the pictorial, as is made obvious in Woolf's example of the inexplicable centre at the heart of Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan', which the poet could not explain himself. Woolf connects painting and writing even further by suggesting that Sickert, with his 'divine gift of silence', is a 'novelist': 'How is he to convey in words the mixture of innocence and sordidity, pity and squalor? Sickert merely takes his brush and paints a tender green light on the faded wallpaper. Light is beautiful falling through green leaves. He has no need of explanation; green is enough'.[27] Green is enough – but only for the painter. The novelist will have to keep asking himself how to 'bring the sun on to [his] page', continuously 'mixing and marrying words' to 'feed the reader's eye'.[28] These lines recall Or-

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24 Woolf, 'Sickert: A Conversation', in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, VI: 1933-41, ed. by Stuart N. Clarke (2011), 36-51 (p. 39).

25 Woolf, 'Sickert: A Conversation', p. 39.

26 To Laurence, however, this zone is a 'domain' that is 'removed from the actual, the political, the historical', and that constitutes a 'space to explore the inner life of her characters and life' (p. 105).

27 Woolf, 'Sickert: A Conversation', pp. 39, 40.

28 Woolf, 'Sickert: A Conversation', pp. 43, 44.

lando's struggle with writing the right kind of green, discussed in chapter one. When read beside *Orlando*, Woolf's comment in her essay on Sickert that '[a]ll great writers are great colourists' may be taken to imply that Orlando's literary skills are not so very great after all, as it is his failed attempt to 'match the shade of green precisely' that initially makes him unable to continue writing (*O*, p. 16).[29]

The mind's eye is important to Woolf's writing, as she frequently invites the reader not only to read her texts, but also to *see* them. In her essay 'Pictures' from 1925, she suggests that the modern novel's focus on the eye moves beyond the image towards the imagined. For the modern novelists' writing, 'however solidly and pictorially built up, is always dominated by an emotion which has nothing to do with the eye', largely because it cannot be seen by the eye or, indeed, be properly represented by language.[30] In the work of Flaubert, Proust, Hardy, and Conrad, Woolf asserts, 'the eye lights up that cave of darkness, and we are shown the hard, tangible, material shapes of bodiless thoughts hanging like bats in the primeval darkness where light has never visited them before'.[31] The phrase 'bodiless thoughts' here presumably refers to nonverbal thought-content that is 'bodiless' because it refuses the shapes offered by language. Beyond the shape of words, however, writing with the help of the eye, Woolf seems to suggest, can enable readers to *see* the text before their mind's eye. This inner eye opens up aspects in the written work that cannot be found in verbal description; it brings light to the 'caves of darkness', or what Woolf in 'Modern Fiction' calls 'the dark places of psychology', named there as the prime interest of the modern writer.[32] The eye, then, adds more to a text than what is described there, reaching into the 'zone of silence'.

The aesthetics of silence that Woolf developed in her experimental fiction is intimately connected to the mind's eye and to the inner experiences that she had always struggled to represent in her writing but frequently

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29 Woolf, 'Sickert: A Conversation', p. 44. As Gillespie suggests, Woolf 'is more interested in the impressions color makes upon the mind than in the precise shade of the color itself'; *The Sisters' Art*, p. 305.

30 Woolf, 'Pictures', in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, IV, 243-7 (p. 244).

31 Woolf, 'Pictures', p. 244.

32 Woolf, 'Modern Fiction', in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, IV, 157-65 (p. 162).

found to be unsayable. The apparent formlessness of her more experimental fiction is rooted in her concern with ineffability; to Woolf, the conventional novel's rigidity of plot can be compared to the inflexibility of a word in the dictionary. As Gillian Beer observes, Woolf rejected plot in her novels because she felt that it contradicted the experience of the self by structuring it into 'origins, sequence, consequences, discovery, exclusion and closure'.[33] For Woolf, arranging experience into plot amounted to assigning false primacy to a fictitious structure over the chaotic, nonverbal flow of the private self. In her experimental fiction, she instead sought to represent her characters' inner worlds without relying on plot or individual words as organizing forces.

The silence in Woolf's experimental works is hence no longer only a matter of 'the things people don't say', as in *The Voyage Out*; rather, it develops into a matter of the things people *cannot* say: the unsayable. Charlotte Walker Mendez associates Woolf's use of silence with what she names '*the mystery of being*', a state of mind that involves a moment of vision and mystical insight.[34] By contrast, I read silence and the unsayable in Woolf's fiction as having to do with ordinary aspects of human life; that which cannot be described is often the individual's experience of his or her inner world, and of thoughts, emotions, and what Woolf often refers to as 'visions', which I return to below. As Mark Hussey observes, Woolf's abstract reality is 'distinguished from mysticism by its rootedness in lived experience'.[35] Indeed, the spiritual in Woolf's fiction is often connected to common but ineffable experiences of inner worlds. The 'patterns' that Woolf and her characters often sense underlie existence do thus not necessarily

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33 Beer, 'Beyond Determinism: George Eliot and Virginia Woolf', in *Women Writing and Writing about Women*, ed. by Mary Jacobus (London: Croom Helm, 1979), pp. 80-99 (p. 94). Harper discusses Woolf's rejection of plot in somewhat similar terms, defining her experimental fiction as being built on a 'plot of intentionality', where conflicts arise from 'the frontiers of awareness, language, and style, where the creative imagination struggles with the ineffable' (p. 3).

34 Mendez, 'Virginia Woolf and the Voices of Silence', *Language and Style*, 13.4 (1980), 94-112 (p. 95 *et passim*, emphasis in the original). Julie Kane, too, argues that Woolf progressed towards a mystical stance; 'Varieties of Mystical Experience in the Writings of Virginia Woolf', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 41.4 (1995), 328-49.

35 Hussey, *Singing of the Real World*, p. 97.

constitute an experience of pantheism or some mystical wholeness, but of belonging and of making sense of the world.[36]

Woolf returns to the concept of 'patterns' throughout her *oeuvre*. In *The Voyage Out*, for example, Terence claims that 'there was an order, a pattern which made life reasonable', and in *The Years*, Eleanor asks herself if there is 'a pattern; a theme, recurring, like music; half remembered, half foreseen?… a gigantic pattern, momentarily perceptible?' (*VO*, p. 348; *Y*, p. 333). The word 'pattern' itself implies an abstract painting or a web, and is hence an indication of the importance of the pictorial in Woolf's work. As Lorraine Sim argues, the idea of the pattern in Woolf's writing becomes increasingly associated with an 'aesthetic form.[37] Indeed, in 'A Sketch of the Past', Woolf holds that the pattern constitutes a work of art that encompasses the whole world:

> [I]t is a constant idea of mine; that behind the cotton wool is hidden a pattern; that we – I mean all human beings – are connected with this; that the whole world is a work of art; that we are parts of the work of art. *Hamlet* or a Beethoven quartet is the truth about this vast mass that we call the world. But there is no Shakespeare, there is no Beethoven; certainly and emphatically there is no God; we are the words; we are the music; we are the thing itself. And I see this when I have a shock.[38]

While Woolf chooses literature and music as artistic representations of the 'vast mass', it is noteworthy that she refers to the 'work of art' that is the world as something visual, as something that she *sees*, if only before her mind's eye.

The passage from 'A Sketch of the Past' is particularly interesting to

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36 To Jane Marcus, Woolf's descriptions of mystical experiences have their roots in her Aunt Caroline Stephen's writings on the Quaker faith. According to Marcus, Woolf learnt a 'female language of the light, a language of silence – acts of light and acts of silence' through her Aunt's treatises on the Friends. See *Virginia Woolf and the Languages of Patriarchy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 115-35.

37 Sim, *Virginia Woolf: The Patterns of Ordinary Experience* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 167.

38 Woolf, 'A Sketch of the Past', p. 72.

consider in relation to the pictorial in Woolf's writing, as it implies that her medium as a writer is not necessarily language, but 'something' beyond language. In *The Waves*, Bernard searches for 'something unvisual beneath' the pictures he sees at the National Gallery, finding that unlike words, the images he contemplates '[make] no reference; they do not nudge; they do not point' (*W*, p. 123). It is not necessarily the images themselves that Bernard appreciates, but their deeper effect on him: the emotions they (almost) enable him to process. Woolf appears to have wanted to emulate this quality of painting. In her experimental writing, she sought to write paintings, creating suggestive images that capture the ineffable: the 'unvisual beneath', the pattern that constitutes 'the truth'.[39]

The 'visions' that Woolf's fiction paints for the mind's eye are also germane to the idea of 'rhythm' in her writing.[40] While the word 'rhythm' is associated with music rather than the visual arts, Woolf connects the two by, for example, saying that she wanted to write *The Waves* to 'a rhythm not to a plot', and, significantly, to a rhythm that 'is in harmony' with that of the painters.[41] In a letter to Vita Sackville-West in 1926, Woolf links

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39 On the ineffable in *The Waves*, see Laurence, pp. 50-1, and Maureen Chun, 'Between Sensation and Sign: The Secret Language of *The Waves*', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 36.1 (2012), 53-70. Chun, too, discusses *The Waves* in terms of painting, but her examination of the novel is focused on the materiality of language. Chun argues that *The Waves* 'embodies Woolf's attempt to unsettle the ineradicable symbolic function of language, to disturb the abstractions of signification, by renewing a sense of words as things'; this is achieved, Chun argues, by 'reaching the physical world beyond the book through the sensuous basis of language, and in relating through narrative the physical rather than subjective or semiotic nature of consciousness' (p. 55).

40 Pamela L. Caughie finds a similar 'wavelike rhythm' in Lily's painting in *To the Lighthouse*, in which 'pauses and strokes form one process' and where the concept of wave 'signifies an action: the momentary lull after the break and before the next towering mound of water is part of the continual movement that is the wave'; to Caughie, this movement 'is what keeps our fictions from hardening into some permanent form'; *Virginia Woolf and Postmodernism: Literature in Quest and Question of Itself* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p. 38.

41 2 September, 1930, *Diary*, III, 316. In a letter to Ethel Smyth written some days before, Woolf uses the same phrase, this time stating that 'writing to a rhythm' is her 'difficulty'; 28 August, 1930, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, IV: 1929-31 (1978), p. 204. Elicia Clements has argued that Woolf modelled *The Waves* on Beethoven's String Quartet in B-Flat Major, Opus 130 and the *Grosse Fuge*, Opus 133, thereby reconceptualising 'the

rhythm to 'style', suggesting that rhythm is concretely connected to a specific kind of writing, and a writing, moreover, that appears to correlate with the modern novel's focus on the eye:

> Style is a very simple matter; it is all rhythm. Once you get that, you can't use the wrong words. […] Now this is very profound, what rhythm is, and goes far deeper than words. A sight, an emotion, creates this wave in the mind, long before it makes words to fit it; and in writing (such is my present belief) one has to recapture this, and set this working (which has nothing apparently to do with words) and then, as it breaks and tumbles in the mind, it makes words to fit it.[42]

Sights and emotions create 'waves' in the mind, and the process that seeks to 'recapture' this experience leads to words that 'fit' the wave, but not, it appears, in the sense that they perfectly represent the initial vision. Mendez finds an influence from Henri Bergson in this passage: in *Mind Energy*, Bergson writes about 'the dancing of the sentence' around a 'curve of thought', the rhythm of speech reproducing the rhythm of the thought.[43] In both cases, the idea of 'rhythm' relates to nonverbal mental activity, which is most easily captured without attention to particular words. 'I will

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notions of subjectivity and "form"' through an 'interchange between musical sound and narrative'; see 'Transforming Musical Sounds into Words: Narrative Method in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*', *Narrative*, 13.2 (2005), 160-81 (p. 175). Emma Sutton argues that while Woolf shaped *The Waves* according to Beethoven's late style, she also used 'Wagner's leit-motivic technique to undercut the political work and rhetorical allure of myth, to question the interests served by particular mythologies and the generalising tendency inherent in myth itself'; see *Virginia Woolf and Classical Music: Politics, Aesthetics, Form* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), pp. 140, 151. On Woolf and rhythm, see also Sutton, '"Putting Words on the Backs of Rhythm": Woolf, "Street Music" and *The Voyage Out*', *Paragraph*, 33.2 (2010), 176-96, and Sanja Bahun, 'Broken Music, Broken History: Sounds and Silence in Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts*', in *Virginia Woolf and Music*, ed. by Adriana Varga (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), pp. 229-58 (pp. 242-6).

42 16 March, 1926, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, III, 247.

43 Mendez, 'Virginia Woolf and the Voices of Silence', 97; Bergson, 'The Soul and the Body', in *Mind Energy*, trans. by H. Wildon Carr, ed. by Keith Ansell Pearson and Michael Kolkman (London: MacMillan, 1920; repr. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), pp. 28-58 (p. 44).

not change the rhythm of my mind by stopping, by looking', Bernard asserts in *The Waves*, implying that rhythm, at least in his case, is constantly influenced by perceptions (*W*, p. 122). The 'wave in the mind' also connects the water imagery of *The Waves* to mental activity and inner worlds, an idea discussed further below.

The word 'rhythm' also has a strong connection to the art theories of Roger Fry, with whose writings Woolf was very familiar. The rhythm that is 'in harmony with the painters', for example, recalls Fry's 'Essay on Aesthetics', in which he argues that the first 'element' that 'arouses' emotion in a viewer of art is the 'rhythm of the line with which the forms are delineated'.[44] Using words not to define but to circumscribe her 'meaning', Woolf's late fiction is similarly built on a rhythm – a rhythm that 'arouses' emotions in her readers, inviting them to read with their mind's eye.

On 'the far side of language', Woolf's attempts to represent her characters' inner worlds led her to a kind of writing that in several ways corresponds to the visual and to painting. This, I argue, does not only mean that her novels often evoke visual images through suggestive descriptions but that she sometimes approaches her craft as though it were a nonverbal medium. As Diane Gillespie points out, Woolf thought of the visual arts as silent, finding there an 'alternate language' to 'embody' experiences for which she found no words.[45] In her experimental fiction, Woolf reconfigures her approach to language, using words to create the kind of silent art that she associated with painting. Thus, instead of searching in vain for the right label, she opts for vagueness and ambiguity, repeatedly pointing at some meaning that she 'cannot indicate' precisely.[46] The remainder of this chapter will consider Woolf's silent language in relation to *The Waves*, her most experimental novel.

The representation of the inner world in *Night and Day* is largely rendered from the perspective of the social world: both the narrator of the novel and Katharine herself appear to look in at the inner world from the

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44 Fry, 'An Essay in Aesthetics', in *Vision and Design* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1920; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 12-27 (p. 23). On Woolf and Fry, see Banfield, pp. 245-388; J. H. Roberts '"Vision and Design" in Virginia Woolf', *PMLA*, 61.3 (1946), 835-47; and McLaurin, pp. 17-94.

45 Gillespie, *The Sisters' Art*, p. 102.

46 This is how Woolf describes Dostoevsky's fiction in 'On Not Knowing Greek', p. 45.

outside, attempting to describe what they see there with words, or, ultimately, with doodles and mathematical symbols. In *The Waves*, on the other hand, the perspective has shifted to the inside, so that the social world is seen from within. But *The Waves* does not only represent the external world as seen from the inside – which is, after all, how most modernist novels represent the world – but approaches it from within that 'zone of silence' that Woolf writes about in her essay on Sickert. As Hermione Lee observes, the characters' monologues do not represent actual speech.[47] Instead, they often appear to constitute a representation of inner 'visions': the paradoxical verbal expressions of nonverbal experiences.[48] *The Waves* is not a novel written *about* consciousness, or *through* consciousness, but a novel set *in* consciousness – in those 'dark places of psychology' that no words can properly define. Consequently, it is in one sense a novel written out of a condition of silence, largely relying on the text's capacity to make readers see and imagine that which is implicit in it.[49]

The visual quality in the novel is emphasized through the frequent use

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47 Lee, *The Novels of Virginia Woolf* (London: Methuen, 1977; repr. Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), p. 164. Laurence similarly argues that the voices are not spoken, but instead 'sounded from different aspects of being: sensation, perception, intellect, memory, imagination' (p. 202). To Laura Marcus, Woolf's 'concern' in *The Waves* is with the '*experience* of identity and with its articulation through a discourse that, for the most part, cannot be named either as speech or as thought'; *Virginia Woolf* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1997), pp. 134-5. For a different perspective, see Melba Cuddy-Keane, 'Virginia Woolf, Sound Technologies, and the New Aurality', in *Virginia Woolf in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, ed. by Pamela L. Caughie (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), pp. 69-96 (pp. 88-90). Garrett Stewart argues that the language of *The Waves* is 'thoughts *in* words, not just mental images translated *into* words', and that 'language itself, inner articulation, thus becomes the only occupied zone of consciousness'; 'Catching the Stylistic D/rift: Sound Defects in Woolf's *The Waves*', *ELH*, 54.2 (1987), 421-61 (p. 425).

48 Ralf Hertel, however, reads the novel as a reaction against the 'wariness of words' that characterizes much of early twentieth-century writing; through Neville and Bernard's 'simple language', Hertel argues, Woolf attempts 'to find a language still capable of conveying the immediacy of the world surrounding us'. See 'The Senses in Literature: From the Modernist Shock of Sensation to Postcolonial and Virtual Voices', in *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Modern Age*, ed. by David Howes (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 174-94 (p. 181).

49 Cuddy-Keane argues, however, that Woolf first conceived of the novel as something to be heard, finding that *The Waves* 'builds an aural density out of layers and textures of sounds widely diffuses in space'; 'Sound Technologies', p. 88.

of words like 'see' and 'look'. These two words are repeated in different forms 484 times throughout the text, whereas 'listen' and 'hear' only appear 86 times, strongly indicating that the ineffable experience of the inner world is rather quiet: it is not primarily to be heard, but seen.[50] Indeed, the connection between writing and painting in Woolf's fiction is at its strongest in *The Waves*. While the images and 'visions' around which the novel is structured are often similar to Katharine's inner experiences in *Night and Day*, *The Waves* does not primarily portray the mind through abstract images, but through concrete ones. 'The southern sun flickers over this urn; we push off in to the tide of the violent and cruel sea', Louis says, and Rhoda describes how she 'will let the Russian Empress's veil flow about [her] shoulders [while the] diamonds of the Imperial crown blaze on [her] forehead' (*W*, pp. 186, 43). Images like these invite us to *see* the novel – to *see* the characters' inner visions – rather than to merely read the words.

Like *Night and Day*, *The Waves* enacts a struggle between inner and outer worlds, repeatedly represented by water and land, and by darkness and light. These are introduced in the interludes that open each section in the novel, and that describe how the sun rises higher and higher, and how the waves break on the shore. Gillespie sees a parallel to Claude Monet's series of paintings of Rouen Cathedral in the interludes, arguing that the pictorial descriptions in the interludes are 'neither wholly visual nor static'.[51] It is true that the interludes do not present a series of true tableaux, since the landscapes depicted are in constant movement. This movement, however, appears to fit in with Woolf's understanding of the self and the inner world as something that keeps evolving.

The sharp distinction between water and land in *The Waves* appears not only in the interludes but also in the characters' monologues, where water

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50 I have counted the words using Mitsu Matsuoka's online hyper-concordance tool; 'Hyper-Concordance', *The Victorian Literary Studies Archive*, [http://victorian.lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/concordance/], accessed 10 October, 2016.

51 Gillespie, *The Sisters' Art*, p. 303. Jack F. Stewart makes a similar observation; 'Spatial Form and Color in *The Waves*', p. 102. Susan E. Lorsch also reads the interludes – which she refers to as 'prose poems' – as paintings, noting that Woolf here 'takes extreme care to avoid using language which might interpret the landscape instead of simply painting it'; 'Structure and Rhythm in *The Waves*', *Essays in Literature*, 6.2 (1979), 195-206 (p. 196).

is continuously linked to inner worlds and land to the world outside the individual. As in the earlier novels, the social world in *The Waves* is connected to language, while the inner world is presented as nonverbal and silent. Words and the social self rise upwards, towards the light, while silence and the private inner world are repeatedly described as moving – or even falling – downwards. As in most of Woolf's fiction, it appears that some balance is needed between these different poles and that it is dangerous to go too far either way. The following discussion centres on two characters who do go too far, but in opposite directions: Bernard, who is associated with an excess of language and who is firmly situated on land, in the social world, and Rhoda, who is associated with water and the inner world, and who is unable to reach land because of a lack of words.

In *The Waves*, there is a struggle between language and silence, linked to notions of social and private selves. Words are associated with veils, covering truths that seem impossible to reach: 'My mind hums hither and thither with its veil of words for everything'; 'Down from our heads veils fell'; 'Let me cast and throw away this veil of being, this cloud that changes with the least breath, night and day, and all night and all day' (*W*, pp. 92, 98, 36). Language brings a sense of protection for the characters, but it also makes it hard for them to reach beyond words towards a different kind of truth. The situation is similar to that in Robert Graves's poem 'The Cool Web', which argues that children who have yet to learn to speak experience life more intensely than adults; they are consequently also in danger, having no speech to 'chill the angry day' or 'dull the rose's cruel scent' (ll. 5-6).[52] Should we experience reality without the safety barrier of language to protect us, Graves muses in the poem's last lines, we would 'go mad no doubt and die that way' (l. 18). These lines are reminiscent of the silence George Eliot describes in *Middlemarch* – discussed in chapter one – but here Eliot's silence is substituted by speech. If silence in Eliot's version saves us from the fatal 'roar on the other side', in Graves's poem it is speech that

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52 Graves, 'The Cool Web', in *Robert Graves: Complete Poems*, ed. by Beryl Graves and Dunstan Ward, 3 vols (Manchester: Carcanet Press; Paris: Alyscamps Press, 1995-99), I (1995), 323-4.

envelopes us in in relative safety.[53] In both versions, the unmitigated experience of reality might kill.

The association between language and safety in *The Waves* is made already in the novel's first chapter, where the characters appear as young children without words to label what they perceive. The chapter reads as an attempt to render the experience of the world in minds that do not yet have language to describe: 'I see a slab of pale yellow'; 'I hear a sound […] cheep, chirp; cheep, chirp; going up and down'; 'I see a crimson tassel […] twisted with gold threads' (*W*, p. 5). Here, the contents of the mind are represented not in the form of thought-as-language but as separate qualia, entering the inexperienced consciousnesses of the children. The descriptions of what they perceive – the sun, birds' twitter, and so on – reveal a world of sense-data that does not make sense to them. Nor can they separate themselves from what they see; repeatedly while describing the scene around them, the children become that which they perceive: 'I am the stalk'; 'My hair is made of leaves'; 'We are edged with mist. We make an unsubstantial territory' (*W*, pp. 7, 8, 10). These descriptions imply that the children experience no boundaries between themselves and the world; they are merged not only with each other but also, through their perceptions, with the world.

While the children may not completely understand what they perceive, it is clear that the world surrounding them might still inexplicably harm them, just like the unveiled world in Graves's poem: 'I burn, I shiver'; 'Now an eye-beam is slid through the chink. Its beam strikes me'; 'I will take my anguish and lay it upon the roots under the beech trees' (*W*, pp. 7, 8, 9). That language protects from the harshness of such experiences is evident: 'I [Bernard] must make phrases and phrases and so interpose something hard between myself and the stare of housemaids, the stare of clocks, staring faces, indifferent faces, or I shall cry' (*W*, p. 22). In *The Waves*, then, language does not necessarily 'chill the angry day' but interposes itself as 'something hard' between the self and the anger, which makes its impact less noticeable – at least for those characters who, like

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53 Eliot, *Middlemarch*, ed. by David Carroll, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), XX, p. 182.

Bernard, are able to use words as shields.

Words might shield Bernard, but they also make him incapable of reaching the depths of his own mind, or any truth beyond the surface world where he is situated. Even though he initially believes that he uncovers the truth of things through his words – 'I draw the veil of things with words' – he is forced to admit that language cannot encompass all the images in his head: 'how much, how infinitely more than I can say, I have observed. More and more bubbles into my mind as I talk, images and images' (*W*, p. 66). To Bernard, words are 'meretricious' and often stem from 'evasions and old lies', but he still cannot stop language from flowing and he cannot exist in silence (*W*, p. 104). His only reality is on land, which is completely based on words, a circumstance which signals its speciousness: the words Bernard uses become the world in which he lives. He is not only afraid to explore the unknown regions of his inner reality, but fearful that he might not find anything there at all: 'I cannot bear the pressure of solitude. When I cannot see words curling like rings of smoke round me I am in darkness – I am nothing. When I am alone I fall into lethargy' (*W*, p. 104). Unable to break free from this world, he is also incapable of connecting to other persons as words position themselves between him and others, preventing any intimacy.

There is little stability about Bernard; he exists in different shapes depending on who he is with and what words they draw out of him: 'I am made and remade continually. Different people draw different words from me' (*W*, p. 105). Because his expressions are not wrested from his inner silence – as are, for example, Neville's – Bernard's words will not be remembered: 'because there is something that comes from outside and not from within I shall be forgotten; when my voice is silent you will not remember me, save as the echo of a voice that once wreathed the fruit into phrases' (*W*, p. 106). Bernard's language is all surface, and can thus never represent or express properly; beneath his words, beneath his existence on land, there is nothing. While Rhoda repeatedly claims that she has no face, Bernard is all face but ultimately soulless. He has too many phrases, which keep him buoyant and unable to dive deep into the sea of the inner world.

Like Richardson, Woolf favoured the sea as a metaphor for mind and consciousness. Throughout her career, she used the sea to represent

non-verbal occurrences and experiences of the self.[54] In 'A Sketch of the Past', she mentions her most important memory as being that of 'hearing the waves breaking, one, two, one, two, and sending a splash of water over the beach; and then breaking, one, two, one, two', as she lay 'half asleep, half awake' in the nursery at St. Ives as a child.[55] Sea and water are present in almost all of her novels. They define the setting in *The Voyage Out* and are 'to be heard all through' *To the Lighthouse*; in *Jacob's Room*, the waves 'showed that uneasiness, like something alive, restive, expecting the whip, of waves before a storm', thus matching Betty Flanders' agitation in the novel's first scene (*JR*, p. 9).[56]

In *The Waves*, Woolf uses the sea as an allegory for the mind, likening the shifts in consciousness to the slow movements of a large body of water. Like Mrs Ramsay's deep inner sea, the characters in *The Waves* can only connect to the external world by coming up to the surface of their minds' sea. At times, the characters' selves are described as burrowing deep into themselves – deep down into the sea – and the world is portrayed as distant and foreign, just as sounds on land appear muted when perceived from below the surface. Patrizia A. Muscogiuri argues that land and surface are associated with 'the characteristic bias towards categorization and discrimination that informs both rationalism and realism' in Woolf's fiction; the sea, Muscoguiri suggests, represents 'the non-manifest and elusive aspects of existence that usually remain unwritten and unsaid'.[57] The underwater world in *The Waves* certainly relates to these elusive aspects of existence: it

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54 On the sea in Woolf's fiction, see David Bradshaw, '"The Purest Ecstasy": Virginia Woolf and the Sea', in *Modernism on Sea: Art and Culture at the British Seaside*, ed. by Lara Feigel and Alexandra Harris (Witney: Peter Lang, 2009), pp. 101-15; Laurence, pp. 114-17; E. H. Wright, 'The "Girl-Novel": *Chance* and Woolf's *The Voyage Out*', *The Conradian*, 39.1 (2014), 80-97 (pp. 85-7); Bonnie Kime Scott, 'The Word Split Its Husk: Woolf's Double Vision of Modernist Language', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 34.3 (1988), 371-85; and Patrizia A. Muscogiuri, '"This, I Fancy, Must Be the Sea": Thalassic Aesthetics in Virginia Woolf's Writing', in *Virginia Woolf and the Natural World: Selected Papers from the Twentieth Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Kristin Czarnecki and Carrie Rohman (Clemson: Clemson University Digital Press, 2011), pp. 101-7.

55 Woolf, 'A Sketch of the Past', pp. 64.

56 27 June, 1925, *Diary*, III, 34.

57 Muscogiuri, p. 105.

is silent, muted, and represents a nonverbal form of existence, unrelated to the world on land, which is governed by language. In the sea – in the world of the mind – there is no language that protects, and the shapes that govern experiences are of a very different kind from those on land.

The mind as sea is also presented as a place to seek refuge and to explore one's individuality: the self's experience of itself. As such, it is a vastly different place from land where, in *The Waves*, the characters are described as having to arrange themselves for a presentation. Neville refers to the waters as 'more stable than the wild, the weak and inconsequent cries that we utter when, trying to speak, we rise; when we reason and jerk out these false sayings, "I am this; I am that!" Speech is false' (*W*, p. 108). The waters describe a place where a more truthful way of being appears possible, and this truthfulness is predicated on silence. By not naming their underwater experiences, most of the characters in the novel can experience a sense of liberation and an honesty that elude life on land.

The sea is not only a place of safety, however. At times, it is associated with claustrophobia and a sense of disorientation, suggesting that the mind is a place where you may get lost and drown if you are not careful. Already in *The Voyage Out*, where the sea is used to symbolize Rachel's mind during her fatal illness, it acquires an ominous quality. In that novel, Rachel's experience of being locked into herself and separated from the world is described as lying on the sea-floor: '[s]he saw nothing and heard nothing but a faint booming sound, which was the sound of the sea rolling over her head' (*VO*, p. 397). The bottom of the sea – representing the core of Rachel's consciousness – is a place from which the self cannot reach the external world. Indeed, Rachel's self is expressed as closed off by a 'gulf between her world and the ordinary world which she could not bridge', indicating the loss of communication between her and her surroundings (*VO*, p. 383).[58] The word 'bridge' – used earlier in the novel to indicate Rachel's and Terence's problem of communicating from their positions of individual silence – suggests the inherent separateness of the two worlds: the private and the social. Rachel's fever makes her unable to connect to

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58 In *The Waves*, Jinny experiences a similar gulf when she notes how sentences '[cross] the empty space between' her and her partner at one of the parties she attends (*W*, p. 81).

the outer world; she is lost, deep in her own self and muted by the weight of the water pressing down on her, unable to reach the words she needs to surface.

In *The Waves*, the sea is similarly a dangerous place at times and especially for Rhoda, who of all the six characters is the one particularly associated with the sea and with inner worlds. Her difficulties with connecting to the outer world are presented already on the first pages of the novel, where Louis notes that '[u]p here Bernard, Neville, Jinny and Susan (but not Rhoda) skim the flower-beds with their nets. […] They brush the surface of the world' (*W*, pp. 7-8).[59] The fact that Louis notes Rhoda's absence is indicative of his bond with her – later, as grownups, they have a relationship. His observation emphasizes her absence on the 'surface' of the world, implicitly linking her to depth and interiority from the very beginning. Her problems with relating to the surface world – the social world – are also intimated through her repeated difficulties with connecting to her own body, or, indeed, with being situated in any sort of corporality at all: 'that face is my face. But I will duck behind her to hide it, for I am not here. I have no face. Other people have faces; [...] they are here. Their world is the real world. The things they lift are heavy' (*W*, p. 32).[60] By contrast, Jinny is all body: 'I can imagine nothing beyond the circle cast by my body' (*W*, p. 101). Throughout *The Waves*, language is linked to the material, external world; for Rhoda, without a face and with hardly any language, it appears impossible to establish a presence in the surface world.

Rhoda's inability to own her body situates her firmly in the world of the mind, and it is relevant to the novel's thorough-going association between,

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59 Laurence suggests that Woolf uses Rhoda to explore 'an aspect of the mind, the dream state', a state that Laurence connects to Freud's case analyses of Dora and Anna O, and Max Ernst's collages of Charcot's hysterical women. She argues that the work of all three writers/artists 'reveal[s] a cultural "intertextuality" concerning women's dream states and hysteria' and suggests that all three 'artists' are 'cultural "framers" of the hysterical unconscious' (pp. 137, 125, 135).

60 Hussey suggests that Rhoda's inability to connect to her own body is at 'the furthest extreme of unembodiment of all Woolf's characters'; *The Singing of the Real World*, p. 16. Laurence, on the other hand, sees Rhoda as an example of how Woolf expresses the mind through her characters' bodies, suggesting that Rhoda's 'bodily symptoms […] might be pathologically labeled hysteria' (p. 137).

on the one hand, the mind and the sea, and, on the other, the body and land. Throughout *The Waves*, Rhoda's connection to the sea and to water is emphasized and explored in different ways. There are, for example, occasional references to a 'stream' flowing through her, and at other times she refers to a pond (*W*, pp. 43, 34). Her sporadic command over her water-world brings a triumphant note into her monologues at times: 'Now the stream pours in a deep tide fertilizing, opening the shut, forcing the tight-folded, flooding free. To whom shall I give all that now flows through me, from my warm, my porous body?'; 'Alone, I rock my basins; I am mistress of my fleet of ships' (*W*, pp. 43-4, 83). In her mind, in solitude, Rhoda can possess herself more completely. As Bernard notes, she 'loves to be alone', and she 'fears' the others, 'because we shatter the sense of being which is so extreme in solitude' (*W*, p. 104). By remaining silent and within her self, Rhoda can also sustain a sense of wholeness, which she loses when interacting with others.

Even so, Rhoda's sea-world is mostly presented as a threatening place from which she is unable to break free. The 'puddle' she mentions at several points serves as a barrier between her inner world and that of the land:

> Also, in the middle, cadaverous, awful, lay the grey puddle in the courtyard, when, holding an envelope in my hand, I carried a message. I came to the puddle. I could not cross it. Identity failed me. We are nothing, I said, and fell. I was blown like a feather. I was wafted down tunnels. Then very gingerly, I pushed my foot across. I laid my hand against a brick wall. I returned very painfully, drawing myself back into my body over the grey, cadaverous space of the puddle. This is life then to which I am committed.
> (*W*, p. 49)

The message she is carrying but is unable to deliver is indicative of Rhoda's inability to put her experiences into words in the social world. She has something to communicate, but she cannot translate it, and therefore she cannot cross the puddle and emerge from water onto land.

Throughout the novel, then, Rhoda struggles to emerge from her silent inner world – her ultimate failure only mentioned in passing towards the end of the novel – while Bernard struggles to penetrate some sort of depth.

The contrast between the two characters is most strongly brought out in the short section where Bernard visits the National Gallery. Looking at pictures while attempting to process his conflicting emotions after the simultaneous death of Percival and birth of his son, Bernard still remains unable to reach the thing 'underneath':

> Something lies deeply buried. For one moment I thought to grasp it. But bury it, bury it; let it breed, hidden in the depths of my mind some day to fructify. After a long lifetime, loosely, in a moment of revelation, I may lay hands on it, but now the idea breaks in my hand. […] They break; they fall over me. (*W*, p. 124)

In his emotional state, Bernard is more aware of his inner world than usual, but he cannot reach it, cannot 'lay hands on' the thing that lies buried within him, only hope to be able to grasp it in some unforeseeable future. The 'silence weighs' on him, and he describes his half-hour in the art gallery as a 'strain' that leaves him 'exhausted', longing for the 'sounds of tradesmen calling' (*W*, pp. 124, 125). Unable to bear the silence of the gallery, of the paintings, and of his own impenetrable inner world, Bernard thus turns towards the sounds of the external world in order to be able to feel at ease again.

While Bernard escapes silence by turning towards sound, Rhoda, by contrast, seeks spots of silence in which to flee sound, 'hollows grooved in the heart of the uproar' (*W*, p. 126). She finds 'alcoves of silence where we can shelter under the wing of beauty from truth which I desire' (*W*, p. 126).[61] When a shop-girl breaks the silence, she also breaks Rhoda's feeling of safety, and Rhoda flees to the 'bottom' of her sea-mind where she, 'among the weeds', can see 'envy, jealousy, hatred and spite scuttle like crabs over the sand' up on the land (*W*, p. 126). Unable to 'touch' some-

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61 Suzette Henke, by contrast, sees Rhoda as attempting to shut her 'eyes against the malevolent intrusion of visual stimuli', only being able to reach her inner world of 'white spaces […] through her sense of hearing, as sounds register on a body cut off from other sensations'; '*The Waves* as Ontological Trauma Narrative', in *Virginia Woolf and Trauma: Embodied Texts*, ed. by Suzette Henke and David Eberly (New York: Pace University Press, 2007), pp. 123-155 (p. 131).

thing hard and concrete, and thus connect to the world, Rhoda remains in her water-world, alone.

Yet, for all her despair, Rhoda is able to retrieve the 'thing' beneath the image that escapes Bernard. Through the emotional upheaval of Percival's death, she can 'see the thing' (*W*, p. 128):

> There is a square; there is an oblong. The players take the square and place it upon the oblong. They place it very accurately; they make a perfect dwelling-place. Very little is left outside. The structure is now visible; what is inchoate is here stated; we are not so various or so mean; we have made oblongs and stood them upon squares. This is our triumph; this is our consolation. […] Wander no more, I say; this is the end. The oblong has been set upon the square; the spiral is on top. We have been hauled over the shingle, down to the sea. (*W*, p. 128-9).

The 'thing underneath', then, is not likened to anything else, unlike most other 'visions' throughout *The Waves*: '"Like" and "like" and "like"' – but what is the thing that lies beneath the semblance of the thing?' (*W*, p. 128). It is finally described here as an abstract image with a square and an oblong and a spiral, moved by 'players'. Significantly, Rhoda's 'vision' of truth moves her back 'down to the sea', in which she finds a 'dwelling-place' (*W*, p. 129). Bernard, unable to grasp the 'thing', will have to remain, non-triumphant, on land.

The contrast between Rhoda and Bernard in this section is also linked to an implicit comparison between painting and literature. 'Painters live lives of methodical absorption, adding stroke to stroke', Bernard asserts, concluding that painters in this sense 'are not like poets – scapegoats; they are not chained to the rock' (*W*, p. 124). Unlike language – which is presumably the 'rock' that Bernard refers to – painters work with a more fluid medium, which is applied slowly and 'methodically' to their canvas, resulting in 'the silence, the sublimity' that escapes Bernard as he regards the pictures in the gallery (*W*, p. 124). Words, on the other hand, are hard, material, unalterable, like the shapes in the external world that Bernard seeks and Rhoda flees.

The distinction between painting and writing refers implicitly to Woolf's

own aesthetics in *The Waves*, a novel that she appears in some sense to have painted rather than written, 'adding stroke to stroke'. By using words as though they were paint, Woolf develops a strategy for representing her characters' inner worlds while avoiding the unbending hardness of language: the labelling and defining that troubled her. Just like waves rising and falling on top of each other, blending water with water, Woolf lines up sentences on top of each other. In a way that resembles the application of new paint on old, putting new strokes and new colours on what was already painted, she constantly seems to rewrite what had already been written, so that the picture alters slightly, and so that no one colour and no one line become dominant or defining.[62] Louis is 'the little ape who chatters over a nut'; a moment later, he is 'the caged tiger' (*W*, p. 100). The shapes that Rhoda sees before *her* mind's eye keep shifting: 'When the white arm rests upon the knee it is a triangle; now it is upright – a column; now a fountain, falling' (*W*, p. 109). And whereas Susan claims that '[e]verything is now set; everything is fixed', Louis asserts a few lines later that 'the chain breaks' and 'disorder returns' (*W*, p. 112). Nothing is definite; everything keeps evolving.[63]

Like the art-works Bernard sees at the National Gallery, *The Waves* is consequently nothing hard and concrete, but a silent and sublime novel-painting, constantly suggesting 'something' intangible 'beneath the semblance of the thing' (*W*, p. 128). In this kind of writing, meaning does not hinge on specific, individual words, but on the text as a whole. Usually, we define literary works as art by referring to how each individual word is needed in the text. Woolf, by contrast, captured the nonverbal, silent core of the inner world by painting with words, describing and re-describing that 'something' between the lines. No one word pinpoints or labels the experience. Instead, all the words together evoke that which lies 'beneath'

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62 For a discussion of repetition in *The Waves* in connection to the materiality of language, see Minow-Pinkney, pp. 171-2.

63 The language in the novel also seems modelled on waves: voices rise and fall, separate from one another only to blend again. At times the novel appears to favour the individual experience, as the voices break free from each other to claim their own stories and express their uniqueness. But the voices often merge again, continuously going back and forth between 'I' and 'we'.

them, that ungraspable truth, which can only be represented by vague, abstract shapes. The inner world in *The Waves* is thus not defined but consistently undefined, or undone.

♦

To Virginia Woolf, the self cannot be precisely defined because it is constantly on the move; it is not a noun but a verb. *The Waves* constitutes Woolf's most experimental representation of the 'vanishing soul', presenting an inner world that keeps evolving and that will not sit still. The novel departs dramatically from the usual techniques of psychological realism, and the contours of the minds it depicts are not readily recognizable. In this sense, *The Waves* is similar to *Finnegans Wake*: it presents a mindscape that is real and unreal, aware and unaware, at the same time. Yet, unlike Joyce's last novel, *The Waves* is not a 'night novel', that is, it is not an attempt to represent the unconscious. Woolf's novel represents the self and the mind without recourse to traditional vocabularies of the psyche. Like Bernard at the art-gallery, we might 'distinguish too little and too vaguely' of the novel if we expect its words to determine its contents to us (*W*, p. 129). Instead, we must read with our mind's eye, constantly looking for the 'thing beneath' the hardness of the words.

Concluding Remarks

The 'test of absolutely everything in life is the quality of the in-between silences', Miriam claims in Richardson's *Pilgrimage* (*P*, III, p. 188). This study reads the modernist novel in terms of what it does not say – testing its generic qualities through the form and functions of its silences, for what comes in between sounds, lines, and events. It argues that silence is a central element of modernist realism, both as part of the texts' soundscapes and of their literary expression. In the works of Richardson, Joyce, and Woolf, silence is more than a mere absence of sound and speech; it suggests the presence of something behind and between the words that cannot be properly defined.

Modernism has often been construed as a break with what came before, a conception that is reinforced by the disdain many early twentieth-century writers expressed for their Victorian and Edwardian forbearers. Against the supposed shapelessness of their predecessors, modernist writers posited form as a vehicle of expression. The fragmentariness and inconclusiveness of many modernist texts carry meaning, and are, I argue in this study, methods for representing aspects of human experience for which many writers felt that language did not suffice. Silence – which relates to both fragmentariness and inconclusiveness – is another such method. By including silences in their texts, modernist fiction not only draws its readers' attention to the difficulties surrounding literary representation but also suggests the very content it circumvents. The result is texts that are still fundamentally realist, in that they attempt to get as close as possible to individual experiences of reality. It therefore seems more correct to read modernist fiction not in terms of rupture but as a development of nineteenth-century realism.

Silence in modernist fiction constitutes a response to the crisis of realism

that emerged around the turn of the century, that is, the impossibility of accurately describing certain aspects of reality in words. By including silence in their texts, Richardson, Joyce, and Woolf were able to delineate those aspects without having to define them; they could suggest the presence of something without having to specify exactly what that something was. The unsayable is thus still included in their writing, not only as gaps and absences, but as presences. By developing realism to include that which cannot properly be represented in language, these writers wrote texts that moved closer to reality as experienced by an individual human being.

In this study, I have examined both the form and function of silence in the works of Richardson, Joyce, and Woolf. The form of their respective silences – that is, how silence is manifested in their texts – is often similar. In all three writers' texts, there are descriptions of silence that add meaning to and place focus on moments of introspection. In Richardson's writing, especially, there are also graphical representations of silence in the shape of blank spaces on the page and ellipses of various length. Woolf, too, experiments with blank spaces, most notably in *Jacob's Room*. In all three writers' works, silence is a palpable presence that elicits curiosity and that requires the readers' collaboration in order to surface.

The function of the silences differs from case to case even within individual novels, but a recurrent tendency within all three writers' texts is the association between silence and interiority. While sound is often connected to the outside world, silence instead suggests the seclusion of the private mind: that most intimate space from which our idiosyncratic perspective of the outside world originates. In *Pilgrimage*, silence becomes not only a method for accessing Miriam's inmost core, but a representation of the state of mind associated with her moments of intense contemplation. For Miriam, silence is a way of life and a goal in its own right. In *A Portrait*, Stephen similarly refers to his inner, 'mental world' in terms of silence, which for him becomes a place to hide from his often dismal surroundings (*PA*, p. 173). In Woolf's novels, too, silence is a sought-after state, suggesting calmness and exploration, as when Mrs Ramsay turns her focus inwards, longing to 'be silent; to be alone' (*TL*, p. 52).

In all three writers' works, there is a constant movement between silence and sound that is significant in itself, representing the multifaceted and

continuously changing focus of human consciousness. In fact, oscillations between silence and sound are often accompanied by a parallel alternation between inner and outer worlds. The mind moves in and outside of itself; it perceives the world and then pauses to reflect, in a constant combination of opening and closing, sound and silence. Silence generally indicates introspection and inner focus, but sudden sounds might at any moment startle the perceiving subject and turn his or her focus to the surrounding world. Noise, writes Arthur Schopenhauer, 'is the most impertinent of all forms of interruption', for it 'is not only an interruption, but also a disruption of thought'.[1] The 'violent explosion' that startles Clarissa Dalloway back to her present at 'Mulberry's the florist' is a case in point (*MD*, p. 12). Lost in the intense experience of the flowers and the associations they yield, Clarissa Dalloway is adrift in an experience that 'lifted her up and up when – oh! a pistol shot in the street outside!' (*MD*, p. 12). Here, the sudden shift in focus – from inner to outer worlds and from an apparent stillness to the noise of the sudden explosion – does not only disrupt Clarissa's thoughts, but the very sentence representing her thoughts. The shift also makes demands on the reader's attention, turning the focus from Clarissa's intense emotional experience of the flower shop to the shock of apparent violence in the street outside ('a pistol shot') to the realization, as the scene continues, that the sound in question did not come from a gun after all, but from a car. The abrupt break in the line does not only illustrate the nature of subjective perception but also emphasizes the association between on the one hand silence and the private, inner world and on the other sound and the outer, social world.

When appearing in connection to solitude, silence at times signals solipsism and an alienation that is dangerous to the self. Such conceptions of silence implicitly contrast it against either sound or language, both of which represent idealized ideas about connection and communication. Silence instead represents a loss of communication between the self and the world. At times, such silences are so strongly tied to characters' inner

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1 Trying to think midst noise, Schopenhauer continues, is like 'trying to walk with a weight on [the] foot'; *Studies in Pessimism: A Series of Essays*, transl. by T. Bailey Saunders (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1900), p. 128.

lives and to solitude as to suggest silence as a condition of life, marking a barrier between self and reality, and, certainly, between the self and others. Such tendencies are evident in all three writers' work, but especially in that of Joyce and Woolf. Silence might be a sought-after state for Stephen in *A Portrait* and the 'Telemachia', but it has less favourable associations elsewhere in Joyce's writings. In *Dubliners*, for example, silence signals isolation and a failure to communicate, often with a romantic Other. For Bloom in 'Sirens', the isolation of silence becomes so threatening that he makes up sounds to fill it, as I have argued in chapter four. In Woolf's writing, too, silence often signals threats, associated with isolation and grief. Several of her protagonists experience silence as claustrophobic states of mind, impossible to escape; for both Rachel in *The Voyage Out* and Rhoda in *The Waves*, silence indicates an impossibility of communicating with the surrounding world. They perish within the walls of their own psyches, their own silences.

Since silence often marks an absence of sound – and often gathers its full meaning only when contrasted with sound – it makes sense to study silence as part of a text's sound-setting. The present study of silence in modernist fiction can thus be read in the context of the so-called aural turn in modernist studies; in recent years, sound and listening in modernist texts have received increasing attention, and some critics have argued that the ear is the dominant sense of the modernist text.[2] In sound studies, silence is often defined by its relation to sound; it is believed that it is in contrast with sound that the full significance of silence is revealed, and vice versa.[3] Silence comes before a sound, between two different sounds, or after a sound. During a silence, sound is usually anticipated, or it reverberates, if only in memory. Conversely, as Sara Danius suggests about the silent film, silence awakens the idea of sound, because 'to apprehend the absence of sound is also to rediscover sound, in effect to reinvent it – in its

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2 See n.22 in the Introduction.

3 E.g. Murray R. Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1977), pp. 257-258. See also Patricia Ondek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), pp. 170-188, 204.

pure and abstract form'.[4] Silence suggests sound, just as sound suggests silence.

As this study shows, however, it is difficult to examine silence as a purely aural aspect of a given text, first and foremost because silence is, after all, not a sound, even though it is often described as part of a sound-setting. The subjective nature of silence in modernist fiction frequently suggests inwardness or oblivion of the outside world rather than the perception of a sound-setting. In other words, perception of silence might not necessarily indicate an absence of sound, but rather an absence of attention to sound.

At times, silence appears wholly unrelated to sound and listening, indicating instead a heightened visual perception; characters might pay less or no attention to the soundscape because they are focused on the visual attributes of the setting. Increased attention to visual impressions implicitly presents settings as silent merely because there are no references to sound. This, too, is a kind of silent soundscape, although somewhat difficult to examine. Representations of silence that indicate an unconscious exclusion of sound on the part of the perceiving character suggest a sporadic undermining, both of the ear and of sound. Don Ihde goes so far as to discuss silence as a 'visual category', because it is an attribute belonging to 'mute objects', while sound can never be seen.[5] Silence, Ihde argues, is the 'hidden depth' of listening, suggesting the presence of a sound that cannot be heard.[6] Even mute objects seem to speak, only we cannot hear them.

Silence is not a sound, but neither is it something visual. It falls between eye and ear, or, possibly, relates to both eye and ear. Indeed, silence in modernist fiction is characterized by a doubleness. It is part of the soundscape while simultaneously suggesting inwardness and interiority. It is (often) part of a realistic description while also being a metaphor. It symbolizes and represents, but is also an enigma. In the works of Richardson, Joyce, and Woolf, silence suggests presence rather than absence, repeated-

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4 Sara Danius, *The Senses of Modernism: Technology, Perception, and Aesthetics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 149.

5 Don Ihde, *Listening and Voice: Phenomenologies of Sound* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), pp. 109-10.

6 Ihde, p. 110.

ly inviting the reader to consider quiet settings, pauses, and blank spaces as central features of the texts in which they appear. In the modernist novel, silence represents: it signifies 'something' that is unsayable. The obscurity of this 'something' makes modernist fiction difficult to read at times, demanding that readers consider not only the words on the page, but also what is not explicitly stated. By reading silence as a presence that communicates in its own way, readers learn to consider the obscure elements in the modernist novel not as difficulties but as depth, suggesting a phantom fullness.

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