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Revising the feminine self in the fiction of Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf

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REVISING THE FEMININE SELF IN THE FICTION OF
DOROTHY RICHARDSON AND VIRGINIA WOOLF

by

LENORA PENNA SMITH

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Abstract
Revising the Feminine Self in the Fiction of
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The fiction of Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf is situated, as are the writers themselves, in the late-Victorian middle-class ideology of individualism, defining the self as autonomous and self-determining and positioning women within domesticity, defining them as relational and self-denying. Although their representations of women and strategies of point of view indicate construction within these dominant discourses, their narratives also refute, sometimes inadvertently, these same discourses.

Richardson's fiction suggests an image of identity rooted in individualism, in notions of an autonomous, unified individuality, associated in her culture with the masculine, whereas Woolf's suggests a basis in individualism's denial of an autonomous, unified feminine identity. The fiction of both assumes a transcendental self, a notion key to individualism, in the image of a "true" self that avoids situation within material and social circumstances. This image appears in Richardson's fiction in the perception of an untouched self and in Woolf's, in the perception of a dispersed self. In their representations of women, both also rely on notions of feminine identity that reiterate the cultural definitions of gender. In Pilgrimage, Richardson's central character, Miriam imagines her self as autonomous, essential, and transcendental. This notion also appears to govern the narrative focused through Miriam's perspective and related through a voice sometimes indistinguishable from hers. But the narrative provides a dual perspective on Miriam that refutes the notions of individualism grounding it and her imagined self. In contrast to Richardson's, Woolf's female
characters, in particular in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, are not unified, autonomous individuals, but instead are fragmented and dispersed, and in their dispersal, they recapitulate both relational, self-denying femininity and transcendental individuality. Woolf's narrative techniques also seem to valorize the culturally constructed feminine by incorporating multiple perspectives and voices. However, Woolf's narrative strategy, like Richardson's, exposes the ideology that grounds it by granting the female narrators an authority ordinarily denied women and by exposing the failure of the relational ego to create a community of characters.
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To Earl's understanding of the computer, this work owes its final form, and to him, I owe thanks that words do not begin to convey.
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Introduction

(Re)Writing the Feminine Self

Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf published their first novels in 1915 with the same publishing company, Duckworth, founded by Woolf's half-brother Gerald. They have other experiences in common as well: comfortable middle-class childhoods, summers on the southwest coast of England, adult years in Bloomsbury. These odd coincidences mark both the position within their culture that the two share by virtue of being female and the differences between their adult lives that shape their identities as women and writers. While they both were born and raised within the late-Victorian middle-class society dominated by an ideology of separate spheres, Richardson's circumstances moved her farther away from the social practices enforcing this ideology. Her father's movement from trade to gentlemanly leisure to bankruptcy set up her own ambiguous class identity, her fluctuating positions within several classes, including the society of the cultured middle and upper-middle class, the near poverty of the female working lower-middle class, and the subculture of bohemian writers and social activists.¹ The dissolution of Woolf's family after the death of her father, in contrast, meant increased social and intellectual freedom for her but no substantial shift in class position.² In general terms, Richardson's circumstances demanded a degree of autonomy and self-reliance that Woolf's circumstances did not. This difference in material circumstances surfaces, in complicated and unexpected ways, in their views on the individual and the feminine revealed in their essays and letters. Richardson, as one might expect, indicates a belief in a unified autonomous individuality, but this individuality incorporates characteristics conventionally ascribed to the feminine self. Woolf, on the other hand, questions the possibility of a unified individuality and posits instead a
fragmented self. Like Richardson's unified self, Woolf's fragmented self recapitulates the cultural definitions of the feminine. Both grant society a role in shaping identity but contend that a transcendental self, defined differently by each writer, can escape situation within society. This study will examine the ways in which these assumptions and beliefs figure in their representations of female characters and in their narrative practices.

First, however, it is necessary to identify the dominant ideologies of late-Victorian middle-class society in order to place Richardson's and Woolf's views with respect to them. This society perpetuated the ideal of separate spheres for men and women. Cultural institutions, including the medical and legal establishments, the family, the educational system, and literature, defined the parameters of these spheres through their discourses and practices. Although the daily lives of individuals necessarily fell short of this ideal, the values it espoused constructed their identities as men and women. These gender identities meant "division, oppression, inequality, internalized inferiority for women" (Barrett, Women's Oppression Today 113). Functioning to construct the boundaries of the separate spheres are the ideologies of individualism and of domesticity. Individualism envisions a transcendental self, "an individuality which somehow pre-exists social relations, or exists independently of them" (Lieven 257). A belief in a transcendental self denies the role of ideology in constructing identity and imagines an identity formed according to universal values, for example, an innate reasoning ability in man and a natural nurturing instinct in woman.

But identity is not formed independently of historical and social situation. Instead one's self, including one's gender identity depends upon one's material circumstances. It is "the effect of a production" involving innumerable
discourses and "social relationships and practices" which engage the individual (Henriques 117; Sawicki 184). One's identity is relevant to one's position in class, race, and gender and the social value placed on each. Because subjectivity is socially constituted, it is both historically bound and potentially mutable. As cultures change or as one's position in society changes, subjectivity is reconstructed (Lieven 257; Sawicki 184). As Michele Barrett notes, "gender is not created once and for all at a certain point in a child's life but is continually recreated and endorsed, modified or even altered substantially, through a process of ideological representation" (Women's Oppression Today 206). This comment points both to the possibility for change in individual gender identity and to the persistence of the cultural perception of gender.5

This theory of the self would not have been comfortably accepted in the late-Victorian period, for it conflicts with the reigning notions of individualism. As Elizabeth Fox-Genovese explains, individualism contains the image of the human as "rational, accountable, and autonomous" (123). For men, individualism defines the self as "agent and actor" (115). But since the eighteenth century, she notes, the discourse of motherhood, of domesticity, defining the feminine, has been linked to the discourse of the individual because the responsibility for the formation of the individual is allotted to mothers (125). Moreover, she contends, the connection was secured, along with the exclusion of women from gaining status as individuals, "by an unacknowledged recognition that pure individualism could not anchor social cohesion," could not sustain a necessary community (130). This duty to maintain community values fell to women, whose self-denial and definition in relation to others fostered the growth of individuals that could function as citizens; "in practice the subordination of
women anchored individualism" (127-129, 130). Men's individuality, their achievement of self-realization, depends on this definition of feminine identity.

The discourse of domesticity defines the feminine self in terms of dependence on and duty toward others. Legally and financially dependent on fathers, husbands, or brothers, the middle-class woman was expected to put the needs and wishes of men, considered her natural superiors, above her own (Dyhouse, "Mothers and Daughters" 30; Girls Growing Up 12). This duty extended to the performance of philanthropic work, visiting the poor and sick, for example, in order to disseminate middle-class values into working class homes (Summers 57-58). The requirements of these duties to family and society demanded an effacement and a dispersal of the self. In "Professions for Women," Woolf vividly describes the woman shaped according to the culturally constructed ideals of femininity:

She was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily. If there was chicken, she took the leg; if there was a draught she sat in it--in short she was so constituted that she never had a mind or wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others. (150)

Woolf's hyperbole fits her purpose of portraying the threat that this "phantom" poses to a woman writer trying to assert herself, but her perspective is confirmed in the words of her mother: "service is the condition of our being" (qtd. in Stemerick 57). As Julia Stephen's words suggest, women did not ordinarily perform these duties under duress. On the contrary, they complied with this demand to efface or disperse their personalities to accommodate the needs of others and perceived themselves and were perceived in relation to fathers, husbands, and children. In short, they merged their identities with others.
Women's compliance with this definition of the feminine self takes place through internalization of the discipline that produces "subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 138). Sandra Lee Bartky notes that internalization occurs because the "sense of oneself as a distinct and valuable individual is tied not only to the sense of how one is perceived, but also to what one knows, especially to what one knows how to do" (77). The value Victorian society placed on the woman within the domestic sphere is epitomized in Coventry Patmore's Angel in the House and John Ruskin's Queen. The ideal woman is valued as the guardian of morality, of the family, of the sacred hearth, itself "the chief prop of a moral order no longer buttressed by belief" (Lewis, *Women in England* 81). On a more practical level, she possesses the knowledge and the ability to manage complex households, provide basic education for her children, care for the sick, entertain at home, and go out into society. In effect, she gains "a sense of mastery" and "a secure sense of identity" (Bartky 77) from the discipline that restricts her to the domestic sphere. She is contradictorily disempowered and empowered by the discipline that makes her a docile body. As Bartky points out, women who resist may at the same time be reluctant "to part with the rewards of compliance" (77). In addition, even women who manage to break free from the confinements of the domestic situation nonetheless have internalized the ideology that produces merging feminine selves.

In their non-fiction writing, Richardson and Woolf deal directly with the issue of identity, but they approach the problem from different directions. Richardson's forced independence, perhaps, encourages her to define identity in terms of the discourse of individualism. In a denial of the validity of the term stream of consciousness, she asserts her view of consciousness as fixed rather
than flowing: one's "'consciousness sits stiller than a tree. . . . its central core, luminous point, . . . tho more or less continuously expanding from birth to maturity, remains stable, one with itself thruout life'" (qtd. in S. Rose, "The Unmoving Center" 368). She imagines an immutable, unified, centered self that recalls her emphasis, in her non-fiction as in Pilgrimage, on "the changeless being at the heart of all becoming" ("Continuous Performance: The Film Gone Male" 424). Woolf, in contrast, sees the self as fragmented. In her diary, she concludes that "[a]ll this confirms me in thinking that we're splinters & mosaics; not, as they used to hold, immaculate, monolithic, consistent wholes" (2: 314). In "Street Haunting," she suggests a similar view of identity:

we are streaked, variegated, all of a mixture; the colours have run. Is the true self this which stands on the pavement in January, or that which bends over the balcony in June? Am I here, or am I there? Or is the true self neither this nor that, neither here nor there, but something so varied and wandering that it is only when we give the rein to its wishes and let it take its way unimpeded that we are indeed ourselves? Circumstances compel unity; for convenience sake a man must be a whole. (161)

Unlike Richardson, Woolf sees the self as unified only out of social necessity. Otherwise, the self is impossible to fix. But just as Richardson assumes a transcendental self that remains unchanged despite the vicissitudes of life, Woolf imagines a transcendental self in her bifurcation of the self into a part that is unified for the sake of convenience and a part that is "varied and wandering."

Although their notions of what constitutes a transcendental self differ, both imagine it as the "true" self.

Whereas Richardson's image of identity is rooted in individualism, associated in her culture with the masculine, Woolf's suggests a basis in individualism's denial of a unified feminine identity. This distinction should not be read as
indicating that Richardson is more "masculine" than Woolf or that the former somehow escapes the discourse inscribing the latter. For Richardson's image of the feminine self shows distinct marks of both the ideologies of individualism and the feminine. In fact, she seems more imbricated than Woolf.

In an essay published in *Vanity Fair*, Richardson describes "the womanly woman," the embodiment of "essential womanhood," whose "essential characteristic" is "egotism" ("Women and the Future" 40, 39). This woman resides "in the deep current of eternity, an individual, self-centered" (40). Richardson's definition co-opt both the conventional criticism of feminine conceit and the claim for masculine autonomy and combines them in a woman who is superior to men and to other women. She maintains that "[o]nly completely self-centered consciousness can attain to unselfishness. . . . Only a complete self, carrying all its goods in its own hands, can go out, perfectly, to others, move freely in any direction." This woman's "gift of imaginative sympathy, her capacity for vicarious living, for being simultaneously in all the warring camps" makes her particularly suited to peace making (40). Paradoxically, her individuality, denied her by her society, is exactly the source of her dispersal, demanded by her society. In contrast, the "'intelligent' woman . . . the woman who is intelligible to men" is "man-trained." She is "brisk, positive, rational." She lives "from the bustling surfaces of the mind; sharing the competitive partisanship of men; subject, like men, to fear; subject to national panic; to international, and even to cosmic panic" (40). These distinctions recapitulate the ideology of gender difference and valorize the "womanly woman," who recalls the nineteenth-century angel in the house, over the woman functioning in the world of men. But all women, according to Richardson, are "synthetic," able to see "life whole and harmonious" ("The
Reality of Feminism" 244-45). As a consequence of this "synthetic consciousness," the female self "has always made its own world, irrespective of circumstances. It can be neither enslaved nor subjected" (246). Richardson's definition of the feminine not only rewrites individualism to include women, both the "womanly woman" and the "'intelligent' woman," who more closely resembles herself and her character Miriam, but turns this ideology on its head by giving women the central position within it and displacing men. In addition, she denies the relevance of material circumstances in shaping the self.

Woolf seems, more than Richardson, to allow a cultural component to the development of the feminine self, but she does not question assumptions about essential gender difference. The role of society, for her, seems to be one of restriction and suppression, keeping women from achieving intellectually, rather than of construction of identities, reproducing women with specific "essential" qualities. In Three Guineas, she outlines the differences between men and women in her letter to the man who asks her opinion on how to prevent war: "It would seem to follow then as an indisputable fact that 'we'--meaning by 'we' a whole made up of body, brain and spirit, influenced by memory and tradition--must still differ in some essential respects from 'you,' whose body, brain and spirit have been so differently trained and are so differently influenced by memory and tradition" (18). She sees the differences that reflect the relevant positions of men and women in society as dependent on education and tradition but also as "essential." Moreover, she incorporates these "essential" differences in her utopian college, which "should teach the arts of human intercourse; the art of understanding other people's lives and minds, and the little arts of talk, of dress, of cookery that are allied with them" (34). In her effort to propose a curriculum as an alternative to the traditional university course of study, she
adopts the position of "other" assigned to women and valorizes "feminine" arts, inscribed within the discourse of domesticity as "essentially" feminine. Woolf also ascribes certain "natural" characteristics to women elsewhere in her writing. In a diary entry, she attributes a young woman's behavior to her gender: "she was less self assertive [than the young man with her], passed the cake, praised the dog, & sensitively appraised the situation with antennae quivering, woman like" (2: 214). Woolf's identification of this behavior as "woman like," though tinged with a touch of irony, implies an acceptance of natural differences between man and woman. Similarly, her description of the androgynous mind in A Room of One's Own as "man-womanly" or "woman-manly" presupposes essential gendered attributes that come together in the artistic mind (102).

The complexities of these perspectives on the individual and on gender difference also figure in the representations of women and the narrative strategies in the fiction of Richardson and Woolf. Richardson creates a character who adheres to a notion of an autonomous, transcendental self. This notion also appears to govern the narrative since it is focused through the perspective of the central character and related through a voice sometimes indistinguishable from the character's. Woolf's female characters, in contrast, are not unified, autonomous individuals, but instead are fragmented and dispersed. Nonetheless, they are also transcendental selves. Her narrative strategies follow this line by incorporating multiple perspectives and voices. But I will argue that these neat parallels between theories of the self, representations of women, and narrative strategies fall apart in actual practice, that the novels, in fact, contain their own counter movements that undermine the notions on which they seem to rely.

In Richardson's Pilgrimage, for example, Miriam is engaged in a conscious quest to redefine the feminine and to define her self, and crucial to her definition
is the notion of an essential self that transcends situation, figured for her in her childhood garden, her friends the Brooms, music, and rooms. Along the way, she maneuvers among the complex ideologies of gender and individualism and the changing material circumstances shaping her relationship to these ideologies. Like her creator, she moves from her father’s middle-class home, after his financial collapse, to work in various positions placing her on the margins of the middle class and the private sphere. In formulating definitions of the masculine, the feminine, and the individual, she both rejects and relies on the dominant definitions of each in her culture, a contradiction that reflects her internalization of the discipline of middle-class social practices and her changing circumstances freeing her from these practices. She discounts the importance of situation in formation of the self, maintaining instead that her essential self is untouched; nevertheless, Pilgrimage details the specific ways in which her situation shapes both her view of gender and her own identity. As I argue in chapter two, the narrative places Miriam within changing circumstances that counter her belief in an untouched, essential self and marks the futility of her quest to fix an ever-changing self.

Woolf’s Clarissa Dalloway, Mrs. Ramsay, and Lily Briscoe, the subjects of my third chapter, are more firmly situated in the middle class than is Miriam Henderson, and their quests are represented more in spiritual than in material terms. Mrs. Dalloway and Mrs. Ramsay, for example, seek moments of emancipation from their material circumstances, their situations as wives, mothers, hostesses, and household managers, through movements of contraction and expansion of the self in response to the contradictory demands of their own identities and their societal roles. For Mrs. Dalloway, contraction protects the self even as it induces guilt over an abdication of duties; expansion fulfills these
duties, but seems to allow for a transcendence of them. For Mrs. Ramsay, contraction and expansion are not counter movements but part of a single movement which empties out the self to meet the demands of others. In *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, contraction and expansion yield identical results: both movements suggest preservation of the self and diffuson of the self. Although these movements sometimes gesture toward emancipation, they illustrate the women's situation within and complicity with the social definitions of gender and class and, in some instances, contribute to the reproduction of these definitions. However, with the representation of Lily Briscoe, Woolf suggests a definition of the self that begins to move beyond the cultural prescriptions for the feminine. Lily's contraction, in contrast to those of the other two women, does not assume the existence of a self capable of avoiding situation within material circumstances; instead, it assumes the possibility of a change of material circumstances, a change involving self-definition based not on a position within the domestic sphere but on one's work outside this sphere.

Woolf's "room of one's own" also suggests the possibility of self-definition under these terms; however, most of the women's rooms in the fiction of Woolf and Richardson assume a transcendental feminine self. They ostensibly establish an alternative space in which an essential feminine self is dominant, a private space in which a woman can engage, without interruptions from domestic and social duties, in intellectual and creative pursuits. The essential feminine self embodied in the rooms supposedly transcends social situation because it is imagined, in terms of the discourse of individualism as autonomous and self-realizing. However, as Fox-Genovese has shown, individualism positions women within the discourse of domesticity, defining the feminine self as relational and self-denying (125-130). Most of the rooms in Woolf's fiction
recapitulate this relegation of women to domesticity because the rooms are either situated within the family house or outside this house but under financial control of its patriarch. Moreover, the work occupying the women in these spaces is mainly aesthetic and, like the accomplishments displayed in the drawing room, remains within the private sphere. Consequently, the essential feminine self imagined in these spaces resembles the culturally constructed feminine self presiding in the drawing room: the daughter at home, the wife, the hostess. Richardson's Miriam, of necessity, finds spaces outside the family house in rooms that she herself finances; in addition, she writes in these rooms, work that is both creative and remunerated. She seems almost to achieve Woolf's ideal room of one's own, but because she sees these rooms as embodying her essential self untouched by her material circumstances, they fail to provide the link between the public and the private sphere that Woolf implies is necessary. In addition, in the fiction of both writers, the social practices that support the dominant ideology infiltrate these spaces, sometimes through physical invasion by its representatives, both male and female, but more threateningly, through the women's internalization of the vigilance enforcing dominant gender ideology. Only Mary Datchet's room, in Woolf's Night and Day, offers the possibility for genuine emancipation because it is not her refuge or the embodiment of an essential self; it is instead the place in London which gives her access to the public world of work.

The narrative practices of Richardson and Woolf, as I suggested earlier, are situated within the same conflicts involving identity that shape their female characters. In focusing on the connection between point of view and ideology, I am following Susan Sniader Lanser, who argues that point of view can be "either a means of naturalizing or a means of exposing ideology" (101). In the fiction
of Richardson and Woolf, it contradictorily functions as both. Richardson's choice of the perspective of a single character and a voice that seems to merge with the voice of this character follows her assumptions about the primacy of the individual, her reiteration of the discourse of individualism. In contrast, Woolf's dispersed narrative perspective and voice echo her denial of the possibility for a unified identity that recapitulates the discourse on the feminine. However, as I will argue in chapters five and six, built into the narratives of both writers are refutations of their own positions, refutations that inadvertently question the discourses in which they are grounded.

Richardson's narrative strategy is based on her revision of the definitions of the individual to include the feminine self. She appears to allow a feminine ego, autonomous and self-determining, to control the narrative, for nothing seems to reach the reader that has not passed through the perception and contemplating consciousness of Miriam. However, Richardson chooses to cast her narrative in third person, which places a mediating narrator between Miriam and the reader, thereby providing a perspective on Miriam apart from her own. This narrator also stands between Richardson and her autobiographical character, allowing Richardson to distance herself from Miriam and to interpret the experiences that they share. This dual perspective subtly refutes the notions of individualism grounding the narrative and Miriam's imagined self in three ways. First, it undercuts the notion of a transcendental self by detailing the circumstances that shape and change Miriam's identity. In addition, it challenges her sense of autonomy by providing a corrective to her perspective. And finally, it reveals the problematic relationship between individualism and domesticity by underscoring Miriam's feminine cultural construction. In *Pilgrimage*, point of
view performs both functions identified by Lanser, but the dual perspective exposes the ideology that the narrative seems to naturalize.

Woolf, whose narrative point of view is the opposite of Richardson's, disperses voice and perspective among multiple characters. This choice seems to valorize the culturally constructed feminine by creating female narrators who efface and disperse themselves, providing the narrative equivalent of the drawing room within their consciousnesses, a space in which characters seem to relate to each other on a psychic level. But these personalized feminine narrators subvert the cultural definitions constructing them as relational, self-denying, and self-sacrificing. In "Kew Gardens" and To the Lighthouse, the effacing and dispersing narrators are actually foregrounded by narrative techniques that should give the narrative over to the characters. In Jacob's Room, the narrator also assumes a central position as her dispersal of her self is limited by her inclusion or exclusion in the various societies of the characters she attempts to connect. And in The Years, the relational ego fails altogether to link the characters, who remain isolated from each other and, to a great extent, from the narrator. Woolf's narrative strategy, like Richardson's, exposes the ideology that grounds it by granting the female narrators an authority denied women and by exposing the failure of the relational ego to create a community of characters.

Despite the attempts of Richardson and Woolf to rewrite the definitions inscribed in their culture, their fiction shows signs of construction within its dominant ideologies. But as Belsey contends all texts do, theirs implicitly criticize their own ideologies (57). The challenge to the angel in the house comes not from the individual, transcendental, essential feminine self that dominates their fiction but from the recognition of a situated self, that is, the
disclosure that all selves are situated implicit in their representations of women and their narrative techniques.
Notes


5 Cultural construction of gender subjectivity suggests why, as Catherine Belsey observes, many women, in spite of their experience of "patriarchal practices," are not feminists and why many women, who are feminists, find
themselves "inadvertently colluding, at least from time to time, with patriarchal values and assumptions prevalent in our society" ("Constructing the Subject: Deconstructing the Text," Feminist Criticism and Social Change: Sex, Class and Race in Literature and Culture, ed. Judith Newton and Deborah Rosenfelt [New York: Methuen, 1985] 45).

6 Dyhouse discusses conduct books that instruct girls in the proper behavior for women in chapter one of her Girls Growing Up. Books espousing self-denial and service to others mentioned in her chapter date from 1842 to 1912 (25-27). Also, portions of Sarah Stickney Ellis' manuals for girls and women are included in Free and Ennobled: Source Readings in the Development of Victorian Feminism (Ed. Carol Baur and Lawrence Ritt [New York: Pergamon, 1979] 4-14).


8 According to Shirley Panken, Woolf equates the feminine self with the maternal self, and her attainment of this identity is thwarted by the absence of a nurturing mother figure and by her own inability to become a mother. Her failure to establish "an integrated identity," Panken suggests, contributes to her creation of characters who are themselves "indeterminate in identity" ("Virginia Woolf: The Feminine Self," The American Journal of Psychoanalysis 50 [1990]: 54n29, 51).
Chapter One

The Quest for a Feminine Individualism

Identity for Miriam Henderson, in Richardson's *Pilgrimage*, is particularly complex because she is situated within late-Victorian middle-class social definitions of the feminine as well as in a family whose patriarch wanted her to be a son instead of a daughter and denigrates women, including his wife. In the development of her gender identity, she adopts her father's hostility toward women along with certain culturally defined masculine attitudes and behaviors, but she also absorbs the ideology of the feminine dominant in her society. Even as she condemns feminine women, she is culturally constructed according to a particular definition of the feminine. Compounding this process is the need to earn her own living following her father's financial collapse, which, while it offers an opportunity for independence, places her in an ambiguous class position and makes individual autonomy a practical necessity. Consequently, Miriam is caught in the contradiction between the definition of identity as an independent self and the definition of the feminine as a merging self. She consciously chooses the former and values the individual over any connection between individuals. Moreover, her sense of self is complicated further by her belief in an "untouched self" at the center of the individual, "a real self that stayed the same through thing after thing," a transcendental self that avoids situation within particular social and historical circumstances (2: 76, 101).

Trudi Tate points out that Richardson's work rejects notions of fixed and essential gender identity and recognizes its cultural production (xi), and the characterization of Miriam does indeed argue for such a process of gender construction. But Miriam's theories of identity contradict this view because they rely on a notion of an essential self, seconded by Richardson's own belief in "the
changeless being at the heart of all becoming" ("Continuous Performance: The Film Gone Male" 424). The narrative, in detailing Miriam's "becoming," delineates the changing circumstances that fuel her desire for independence and that conflict with and create her notions of self and gender. Throughout, she clings to a belief in a transcendental self, but her pilgrimage becomes a quest to fix an ever-changing "essential" self, a quest that, although incomplete at the close of *Pilgrimage*, points toward increasing solitude.

Two aspects of Miriam's situation are particularly important in her definition of her self and her redefinition of the feminine. First, she experiences her father's treatment of her mother, which she recognizes as stifling to her mother's personality and as contributing to her depression. She remembers that her father belittles her mother for believing what she reads in the newspaper and imagines the effects of his criticism:

> quite often he would go on to general remarks about the gullibility of women, bringing in the story of the two large long-necked pearly transparent drawing-room vases with stems and soft masses of roses and leaves painted on their sides that she had given too much for at the door to a man who said they were Italian. Brummagem, Brummagem, he would end, mouthing the word and turning back to his book with the neighing laugh. . . . And that neighing laugh had come again and again all through the years until she sat meekly, flushed and suffering under the fierce gaslight, feeling every night of her life winter and summer as if the ceiling were coming down on her head. (1: 234-235; ellipsis added)

Miriam understands how her father's sarcasm and criticism must have affected her mother, how he has made her afraid to express her thoughts, even to think for herself. She senses her mother's suffering and pities her. Years of watching her parents interact forces her, at about age twenty, to conclude that she feels only contempt for her father (1: 460). But she also resents her mother's
weakness and sees her mother's "attacks of hysteria" as "simply irritating" (1: 470). The complexity of her feelings for her parents surfaces in her silent assertion that she knows her mother better than her father does and would have been a better husband for her: "it's I who am your husband. Why have I not been with you all your life? . . . all the times you were alone; I know them all. No one else knows them" (1:456). She identifies with her mother on the basis of their common sex and empathizes with her; at the same time, she images herself as masculine, which suggests a rejection of the feminine. Miriam's feelings for her mother are further complicated because she is responsible for her mother when she kills herself, and although the suicide and Miriam's direct reactions to it are elided in the novel, they surface in subtle ways throughout. 4

Another circumstance which profoundly affects Miriam's definition of herself and her redefinition of the feminine is her father's bankruptcy, which forces her to find another means of support. As Carol Dyhouse notes, this kind of situation opened up the opportunity for women, including Richardson, to experience "personal autonomy" which they found valuable (Feminism and Family 33). Miriam certainly comes to value the freedom her situation provides, although it also complicates her class position. Two of her sisters choose one option, to marry. Miriam and another sister choose the only other option open to middle-class women of their time: they become teachers. Eve becomes a governess in a wealthy family, and Miriam becomes first, a pupil-teacher in a German school, then, a teacher in a North London school, and finally, a governess in an upper-class home. These teaching positions keep Miriam within the private sphere, but make her class position ambiguous. Most pupil-teachers were working class girls whose training allowed them some mobility but little status (Lewis, Women in England 158, 198). For Miriam, then, her position
would amount to a drop in social status. When she becomes a governess, the ambiguity of her social position is increased. She has a large, luxurious room in the heart of the Corries' house and participates in most social functions, from tea to dinner parties. Nevertheless, her position is only slightly above that of Wiggerson, the housekeeper. Miriam experiences what Jeanne M. Peterson calls "status incongruence": she is aware of her incongruous social position as the educated daughter of a gentleman working in a gentleman's home (10-13). Throughout Pilgrimage, her awareness of this incongruity resurfaces in her sensitivity to servants, with whom she feels an affinity long after she has left the Corries, and whom she sees as secure in their positions, more secure than she feels in her own.

With her fourth job, she manages to break out of the private sphere and increase the ambiguity of her class position. She becomes a dental secretary and assistant earning a salary of one pound per week, a salary barely above the poverty line. However, her secretarial job provides a secure place for her within the family of dentists for whom she works. Her principal employer, Mr. Hancock, provides a link to her comfortable childhood because he comes from the same district and background as she. In addition, two of the dentists live with their family in the upper floors of the house containing their offices. Her position includes daily lunch and tea with the dentists and the family and occasional social events, like excursions to the theater. In sum, her secretarial work with its one pound per week salary places her in the lower-middle class in the public sphere while it also incorporates her into the private sphere of the middle-class dental family and the social world of Wimpole Street. Her position as a secretary living in an attic room, with the self-reliance it demands and the independence it offers, shapes her theories about the self and the feminine. But
her continued existence on the margin of the middle class and on the line between the public and the private sphere reinforces her cultural construction according to middle-class standards for feminine behavior involving service and self-sacrifice. Although Miriam's ambiguous situation forces her to define herself in terms of several diverse social groups, she maintains beliefs consistent with the ideology of individualism, specifically, a faith in the primacy of the individual and in a transcendental self.

Throughout Pilgrimage, Miriam wrestles with theories of the individual, with philosophical issues involving the nature of identity, such as the relationship between mind and matter, individuality and race, being and becoming. She reads the essays of Emerson, attends the lectures of McTaggert, and contemplates the relationship between idealism and materialism. Although the novel is replete with details of Miriam's material existence (of her work, dress, and physical environment, for example), she consistently denies "her forgotten material self," particularly in her relationships with men. She resents "the idea of a man being consciously attracted and won by universal physiological facts, rather than by individuals themselves" (3: 303). This emphasis, according to her, ignores her individuality. In a curious conflation of the material and the ideal, she sees her material being, specifically, her sexuality, as universal and her mental being, her intellectuality, as particular. In relationships with men, in fact, she esteems intellectual over physical stimulation. With Michael Shatov, she argues over the relative value of the individual and the race and consistently claims the priority of the former. In her opinion, race is nothing but the individuals within it (3: 150). Although she recognizes the characteristics of the two sides of her family in conflict within herself, she rejects the idea that one is only the sum of one's inheritance, and she takes the evidence that the young...
leave their families as support for the priority of the individual over the race (3: 247). With Hypo Wilson, she discusses the connection between being and becoming and argues for an inclusion of "the fact of 'being'" in "his world of ceaseless 'becoming'" (4: 362). She insists, further, "that becoming depends upon being," that we must "somehow precede what we are" in order to "perceive even ourselves" (4: 362, 419). Miriam's philosophical positions shift during the course of the novel, and frequently she seems inconsistent in her views, as would any individual observed over the course of approximately twenty years, beginning at age seventeen. But throughout, she maintains preferences for mind over matter, individual over community, and being over becoming, positions that coincide with her belief in the priority of the individual, in an essential self that transcends material circumstances.

A belief in a transcendent self implies a bifurcation of the self that seems to afford Miriam protection from the harshness of her life after the break up of her home. She sees in the self a part functioning in the surface life and "something, a real inside personality that is turned away from the surface" (3: 182). For Miriam, this surface includes her work in the girls' schools in Germany and North London, in the Corries' home, and in the Wimpole Street dental office. She contends that freedom is essential to being alive; "nothing that happens in the part of your life that is not free, the part you do and are paid for, is alive" (2: 215). This view allows her to believe that "her original nature [is] stored up and hidden behind the adopted manner of her bondage," that she can perform the tasks she sees as demeaning while preventing them from affecting her perception of her self (3: 245). She need not identify herself as pupil-teacher, governess, or dental secretary because these aspects of her self are not alive; they are external to her "real" self.
Miriam's definition of her self and redefinition of the feminine hinge on this belief in a transcendental self, which for her is "untouched," "authentic," "the changeless central zone of her being" (2:76; 4: 298, 299). This self is evoked in three images, her childhood garden, her friends the Brooms, and music, as well as in her rooms (which I will discuss in a later chapter). The first three images take on contradictory meanings undercutting Miriam's belief in a transcendental self. They expose this self as imbricated in dominant assumptions about class; moreover, they suggest that it is capable only of an illusory transcendence allowing Miriam a temporary respite from the hardships that she faces.

She associates this self with her first memory, her first experience of being alive. She remembers "toddling" down a garden path at her childhood home in Babington, walking among the flowers as tall as she, the bees buzzing from flower to flower around her head. This experience gave her a "strange independent joy," and the memory of it recalls this joy (1: 316-317). But for her, the garden represents more than just a happy memory. It represents her essential self that remains untouched by her material circumstances: "Something that was not touched, that sang far away down inside the gloom, that cared nothing for the creditors and could get away down and down into the twilight, far away from the everlasting accusations of humanity."7 Her father's disgrace, his bankruptcy, can only touch the surface, "the stuff of her that had defied and fought and been laughed at and beaten. It would not get deeper. Deeper down was something cool and fresh--endless garden" (1: 425). For her, this early moment in the garden is the central originary experience of her being, and in her view, nothing that happens to her can alter that being. She remains the person "who had gazed for ever at the flower-banks, unchanged" (4: 178). The garden becomes the emblem of her comfortable middle-class childhood, an association
suggesting that her imagined essential self is a remnant of her secure youth, that this self is a class construction. Miriam consistently denies that the difficult circumstances of her life, the financial problems, the unpleasant work, the strained relationships with others, and the compromises these circumstances demand of her, affect her real self. However, Richardson's novel demonstrates how profoundly Miriam's experiences shape her and how far they take her from the childhood garden.

In fact, the image of the garden itself becomes entwined with Miriam's social situation. It seems to function as a source of temporary protection for her from her daily existence, as a place to which she can contract to escape her material difficulties. For example, she recalls the garden scene when she smells the flowers decorating the home of the Corries. The luxury of the Corries' house and their apparent acceptance of her into their social circle add to the sense that the Babington garden is "nearer to her than ever in this happy house" (1: 392). This feeling of joy persists on her walk to the village to perform an errand for Mrs. Corrie and is heightened by the presence of a dog that assumes, Miriam imagines, that she is a member of the Corries' class. Miriam's joy, though, is cut short by a shopkeeper whose treatment of her reminds her of her place as "a helpless dingy little governess" (1: 396). She is hurt by this reminder of what she has become, and her garden joy is only partially restored when she thinks of the elegant tea tray waiting for her in her room at the Corries' and the weekend to follow, with its promise of house guests and dinner parties. The self that is restored to her is the one that predates the hardships brought about by her father's financial problems, the one that enjoyed a life not quite as luxurious as the Corries' but certainly more cultured. The fact remains, though, that Miriam
is a governess for the Corries, not a house guest, not a member of their set, and no memory, regardless of its compensations, can erase her present situation.

The association of her untouched self, her garden self, with Grace and Florrie Broom and their aunt, Mrs. Philps further stresses that this self is anchored in class. With them, "her surface being," "masquerading under various guises, with whom she had gone about ever since leaving home," sleeps and "her essential self . . . so long withheld and now at last accessible" is awakened (4: 407; ellipsis added). Shirley Rose suggests that because the Brooms' Banbury Park home remains the same throughout Miriam's life, from her teaching days at Wordsworth House through her London days and beyond, it provides the stability necessary for Miriam to recover her essential self ("The Unmoving Center" 378-380). Perhaps more significant is that the Brooms provide a link with Miriam's early life because their middle-class background resembles her own. In addition, the loss of a father's support, in the Brooms' case, because of his death, has placed them in a position similar to, though less extreme than, Miriam's own; just prior to meeting Miriam, they have been forced to move into a house one-fourth the size of the one that their father provided (1: 252). Their house, however, is large enough to include a small garden, and this garden allows Miriam access to the seasons as her London environment cannot. In their garden with them, Miriam can feel spring as she can when she is alone (2: 147). Even in winter, Miriam feels the garden air and senses summer, making her conclude that "[t]he truth about life was in" the Brooms (2: 301-302). The Brooms seem to provide a substitute for the home that she has lost and access to the garden self, a self that appears unaffected by the vicissitudes of her London life with its ambiguous class position.
However, association of the essential self with the Brooms calls into question its very nature because they finally become part of what she leaves behind. For a more mature Miriam leaving her London life and Wimpole Street job for an extended rest during which she will attempt to write, the Brooms become "the symbols of all she was leaving" (4: 403). The prospect of a new life centered in writing appears to lessen the need for the relief that the Brooms provide. Their association with her essential self is consequently qualified; they become linked to a situated self, one of several possible selves functioning in middle-class Banbury Park, in Wimpole Street, and in Bloomsbury. She transforms the Brooms from part of her essential self into part of the circumstances that her essential self transcends. Although this transformation of the Brooms suggests that Miriam's self changes to reflect her changing material circumstances, she does not acknowledge any alteration in her "essential" self.

For Miriam, music also represents a mode of access to her garden self, thereby offering the bridge closing the gap in the bifurcated self by calling "her to herself" (4: 229). It also insulates her from the difficulties of her material existence and provides, to a limited extent, a means to relate. She discovers the possibilities of music when she hears the German girls playing and singing during the Vorspielen in Fraulein Pfaff's school; before this time, music had been associated with a side of her that she wanted to reject. She remembers the musical evenings at home as painfully embarrassing experiences when her nervousness made her fingers stiff or her hands limp, her material self preventing any enjoyment of the music (1: 41-42). On these occasions, music becomes a social duty imposed on Miriam by women, mainly her mother, who "had taken for granted one should 'play when asked,' and coldly treated refusal as showing lack of courtesy." Performing, displaying one's accomplishments, in
the view of these women, is a proper young lady's role. For Miriam, however, "you can only 'play when you can' . . . like a bird singing" (1: 58; ellipsis added). Only once, had she come close to forgetting "her wretched self," during her last music lesson at school when her teacher had prodded her to "'Let it go!'" and she had "almost heard the music" (1: 56).

After she joins Fraulein Pfaff's staff at the German school, music takes on a new meaning and offers a means of self-expression, self-confession, and a sense of self loss that leads to transcendence. The social occasion of playing for an audience is emptied, for her, of its association with women's drawing-room duties. Consequently, it no longer need cause self-consciousness and embarrassment. In observing the bold confidence of the German girls and listening to them express themselves through the music, she transcends her physical surroundings:

Miriam, her fatigue forgotten, slid to a featureless freedom. It seemed to her that the light with which the room was filled grew brighter and clearer. She felt that she was looking at nothing and yet was aware of the whole room like a picture in a dream. Fear left her. The human forms all round her lost their power. They grew suffused and dim. . . . The pensive swing of the music changed to urgency and emphasis. . . . It came nearer and nearer. It did not come from the candle-lit corner where the piano was. . . . It came from everywhere. It carried her out of the house, out of the world. (1: 43)

This moment of transcendence frees Miriam from the discomfort of her first evening at the school as well as from the family troubles that brought her there. When she hears the English girls' playing, she begins to recognize that music may also provide a way to overcome "English self-consciousness" (1:44). Gertrude's singing, demonstrating amazing daring but no ear for music, verifies her suspicion (1: 47). Playing the piano alone in the saal on the day after the
Vorspielen, Miriam attempts to achieve the sense of transcendence in her own playing and discovers that the self-expression in the German-style playing is also self-confession: "She had confessed herself . . . 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" (1:57). This self-expression does not lead to self-consciousness, but to self-confidence and to acceptance by Fraulein and the students. Her feeling of well-being temporarily alleviates the discomfort that she feels over her position at the school.

Music both arouses a sense of self loss leading to transcendence and overcomes a sense of self loss causing despair. Listening to a guest violinist during one of her father's musical evenings erases the financial situation that threatens to break up her home. As she listens, "everything [is] dissolved, past and future and present and she [is] nothing but an ear, intent on the meditative harmony which stole out into the garden" (1: 205). She is disembodied, floating with the music out into the garden, the image of her essential self. This kind of self loss allows for momentary transcendence of her material situation. Music also allows Miriam to overcome a destructive self loss brought about when her material circumstances fill her with despair. As she plays an old piano in Mrs. Bailey's boarding-house drawing room, the music encloses her and momentarily blocks out her circumstances, but the circumstances, embodied in the shabby room, remain: "She had exposed herself and it meant nothing in the room. Life had passed her by and her playing had become a sentimental exhibition of unneeded life. . . . She was wretched and feeble and tired. . . . Life has passed me by; that is the truth. I am no longer a person" (2: 334). Miriam's circumstances have induced a profound sense of self loss, which the music
begins to ameliorate. She plays on, asserting her self, convinced that "\textbf{Something} must happen under the outbreak of her best reality," and sends her music "echoing out into the street the thing that was stronger than the feeling that had prompted her appeal for sympathy." The room, her situation, is forgotten and is transformed by "friendly light." Under the influence of the music, her essential self expands, and she senses around her "height and depth, . . . vastness and grandeur beyond anything to be seen or heard, yet stretching back like a sheltering wing over the past to her earliest memories and forward ahead out of sight" (2:335; ellipsis added). She sends out her sense of her essential self, expanding and transcending the circumstances causing her despair.

By providing an outlet for self-expression and self-confession, music also allows for a definition of the self in relation that Miriam's emphasis on the primacy of the individual ordinarily prohibits. Having chosen the independent self rather than the merging self in her quest for identity, she rarely relates to others as openly as she can through the music she plays in Fraulein Pfaff's \textit{saal}. She resists defining her self in relation, but her cultural construction as feminine coupled with her material situation, both her comfortable middle-class youth and her work, place her in communities which require a relational self. Music seems to offer a compromise allowing her to adhere to her beliefs in the primacy of the individual and in the transcendental self. Even the singing of Auld Lang Syne at a Lycurgan Society party opens up the possibility of community, however qualified: "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" (3: 496). The singing alleviates the isolation of individuality, but maintains the "essence," the essential, transcendental self, which links up with the transcendental selves of the other singers. Miriam redefines the relational
identity mandated for women to make it compatible with her theory of the primacy of the individual.

Music also opens up a channel allowing her to deal with the possibility of her pregnancy by relating it to Michael Shatov. At a concert, Miriam unsuccessfully attempts to hear the music with her "authentic being." A single musical phrase breaks through, spreading "coolness within her, refreshing as sipped water from a spring" (4: 298). The coinciding of her effort and the musical phrase, "the rapturous intruder," gives her access to "the changeless central zone of her being," and she envisions a garden in the morning light (4: 299). The connection with her untouched self, the vision of the garden, allows her to face the material possibility of her pregnancy with Hypo Wilson's child:

Within it [the garden], alone, free from the chill isolation that had returned to her spirit this afternoon, she would somehow sustain, somehow make terms with what must surely be the profoundest solitude known to human kind. Twilight, tree and flowers, the first inhabitants of a future into which, until this moment, she had cast no investigating glance. (4: 300)

The consciousness of her essential self, untouched, unchanged by her physical condition, empowers her to relate to Michael by confiding in him but to maintain her autonomy by rejecting his offer of marriage. She views the possible pregnancy as "a temporary embarrassment" and "a triumphant social gesture" and rejects Michael’s offer, which she considers "a permanent prison" and, consequently, no solution to her problem (4: 302-303). Since she is not actually pregnant, she never has the opportunity to discover whether or not her essential self would remain untouched by her material self and the materiality of a child. But her belief serves as a shield against the possibility that it might not.
Although Miriam maintains that her essential self remains untouched by material circumstances, by the surface life, the novel suggests that this self changes as her circumstances change and that it fails to transcend them. The image of the self shifts as Miriam moves away from the class of her childhood: the Brooms lose their connection with this self; Miriam's meager A.B.C. dinners of coffee, boiled egg, roll, and butter take on an association with "her untouched self here, free, unseen, and strong" (2:76). Whereas the Brooms' association with this self is grounded in the similarity in social class, the meals at the A.B.C.'s become associated with this self precisely because they represent Miriam's break with this class. They epitomize her emancipation from middle-class codes governing proper social behavior. In spite of the nourishment they provide for her essential self, they are inadequate as nourishment for her physical self and, ironically, are part of the harshness of the surface life. Moreover, Miriam's preoccupation with the surface life is revealed in her constant admission of hunger, her attempts to stretch her salary of one pound per week, and her dismay over her worn clothes and the discomfort of her single pair of cheap, cracked shoes. A self capable of transcending these recurring difficulties would be particularly comforting to the physical being undergoing them. But Miriam's insistence on the priority of the essential self and her denial of the material self cannot always protect her from the anxiety of the surface life.

Miriam never relinquishes the idea of a transcendental self; however, she comes to accept, after joining the socialist group, the Lycurgan Society, that "'environment and ways of thinking do partly make people'" (3: 374-375). According to Caesar Blake, Miriam's mode of thinking involves an adjustment of her beliefs as they are modified by new experiences (46). Miriam does make many conscious adjustments to her changing situations, but she clings to her
central ideas. Though she admits to being influenced by experiences, she contends that she is "never quite permanently affected" (3:429). An essentialist throughout, she separates the self from the circumstances and gives the self, the "I," control over the circumstances: "I must create my life," she thinks. "Life is creation. Self and circumstances the raw material" (3: 508). In addition, she is "certain" that in each individual is "something" that is "the same in everybody" (3:429). At other points, in contrast, she suggests that the self changes under changing circumstances. For example, she recognizes as she prepares for a visit from the Brooms "her gay carefree self, the self that bore in the eyes watching it from their distant suburb, a charmed life" (3: 448). And the self that she shows to the Wilsons is "the self that no one in London knew." It is "her unknown self. The self she was meant to be" (3: 336-337). Here she seems to imply two conflicting views of the self, the first, of a self that changes depending on the situation, and the second, of a self that is essential and more real than the others. Similarly, she experiences a "haunting sense of being a collection of persons living in a world of people always single and the same." Others appear to be integrated wholes, whereas she appears, to herself, to live different lives with each of them,"sharply separated lives, separable parts of herself, incompatible" (4: 122). Miriam's shifting views reflect her various situations, her middle-class youth, her working adulthood requiring self-reliance, her socialism, her associations with revolutionaries, upper-class people, writers, foreigners. These shifting views may indicate conscious adjustments, but they also undercut her continued adherence to the notion of an untouched, unchanging self.

Miriam's theory of the transcendental self also influences her ideas about the feminine. As do other women described by Catherine Belsey, she participates "both in the liberal-humanist discourse of freedom, self-determination and
rationality and at the same time in the specifically feminine discourse offered by society of submission, relative inadequacy and irrational intuition" (50). Miriam imagines a feminine identity grounded in individualism. Her image incorporates notions of an essential, self-determining individual with notions of essential gender differences. Although she refutes received ideas about the feminine, she contradictorily valorizes culturally defined femininity over culturally defined masculinity.

Miriam believes in an essential self for women, but openly renounces the commonly held view of the biological essence of the feminine self. She insists that women's essential selves prevent them from needing to be emancipated because they have never been "'subject'" (3: 257, 218). "'Disabilities, imposed by law,'" she argues, "'are a stupid insult to women, but have never touched them as individuals'" (3: 218). Similarly, a woman's position as a waitress or a mother does not alter her; she remains herself. Children, according to Miriam, are "'incidental . . . [t]o the life of the individual'" (3: 280, 260; ellipsis added). She criticizes Michael for assuming that a woman's life is only her husband and her children. "'That is a description,'" she states, "'from outside, by men'" (3: 222). In keeping with the discourse of individualism, Miriam imagines that women are self-determining; consequently, external perceptions of women, like Michael's or the legal system's, have no bearing on the essential lives of women. Moreover, she is so adamant in stressing that motherhood is not the whole of the feminine being that she argues that it was not even for her grandmother who bore twenty-two children (4: 331). She denies that the essence of the feminine lies in the reproductive capacity of women, but argues for an essential self that would have insulated her grandmother from the hardships of bearing and raising so many children. She does not know her grandmother when she is balancing
the duties involved because they meet for the first time when her grandmother is sixty-five and she is seven. By believing that her grandmother at sixty-five is no older than she herself is at seven, Miriam erases most of her grandmother's adult life. She cannot imagine the hardships that her grandmother must have faced and the effects that they must have had on her. Miriam seems to equate her grandmother with the society woman spending her life among people, but having "a life of her own going on all the time," a life that she can resume at fifty when her society days are over (2: 210-211).

Miriam's theory as applied in this instance is particularly problematic. By arguing for the irrelevance of the social practices that govern women's lives, she discounts their material effects and suggests that no changes in these practices are necessary. Moreover, in her zeal to refute the received ideas about essential femininity, to prove that women should not be reduced to their reproductive capacity, she denies the relevance of women's situations to their identities and shows an amazing naïveté about the daily lives of many women. Her comments reflect her own cultural construction in two ways. In her comfortable middle-class childhood and youth, she was never required to participate in any domestic activities, so she knows little about them. As she tells Fraulein Pfaff, she and her sisters "were never even allowed in the kitchen at home" (1: 131). In addition, the influence of her father's attitudes toward women surfaces in her underestimation of the relevance of her grandmother's childbearing and childrearing. Her father, she remembers, "knew how hateful all the world of women were and despised them." She agrees with him and is proud of the fact that he "never included her with them" (1: 22). Miriam's attitude suggests an acceptance of prevailing attitudes about masculine and feminine roles and the relative importance of them. She attempts to place herself outside the domestic
sphere, with some success, by maintaining an ignorance of all the activities that go on within it and by devaluing them. Nevertheless, as I will show later, she does not completely escape situations which draw out her culturally constructed feminine self.

In defining the feminine, Miriam attempts to identify the differences between the masculine and the feminine. She asks: "Ought men and women to modify each other, each standing, as it were, half-way between the centre and the surface, each with a view across the other's territory? Or should they accentuate their natural differences? Were the differences natural?" (3: 271). She accepts that men and women are different, and on at least one occasion, concedes that women are "physically inferior" to men. For this reason, she thinks, men are less often afraid than women and, consequently, "are more independent than women," who must rely on men for protection (2: 233). She also suggests that men are more conscious of their essential selves than women; she observes that, "in some strange way, men knew there were gardens everywhere, not always visible" (1: 405). The knowledge of gardens, she notes, is something that women do not seem to have. In most cases, though, she suggests that the differences work to women's advantage. For example, women's knowledge is "larger, bigger, deeper, less wordy and clever than that of men." The only knowledge men have is "of things; a sort of superiority they get by being free to be out in the world amongst things; they do not understand people" (2:188).

"Women see in terms of life," she asserts. "Men in terms of things" (3: 393). In noting this difference, Miriam implies a recognition of the role of culture in shaping gender, but at the same time, she seems to accept without question the validity of the generalizations about gender dominant in her society which perpetuate the separation of the public and private spheres. Moreover, she sees
the differences between men and women as exacerbated by their inability to speak the same language; the words they use "mean different things" (4: 93). She contends that "[o]nly in silence, in complete self-possession, possession of the inwardness of being, can lovers fully meet" (4: 645-646). Again, Miriam's observation that men and women cannot communicate reiterates the assumptions of essential differences that relegate men and women to different spheres. If women cannot speak the language of men, they will be unable to enter the public sphere and must accept the places that society has designated for them.

Miriam argues for an essential femininity that at times resembles culturally constructed femininity. She notes that all women have a kind of secret inspiration, but it must be kept secret. "Men ought not to be told. They must find it out for themselves. To dress up and try to make it something to attract somebody. She was not a woman, she was woman" (1: 400). A woman's inspiration is innate, but she risks turning herself into universal "woman" if she tries to use this inspiration to attract a man. Miriam does not entirely blame women, though, since she recognizes that men like women who fool them, who act a part (1: 400). She also maintains that women have a "silent knowledge," which is in some way violated by their social behavior, by their insincere questions to keep conversation going (3: 68). According to Miriam, women also have an "insight into personality that [gives] them extraordinary prophetic power" (3: 370). This power is unique to women and absent in men. These characteristics share the quality of being outside reason, which is culturally defined as masculine. Inspiration, silence, and insight are ascribed to women, who know and understand in ways that are not rational. Miriam seems to have accepted the culturally prescribed definition of the feminine as other than the masculine and reinterpreted its meaning.
She also reinterprets woman's social role by identifying it as her art, as the "art of making atmospheres." This art, she claims, is as important as any other art:

"Most women can exercise it, for reasons, by fits and starts. The best women work at it the whole of the time. Not one man in a million is aware of it. It's like air within the air. It may be deadly. Cramping and awful, or simply destructive, so that no life is possible within it. So is the bad art of men. At its best it is absolutely life-giving. And not soft. Very hard and stern and austere in its beauty. And like mountain air. And you can't get behind it, or in any way divide it up. Just as with 'Art.' Men live in it and from it all their lives without knowing. Even recluses." (3: 257)

Miriam turns the culturally designated role of creating comfortable spaces for men to relax within into a quality innate to women. She also judges those women who perform this role particularly well as the best women, thereby recapitulating the cultural standards for judging femininity. She refuses to accept the view that women find "their truest fulfillment in self-sacrifice," noting that in discussions of male art, the same behavior is identified as "self-realization." Women, she asserts, "don't stop dead at self-sacrifice. They reap... freedom. Self-realization. Emancipation" (3: 258). Miriam's interesting renaming limits women to a kind of freedom and self-realization within the domestic sphere, limits which she rejects for herself. She leaves herself out of this definition by insisting that "[l]ots of women hold back. Just as men do--from exacting careers. I do. I don't want to exercise the feminine art" (3: 258). Her choice not to pursue the art of making atmospheres is illustrated in the few parties given by her, in particular her own dinner party, so different from the parties in Woolf's novels. She feels no desire to lead the conversation and wonders "whether hostesses in general suffered the indifference
that now held her in its grip. And if they did, why the business of entertainment was not abolished" (3:470).

She suggests, though, that women can only stop creating atmospheres "by getting away. That is why so many women get nervy and break down. The only way they can rest, is by being nothing to nobody, leaving off for a while giving out any atmosphere" (3: 258). She seems aware that breakdowns like her mother's are reactions to material situations, but sees them as respites from the exercise of art rather than symptoms of a deep dissatisfaction with or extreme exhaustion from the dispersal of the self. This theory minimizes the significance of situations, like her mother's, that induce depression and suicide. In her transformation of woman's social role into her art and a nervous collapse into a rest from the performance of this art, she glosses over the consequences facing women who are unable to fill their prescribed roles. Moreover, she reveals her own imbrication in received ideas about feminine duty, which she rejects for her self.

Fixing Miriam's feminine identity is as futile as her own attempts to do so because her self fluctuates under a number of conflicting influences. But these influences and their results are identifiable. These influences structure her belief in the primacy of the individual and the transcendental self and her definition of a femininity that she, for the most part, rejects for her self. Miriam's own version of this conflict is her perception of herself as alternating between two temperaments, one associated with conventional definitions of the feminine and one associated with her father's definition of himself. One she identifies as a "solid charwomanly commonplace kindliness, spread like a doormat at the disposal of everybody." The other is "an intermittent perfect dilettantism that would disgust even the devil" (3: 245). Under the influence of the first, she
approaches the identity of a "feminine" woman, sensitive to the needs of others, particularly in her positions as teacher, governess, and secretary. Under the second, she follows her father in keeping herself free to pursue all avenues of knowledge. Sometimes the temperaments collide, alienating Miriam from others: "A perpetual oblivion not only of my own circumstances, but, at the wrong moments, of those other people, makes me disappoint and shock them, suddenly disappearing before their eyes in the midst of a sympathy that they had eagerly seemed to find satisfying and rare" (3: 245). At these points, her thinking self, the self struggling with ideas obtrudes into her relationships with people. It is "[s]ometimes inconveniently obtrusive at moments when she most wishe[s] to approximate to the approved pattern of charming femininity" (3: 482). Miriam's alternation between these two temperaments, one inscribed as feminine, the other as masculine, reflects her conflicted position with respect to these categories.

Miriam locates the reason for her oscillation in the attitudes of her father and other men. In the early stages of her pilgrimage, she follows her father in not liking men and loathing women (1: 31). Her dislike for men is a reaction to "mannishness" as it is revealed in a man's "superior self-satisfied smile because a woman says one thing one minute and another the next." In her irritation with the "mannish" condescension of Bob Greville, she judges that "[m]en ought to be horse-whipped, all the grown men, all who have ever had that self-satisfied smile, all, all, horse-whipped until they apologize on their knees" (1: 423). She also dislikes "those hateful women's smiles--smirks--self-satisfied smiles as if everybody were agreed about everything." All women, including her mother, with the exception of Miriam and her sister Harriett, smile in this way. As Miriam matures, she begins to see men as responsible for the attributes of
women that she expressly condemns. Although she adopts her father's disdain for "'feminine' women," women who, in her view, assert themselves through "a deliberate 'charming' feminine effect," "a trick," an "advertising manner," she blames men for encouraging such behavior (2: 105). She criticizes men who talk "in a clever expert way about women and never [think] of their own share in the way those women went on" (2:106). She understands that men expect specific responses from women. Hypo Wilson, she observes, has a "twofold vision of women as bright intelligent response or complacently smiling audience," as "either bright obedient assistants or providers of illusion for time of leisure" (3: 360, 367). She believes that men shape women by demanding specific responses, and she notices Wilson's hand in the changes she sees in her friend Alma, whose attitudes are now "fixed and arranged in some way by Mr. Wilson," whose identity he changes as he changes her name to Susan (2: 118).

Miriam's absorption of these attitudes lies behind her own conflicted views of her gender identity. In addition, her belief in individualism impedes her identification with a group that does not appear to be self-determining, so recognizing the role of men in shaping women makes it difficult for her to secure a place among women. She seems initially to align herself with men and to identify women as a group to which she does not or cannot belong. According to her, these women are "female," and she herself is not (1: 257). She even voices her suspicion that "'[p]erhaps I can't stand women because I'm a sort of horrid man'" (1: 404). Her use of the word "horrid" underscores her dilemma: she cannot fit in with women, nor does she fit in with men. She indicates her sense of displacement in concluding that she fails as a woman because she is "without courage, without funds or good clothes or beauty, without charm or interest, without even the skill to play a part" (1:21). She has internalized a
perception of women that calls for a specific appearance and behavior, but she does not possess the knowledge necessary to produce herself according to this perception. As she matures she gains the knowledge of how to be feminine and becomes, to some extent, empowered by it. Her empowerment induces her to reiterate the cultural definition of the feminine in her valorization of an essential femininity. But her internalization of her father's negative attitudes toward women and her increasing desire for a freedom denied women encourage her to define her self in opposition to her definition of the feminine.

Nevertheless, her feminine temperament, her culturally constructed femininity, surfaces, occasionally through a deliberate effort on her part, occasionally in spite of her efforts to subdue it. When she writes a letter in response to Bob Greville's request to help him buy a wedding gift for Harriett, she is aware that her handwriting and tone are "masculine." "He'll admire it on the page," she thinks, "and then hear a man's voice, pater's voice talking behind it and not like it." So she attempts to "feminize her attitude" by shifting her body, "raising one heel from the ground." She notes that her attempt fails: "her hat was hard against her forehead, her clothes would not flow" (1: 418-419). Her clothes express her "unfeminine" attitudes by not exhibiting "feminine" characteristics of softness and graceful fluidity. Similarly, she adopts a feminine manner to impress Dr. von Heber sitting across from her in the boarding house dining room; she tries to assume "as far as possible the characteristics he was reading into her appearance" (1: 389). Again, she finds that she cannot sustain the pose. These poses do not hold because she recognizes the falseness of her position. Even when tempted into "the world of women" by the family of Mr. Leyton's fiancée, whose life resembles the plot of a Charlotte Yonge novel, Miriam finds that she cannot live the feminine role. At first, she can "achieve
an appearance of conformity" (3: 268). But ultimately she realizes that the "charmed familiar scene" is "as significant and as unreal as the set figure of a dance" (3: 269). But this scene is in fact part of lived reality, which is precisely Miriam's problem. She sees conventional behavior as unacceptable for her, but she cannot entirely escape social practices producing this behavior.

Consequently, she conforms to these conventions frequently in spite of herself. Although she resents Mr. Leyton's unspoken assignment of tea table duties to her, thinking "Why should he assume that she should pour out tea," she tacitly accepts the role by pouring tea and cutting cake (2: 69). In addition, her recognition of and contempt for the roles women must play do not prevent her from being distressed when her employer Mr. Hancock falls asleep during a lecture that they are attending together. She suspects that if she were one of "those women" "being 'arch' in a polite, dignified, lady-like manner," she might have entertained him sufficiently to keep him awake (2: 107, 105). She also reacts in a "feminine" manner when she confronts a group of working-class men because she imagines how Michael would feel if he were to hear their disparaging remarks about him. When one of the group apologizes by saying, "'Miss, we know the sight of you going up and down. Miss, he ain't good enough for ye,'" she is unable to respond and sends "sweeping over them a general disclaiming smile, hoping she told them how mistaken they all were and how nice she thought them." She thinks that they are "darlings" for feeling as they do about her (3: 138). Although her initial assertive reaction, confronting the men, is, perhaps, "unfeminine," she also responds in a conventionally feminine way by showing that she is flattered by their concern for her. In all of these situations, she displays a "feminine" sensitivity to the points of view of others. Moreover, she defers to others' points of view, particularly men's, to
Hypo's, Mr. Hancock's, Richard Roscorla's (4: 332, 3: 180, 4: 541). For Richard, the Quaker farmer, she effaces herself by making an "effort to forget oneself and one's interests in order to please Richard by being interested in slag-distributors, swath-turners and threshers, rib-rollers and reaper-and-binders" (4: 541). This self-effacement indicates her cultural construction to consider others before herself.

Miriam's "masculine" temperament, the side of herself that she associates with her father, nonetheless frequently overcomes her feminine temperament. In her view, "that strange hard feeling that was always twining between her and the things people wanted her to do and to be" is "manhood" (1: 471). Other people, from her mother to Dr. Densley, who wants to marry her, also recognize culturally defined masculine characteristics in Miriam (1: 193, 3: 479). What Miriam wants and, to some extent, achieves, is conventional masculine freedom, both physical and mental. She criticizes her friends Jan and Mag for their feminine behavior: "Sewing all the time, busily, like wives, instead of smoking and listening and thinking" (2: 141). To her, the latter activities are masculine, but they are far more appealing than the former. She imagines herself in her movements around London as a "man about town" and while sitting in a cafe as "a free man of the world" (2: 154, 394). As far as she is concerned, this life has more to offer than the lives most women lead, trapped within the domestic sphere. So she determines, as she starts out alone on a bicycle trip, "to lead a man's life, always getting away" (2: 230). Accompanying this physical freedom are "the things of the mind that had come her way . . . unsought; yet finding her prepared; so that they seemed not only her rightful property, but also in some way, herself" (ellipsis added). She has been "drawn, often reluctant, perpetually escaping and forgetting; out on to a path that it sometimes seemed she must
explore to the exclusion of everything else in life, exhaustively, the long way round, the masculine way. It was clearly not her fault that she had a masculine mind" (3: 236). She does not want to live as most women do, "in a gloom where there were no thoughts" (1: 404). Because her culture associates thinking with masculinity and feeling with femininity and she is constructed within this culture, she makes the same associations and judges herself masculine because she thinks. And because she prefers a masculine life to a feminine one, she attempts to carve out a space of freedom which approximates masculine freedom as she redefines the feminine to suit her needs.

In her search for emancipation, Miriam goes through a process of rejecting virtually all the possibilities available to her. The Henderson family's financial problems place her in positions which require culturally constructed feminine behavior. These positions, marriage, teaching, and clerical work, represent choices that she may make to guarantee her own financial security, but she perceives the behavior required in each position as a threat to her identity. Affiliation with particular social groups, sometimes associated with the different work positions, also offers some relief from the stress accompanying the financial problems. Miriam finally finds it necessary to draw away from each of these groups in her attempt to define her self.14 Ironically, her transcendental self is unable to remain untouched by her material situations; contraction away from these situations seems the only possibility open to her. When her pilgrimage stops, she appears to choose solitude over society.15

The position open to Miriam that carries the most social status is marriage, but she tells Hypo Wilson when she is approaching thirty years old, "'Been flying, almost desperately, from domesticity, all m'life" (4: 225). The marriages of her sisters, at the time of her father's bankruptcy, provide security
for Harriett and Sarah (at least in the short term) and relief for her family. The new husbands are saviours who are "ready to look after everything" (1: 470). And they do take care of many details, from paying for a trip to Brighton, to arranging for surgery for Mrs. Henderson, to finding a position as governess for Miriam. She sees her sisters, "Sarah and Harriett, rescued from poverty and fear" (1: 472). However, Miriam recognizes the price that marriage extracts on the faces of the grooms and brides on their wedding day: Gerald and Bennett have "strained pale faces," and Harriett's face shows "brave stricken eyes: old and stricken; that was how Sarah had looked too. No radiance on the faces of Sarah and Harriett" (1: 461-462). To Miriam, marriage offers security, but oppressive togetherness:

"The only way to feel quite secure at night would be to marry . . . how awful . . . either you marry and are never alone or you risk being alone and afraid . . . to marry for safety . . . perhaps some women did. No wonder . . . and not to turn into a silly scared nervous old maid . . . how tiresome, one thing or the other . . . no choice" (1: 466).

Miriam recognizes the hegemony of marriage and family and sees her choices as protection from fear and poverty or a life of loneliness and worry, but she is aware that with the protection comes constant companionship and loss of valued solitude and freedom, freedom of action and of thought. While the "sheltered life" of marriage offers advantages, its costs, she determines, are too great (2: 92).

The marriages she witnesses, her parents', the Corries', the Wilsons', Gerald and Harriett's, seem to bear out her conclusion and lead her to assert that she will never marry. Nevertheless, she repeatedly considers the possibility of marriage and tries out relationships with men.16 Her ambivalence is representative of the attitudes of many young women of her time, for as
Dyhouse notes, women who had worked to become economically independent had mixed views about marriage (34). Miriam and her friends Mag and Jan recognize what they would lose if they marry: a freedom represented by "being able to turn up on Sunday morning in your knickers, with your hair down" (2: 90). Outside the hegemony of the family, they need not follow the codes of their class governing appropriate behavior for young ladies. They answer only to themselves and dress, act, think, and talk as they wish. After experiencing physical and psychological independence, they are hesitant to enter the conventional, conservative institution of marriage.

However, Miriam is not immune to the attentions of men and flushes with pleasure when she learns that she has attracted one: "Then she had taken the right line. How easy. This was how things happened." Although she senses that to attract a man through pretense is a fraud (1: 451), she imagines a life for herself married to Gerald's friend that approaches that of the Victorian angel in the house and would require her to live under constant pretense:

She felt herself and Mr. Tremayne as duplicates of Harriett and Gerald, only that she was a very religious, very womanly woman, the ideal wife and mother and he was a bad fast man who wanted to be saved. It was such an easy part to play. She could go on playing it to the end of her life, if he went on in business and made enough money, being a "gracious silence," taking an interest in his affairs, ordering all things well, quietly training the servants, never losing her temper or raising her voice, making the home a sanctuary of rest and refreshment and religious aspiration, going to church. (2: 27)

She feels that her demeanor as she plays the piano projects this image of herself and the look on Mr. Tremayne's face suggests to her that he sees it too. She senses that "if she kept out of the conversation and listened and smiled a little, he would go away adoring" (2: 28). In other words, if she would be conventionally
feminine, she could win him as a suitor. But Miriam cannot sustain this role. She chooses a Beethoven sonata that requires her to drop her pose as she loses herself in the music. When she finishes, she feels "charged to the fingertips with a glow that transfigured all the inanimate things in the room." Mr. Tremayne, however, is lost: "The party was wrecked . . . a young lady who banged the piano till her hair nearly came down. . . Mr. Tremayne had heard nothing but noise. . . His eyes smiled, and his uneasy mouth felt for compliments" (2: 28). She has shown too much emotion and revealed herself as an indecorous woman.

With the exception of the relationships with Michael Shatov, Hypo Wilson, and, possibly, Charles Ducorroy, Miriam’s experiences with men are variations of the Mr. Tremayne episode. She tries on the pose of conventional femininity, and when she is unable to hold the pose, she or the man backs off. As Gloria Fromm observes, Miriam consistently sets up a situation in which she must in the end lose the prize of marriage ("What Are Men" 176). In the case of Richard Roscorla, Miriam suspects that she is in love with his surroundings, the Quaker silence and individuality, and that he himself means nothing to her (4: 546). She is aware that she plays "a charming character-part," aided by some fortuitous accidents casting her in the role of devout churchgoer solicitous of his mother's well-being (4: 514). She even calculates that she could "'live upon the people occasionally turning up who more or less think and read,,'" people who "'wouldn't be embarrassed by free discussion of ideas'" and admits that she would "'sooner confess to a mermaid's tail than to any sort of mind'" (4: 522). Circumstances reveal her mind anyway, portraying her as an unfeminine woman and turning Mrs. Roscorla and Richard against her. At least, this is Miriam's interpretation, but ample evidence suggests that she herself pulls away (4: 551). She pleads with Rachel Mary, "'send me away before it is too
late" (4: 543). She also later admits to retreating from the farm at Dimple Hill and escaping to Vaud (4: 611). Silence and solitude, if they require marriage, apparently are not enough to compensate for the lack of stimulation of the mind.

Michael Shatov's attraction for Miriam is "that she could think untroubled, in his company" (3: 63). Mental stimulation is also the initial attraction of Hypo Wilson. But, for Miriam, the tyranny of their masculine scientific minds destroys the relationships. In fact, Hypo's scientific mind, his "constricted, biological way of seeing sex" ruins their early sexual encounters for Miriam. She wants "homage," not for her physical beauty, but for what she is and what she represents. "Women," she contends," want recognition of themselves, of what they are and represent, before they can come fully to birth" (4: 230). This view contradicts her earlier rejection of Michael's homage, which she interprets as attention to "universal physiological facts" that slights "individuals themselves" (3: 30). This difference between the two reactions may stem from the different objects of the two men: Michael wants to marry her, whereas Hypo wants an affair. Michael's homage threatens her sense of self because she would have to give up something of herself to marry him, her freedom in solitude. Hypo, on the other hand, threatens her sense of self because her self would be irrelevant in their relationship. He does not see her as an individual, but as a type of intelligent young woman who can play "the Intimate Friend of a Great Man" and whose life would follow a pattern designed by him: "'Middles. Criticism, which you'd do as other women do fancy-work. Infant. NOVEL.'" (4: 362, 240). Miriam rejects both possibilities, marriage to Michael and an affair with Hypo. She wants both solitude and intellectual stimulation, but she wants neither if she must give up personal autonomy to get them. She opts for the promotion of Michael's marriage to Amabel and a vicarious relationship with
their son. Similarly, she maintains a friendship with Hypo and Susan, but walks away from intimacy with him and the possibility of bearing his child.

Miriam also rejects teaching as a possible mode of living because in requiring conventional feminine behavior, it threatens her identity and her solitude. Initially, she fits the stereotype of the teacher or governess described by Peterson: a gentlewoman who must support herself because of the death or financial ruin of her father (6). The conventional assumption during Miriam's time was that women were "natural" care givers particularly suited to the role of teaching young children (Holcombe 12). Women raised according to the values of the middle class were especially suitable to train children to espouse the values of that particular society (Peterson 4). Fraulein Pfaff, addressing Miriam, describes the behavior required of effective teachers:

"To truly fulfill the most serious role of the teacher you must enter into the personality of each pupil and must sympathize with the struggles of each one upon the path on which our feet are set. Efforts to good kindliness and thought for others must be encouraged. The teacher shall be sunshine, human sunshine, encouraging all effort and all lovely things in the personality of the pupil." (1: 160)

This behavior falls within the cultural prescription of the feminine, requiring self-effacement and dispersal of the self to meet the needs of the children. Miriam, renouncing conventional femininity for herself, cannot accept the duties required of teachers.

Espousing the values of the middle class, as her teaching positions demand, would be a particular problem for Miriam, who is in the process of rejecting them for herself. She recognizes that she no longer adheres to the values of the people for whom she works; nevertheless, since she must support herself, she feels pressured to pretend to share them. "But must she always be pretending?
Would it always be that... living with exasperating women who did not understand... pretending... grimacing?" (1: 74). Fraulein's advice, quoted above, suggests that Miriam should not only be more feminine but also encourage feminine behavior in her students. However, Miriam renounces feminine behavior for herself, so she finds it difficult and hypocritical to encourage it in others. She finds that she cannot fill the feminine role, that she shies away from intimate contact with the girls, that she would prefer to discuss general matters with them and encourage their independence (1: 95).

Consequently, she contracts "to her utmost air of preoccupation" when confronted with the possibility that one of them might approach her (1: 247). Although she is tempted to relate to some of the girls in Hanover and in Banbury Park--particularly the younger girls who arouse in her a "desire to get up then and there and clasp the little figures one by one" (1: 249)--she recognizes that she cannot "give them personal love" and instead encourages them to be impersonal, to think for themselves, to be independent (1: 333-335). She finally gives up teaching in schools or homes as a mode of life antithetical to her theory of the primacy of the individual.

Miriam's position as dental secretary offers her the most freedom; nevertheless, it does not allow her to escape completely from the requirements of the feminine role. She no longer must live in environments that reproduce the structure of the family. She lives, instead, in rooms which, while they require particular social roles, do not place her in the position of care giver and at least partially release her from the strictures of the middle class. The dental office itself, though, is an environment that demands her to play the feminine role mandated by middle-class society. It is a public place in which she does domestic work: cleaning up, writing letters, playing piano, pouring out tea,
advising on decorating. In addition, because the practice is primarily a family one, the atmosphere is home-like and sheltered. Miriam ruminates on "the privileges of her environment": "the association with gentlemen, her quiet room, the house, the perpetual interest of the patients, the curious exciting streaks of social life, linking up with the past and carrying it forward on a more generous level." All of these "privileges" are attractive to Miriam partly, as she suggests, because they take her back to the untroubled past, before her father's financial failure. At times, she sees Wimpole Street as home and thinks of how pleasant and simple her life would be "if she could throw in her lot with them" (2:172). But she is aware of the drawbacks of her position: "She was somehow between two worlds, neither quite sheltered, nor quite free . . . not free as long as she wanted, in spite of her reason, to stay on at Wimpole Street and please the people there" (2: 163). In spite of the ambiguity of her position in the dental office, it does allow her to live alone on her salary of one pound per week, and this fact alleviates the tension she feels in connection with her work.

Miriam is most conscious of her ambiguous position in her relationship with Mr. Hancock, which becomes progressively more personal, involving more social engagements, lectures, parties, picnics. She wonders about the reaction of the patients, who treat her "with the kindly consideration due to people of her station," if they knew of her socializing with Mr. Hancock, her visits to his home, her contact with his friends (2: 139). Their relationship follows the predictable course of Miriam's other relationships with men. Mr. Hancock draws back, Miriam suspects, because he realizes that they belong in separate worlds as employer and employee, because he sees their relationship through the eyes of the women in his family. He takes an official tone with her, which Miriam resents, apparently to emphasize their relative positions. She is both
angry and saddened because "[h]is life was closed on her for ever" (2: 206). He explains his actions as an attempt to avoid "'foolish gossip which might end by making [her] position untenable.'" His reasoning draws an ambivalent reaction from her: "I want to have it both ways. To keep the consideration and flout the necessity for it. No one shall dare to protect me from gossip" (2: 208). Mr. Hancock reacts as a gentleman in his class should react, but Miriam, on the margin of the middle class, questions the validity of the code that makes his actions necessary. Later, when Miriam draws back because she resents the personal duties, like taking charge of the Mudie books, that Mr. Hancock expects of her, their conflict is again based on class differences. These duties seem too domestic to her, too much the realm of the wife. Mr. Hancock sees these duties as a fair exchange for all that he has done for her. Her refusal is apparently a breach of their social contract. She must willingly assume the feminine role and care for his needs; in exchange, he will provide shelter for her as a substitute father/husband. Miriam's angry, vocal resentment prompts her employers to fire her because, in part, she has questioned their manners. As Mr. Orly puts it, "'it's as good as telling us we're not gentlemen'" (3: 183). Miriam must withdraw her objections and agree to perform the disputed tasks, although she sees her capitulation as a "sort of sale of mean little virtues for respectability and a living" (3: 185). She continues at Wimpole Street because the living she makes there allows her freedom away from its sphere.

One way for women to improve their positions is to establish a "public world" separate from the public sphere of men (Rosaldo, "A Theoretical Overview" 36). Miriam's pound per week salary allows her to create a public world, sometimes shared with others, sometimes alone, in which she gains the kind of freedom unavailable to her in the middle-class world in which she was
raised. Her freedom takes the form of physical actions ordinarily prohibited for middle-class women, actions culturally defined as "masculine" behavior, like smoking a cigarette, which gives "her a sense of power. She had chosen to smoke and she was smoking, and the morning world gleamed back at her" (1: 209-210). This choice represents other, more important choices for her and convinces her that she can "choose her fate" (1: 210). Other physical actions include "her first deliberate piece of daring in London," going to the theater alone, her first late-night visit to Donizetti's restaurant, and her first beer, another "tremendous adventure" (2: 184, 358-360; 3: 126). A crucial example of freedom to Miriam is her bicycle trip, which she takes during one of her holidays. She travels alone through a forest at dusk, to the amazement of the clerk in a telegraph office, and stays overnight in a hotel. She gains a sense of independence and accomplishment from being able to negotiate not just the bicycle trip, with its potential dangers, but also the stay in the hotel room, a prospect for which nothing in her middle-class background could have prepared her (2: 231-237). Miriam's attempts at freedom seem small in comparison to the movements of female characters in early modern novels, by both men and women. Perhaps for this reason, she is successful and avoids the fate of the women in novels, like Anna Karenina, who attempt to gain impossible sexual freedom only to be punished by death. Miriam separates herself from individuals who disapprove of her "unfeminine" behavior and links up with people, like Hypo Wilson, "a divorced, remarried man," "people all of whom Eve would see as 'living in sin,'" people who will not judge her according to middle-class standards (4: 229, 230). By the time Miriam attempts sexual freedom, she has established an alternative public world and escapes the usual consequences, including pregnancy, of her actions.
Miriam's alternative public sphere places her on the margin of several different worlds: the professional middle class of Wimpole and Harley Streets, the world of bohemian writers, the socialist world of the Lycurgan Society, the world of Russian intellectuals and revolutionaries, the society of the women at her club, who represent "not names and families but selves in their own right" (3:453), the upper class world of the Oberlanders, the private world established with Amabel, the society of Quakers at Dimple Hill, and the world of Tansley Street, whose inhabitants are themselves marginal, "drifting about on the edge of catastrophe" (3: 233). Miriam deliberately keeps herself on the borders of these groups because, she maintains, one must join "whole-heartedly" or not at all, and since she is attracted to all groups, but not "whole-heartedly" taken with any of them, she cannot join any one (4: 331). Miriam's argument implies a self-imposed isolation, a voluntary withdrawal from communities stemming from her belief in the primacy of the individual. She does not define her self in relation to others, as her class insists that a woman must, but instead, as an autonomous individual. Elaine Showalter sees this refusal to commit herself as reflecting Miriam's creator's own choice of a life on "the perilous borders of egolessness, in the female country of multiple receptivity" over "the martyrdom of commitment because that was masculine" (250). Miriam's rejection of commitment, though, seems to follow from a renunciation of culturally prescribed feminine "multiple receptivity" and an espousal of the individual ego. Rachel Blau DuPlessis suggests that Miriam chooses "liminality" to avoid the stereotypes of masculine and feminine (146). She is not entirely successful in avoiding these stereotypes, however, for they underlie the individualism in which she believes. Nevertheless, her marginality results from her attempts to reject late-Victorian middle-class prescriptions for the feminine, and although at
times her isolation causes her pain, she comes to value loneliness as "her best companion, to shelter strangeness that can be known only in solitude" (4:24).

Miriam's belief in the priority of the individual leads her to leave behind all possible communities. Some critics place Miriam at the end of her pilgrimage within the community of Quakers, but the unfinished *March Moonlight* suggests that she is moving beyond this society as well. Blake, particularly in chapter two of his *Dorothy Richardson*, sees the Quaker influence in the development of Miriam's mysticism, which draws from the mysticism of religion and of the visionary artist. Writing before the publication of *March Moonlight* in 1967, Blake could not consider the events outlined there. DuPlessis, who, on the other hand, writes after the publication of the unfinished chapter-volume, contends that Miriam achieves "spiritual community in a 'lay convent' of Friends" (143).19 This argument does not take into account much of *March Moonlight*, which depicts Miriam extracting herself from a relationship with the Roscorlas complicated by her involvement with Charles Ducorroy. *Pilgrimage* finishes with Miriam's recognition that she belongs neither at Dimple Hill with the Quakers nor with the family of her sister Sarah. Fitting into no community, she chooses to live and write in an attic room in a house in which, she initially believes, she is the only lodger (4: 654). Her discovery of the existence of another lodger, Mr. Noble, does not disturb her solitude. Given the events of the unfinished chapter-volume, one cannot make definitive statements about Miriam's position at the conclusion of her pilgrimage.

However, the last image of *March Moonlight*, showing Miriam recalling her feelings when she holds Amabel's baby, indicates that she has not relinquished her belief in a transcendental individuality:
Something of the inexpressible quality of our relationship revealed itself in that moment she did not share, the moment of finding the baby Paul lying asleep in his long robe in the sitting-room, gathering him up, and being astonished to feel, as soon as he lay folded, still asleep, against my body, the complete stilling of every one of my competing urgencies. Freedom. Often I had held babes in my arms: Harriett's, Sally's, and many others. But never with that sense of perfect serenity. If Jean's marriage with Joe Davenport brought her a child, should I feel, in holding it, that same sense of fulfillment? (4: 658)

Miriam feels fulfilled and emancipated as she holds the baby of the woman, the only person, in fact, with whom she has had a complete affinity, as if Amabel's baby is also her own. She wonders if the child of Jean, whose appearance, necessarily undeveloped, in *March Moonlight* hints at a relationship as intimate, would evoke the same feelings. Miriam vicariously fulfills her culturally constructed urges to motherhood and momentarily stills the other "urgencies" driving her along in her pilgrimage, the urgencies of selfhood. Holding the baby allows her to maintain her treasured individuality because her links with another are figurative rather than material; she avoids the stifling community of marriage and the physicality of childbearing and motherhood, but experiences unqualified intimacy with an infant and, vicariously, with the infant's mother. Consequently, she manages to retain the illusion of her untouched, transcendental self.

But *Pilgrimage* reveals that this self is only an illusion. Each varied situation, each experience leaves its mark on Miriam's identity, and she changes in fundamental ways in reaction to these experiences despite her theories. The self that she is in a constant process of becoming negotiates positions outside the prescribed definitions of the feminine, positions that are in danger of being undermined by her own internalization of class and gender discourses and by her refusal to recognize their power to produce identities. At the stopping point of
Pilgrimage, she seems to be continuing in her quest for a self that transcends situation, that exists independently of the circumstances and practices constructing reality, that itself determines reality. As I demonstrate in the next chapter, Woolf's women are engaged in a similar quest, but their different experiences of class give their quests a different dimension from Miriam's.
Notes

1 See also Rachel Blau DuPlessis who states that Miriam is "constructed as a one-woman experiment, in the sense that the term is used in naturalism, to prove that these decrees of 'nature' are masculinist ideology and to attack nothing less than Western culture's production of the female" (Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers [Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985] 145); and Stephen Heath, "Writing for Silence: Dorothy Richardson and the Novel," Teaching the Text, ed. Norman Bryson and Susanne Kappeler (London: Routledge, 1983) 143-145.

2 Gloria G. Fromm notes that this memory of the Henderson marriage indicates "the parental source of her [Miriam's] love-hate relationship with both sexes" ("What Are Men to Dorothy Richardson?" Women and Literature 2 [1982]: 175).

3 Richardson frequently uses ellipsis in Pilgrimage, so I will indicate when I am adding it. Otherwise, the ellipsis is hers.

4 As DuPlessis points out, Mrs. Henderson's suicide is obvious only to the reader with knowledge of Richardson's biography (143).

5 In an unpublished letter to Vincent Brome, Richardson describes herself as one of "what Lawson Dodd labeled 'poor-law girls', independent, existing (quite happily) just above the poverty-line on very small salaries" (Dorothy Richardson Papers, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin). Compare Miriam's comment on her own position made to a friend at a party: "'You and I are vicarious sufferers, gutter-snipes, poor-law children, underpaid wage-slaves without security or prospects, dancing at the edge of an abyss'" (4: 184). Although Richardson contends that she was "scarcely aware" of her impoverished state, she makes Miriam, in the same position, often acutely aware of her poverty ("Data for Spanish Publisher," ed. Joseph Prescott, London Magazine 6 [1959]: 18).

6 Gillian E. Hanscombe notes that for Richardson, women who do not accept feminine roles suffer "role conflict." "Their femininity lodges in the body, its attributes and capacities, while their sense of identity becomes synonymous with
the mind, the personality and individuality which are, by the definition of division, sexually neutralized" (The Art of Life: Dorothy Richardson and the Development of Feminist Consciousness [Athens: Ohio UP, 1982] 67).


8 Labovitz describes the garden and music as related motifs figuring "Miriam's quest" and suggests that music "holds the key to the garden, a metaphor for Miriam's inner creativity so far suppressed and, further, related to the theme of freedom" (17).

9 In an unpublished letter to Vincent Brome, dated January 16, 1950, Richardson wrote, "I recall a solemn discussion, at a meeting of young women, on the desirability of selecting a suitable male, producing an infant & going on the rates" (Dorothy Richardson Papers, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin).

10 Richardson states, in an unpublished letter to Henry Savage dated March 11, 1950, "Men are practitioners, dealing with things (including 'ideas') rather than with people, obliged on every level to do rather than to be; feebler than women in their sense of being, and knowing almost nothing of women save in relation to themselves" (Dorothy Richardson Papers, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University).

11 In an essay entitled "Women in the Arts," Richardson distances herself from this view by associating it with some feminists who attempt to refute the charge that women have failed to produce great art by claiming "that the finest flowers of the human spirit are the social arts." Having dismissed this argument, she goes on to contend that women have not produced great art because they are
hampered by "the human demand . . . for an inclusive awareness, from which men, for good or ill, are exempt." She suggests that woman's "gift for expansive vicarious living," which should aid her in the production of art, inhibits her instead: "even vicarious expansion towards a multitude of details, though it may bring wisdom, is fatal to sustained creative effort" (Vanity Fair May 1925: 47, 100).

12 As Carol Dyhouse points out, "intellectual ambition in women" was often equated with "selfishness" (Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England [London: Routledge, 1981] 73). Letters exchanged between Rose Odle, Richardson's sister-in-law, and Veronica Grad, the original of Amabel, suggest that they viewed Richardson as selfish in her behavior toward them (qtd. in Hanscombe 169-186). Their letters recall Miriam's observation of her own behavior and the reactions of others. Labovitz, in her study of Pilgrimage as a female bildungsroman, notes that part of Miriam's education involves getting beyond the guilt arising from her quest for "self-realization," from her "freeing herself from the pervasive image of the self-sacrificing woman" (25-26).

13 Hanscombe identifies Miriam's problem as a conflict between her "womanhood" or her "female role," which prevents her from identifying with men and her "personhood" or her "human mind," which prevents her from identifying with women (The Art of Life 34, 52). She also notes that the conflict is part of her father's legacy, which has both negative and positive sides. Hanscombe sees Mr. Henderson's appreciation for culture as a positive aspect. But she sees as negative "a questioning of the woman's role and a disaffection for conformity, for compromising one's interests on behalf of others." These aspects are negative because they prevent Miriam from accepting her feminine role (64). Compare Sydney Janet Kaplan's assertion that the main characteristic of Miriam's "'feminine consciousness'" is her "ambivalence toward her role as woman" (Feminine Consciousness in the Modern British Novel [Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1975] 16-17).

14 Anita Levy defines Miriam's quest in terms of a search for a place to be "female," which is neither "in the household nor in the workplace, but in a third place defined as the site of female mind." Levy concludes that "Richardson unwittingly does the work of the dominant class in representing the male professional world as no place for women" ("Gendered Labor, the Woman Writer and Dorothy Richardson," Novel 25 [1991]: 69).
15 The last chapter-volume of *Pilgrimage* was published ten years after Richardson's death. She apparently worked on it for nearly twenty years, but it seems unfinished. Nevertheless, some critics attempt to argue for some sort of unity for the entire work. See, for example, Caesar R. Blake, *Dorothy Richardson* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1960) and Horace Gregory, *Dorothy Richardson: An Adventure in Self-Discovery* (New York: Holt, 1967).

16 Fromm notes that the major and minor male characters affect Miriam in different ways: the major characters change Miriam's "sensibility as well as her direction by the ways in which they force issues"; in contrast, the minor ones "offer Miriam countless opportunities to flex her mental muscles" ("What Are Men" 171, 172).

17 Moreover, Richardson suggested another reason beside economic independence: flouting of convention on principle. In an undated letter to Vincent Brome, she writes, "For the first time in our hist. middle-class young w. were out in the world on their own. Mrs. Grundy was being flouted, by many of them on principle. For the first time there was an alternative to prostitutes" (Dorothy Richardson Papers, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin).

18 Because Charles Ducorroy figures in the final, unfinished chapter-volume, *March Moonlight*, the relationship between him and Miriam is sketchily drawn. But she apparently cares a great deal for him, more than she is willing to admit to caring for any other man. She thinks, "Only when I am with others does my sense of isolation return. To last, if they are right who declare that the state of being deeply in love endures for exactly five years, for exactly another three. Until this autumn of 1915, I shall still be alone with Charles" (4: 656-657).

19 The term chapter-volume is Richardson's own designation for the individual novels that comprise *Pilgrimage* ("Data for Spanish Publisher" 19).

20 For an analysis of Miriam's relationships with Amabel and Jean, see Hanscombe's *The Art of Life*. 
Chapter Two
Contracting and Expanding Toward a Feminine Self

Like Miriam Henderson, the women of Woolf's novels are constructed within the late-Victorian middle class and receive two contradictory messages: identity depends on an independent self; femininity depends on a merging self. This contradiction creates a dilemma for them, for the self-effacement and dispersal required of the feminine self lead to a sense of self-loss. This dilemma is played out in Woolf's representation of women as diverse as Rachel Vinrace, Jinny, and Lucy Swithin, but in particular of Mrs. Dalloway and Mrs. Ramsay. Their class positions, more stable than Miriam's, place them more firmly within the social practices demanding a merging self. This difference is reflected in particular in Woolf's representation of the last two characters, which limits them to social positions allowing for spiritual rather than material pilgrimages in which they contract to protect a core self and expand to disperse a "social" self in response to the contradictory demands of their own identities and their societal roles. Despite the individual motives of Mrs. Dalloway and Mrs. Ramsay, the distinctions between contraction and expansion sometimes dissolve so that both movements reveal a basis in the cultural construction of the two women.

Consequently, although these movements seem to gesture toward emancipation, they illustrate the women's situation within and complicity with social definitions of gender and class and, in some instances, contribute to the reproduction of these definitions. With the representation of Lily Briscoe, Woolf suggests a definition of the self that begins to move beyond the cultural prescriptions for the feminine.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, the identity dilemma is figured in Clarissa's sense of her lack of "something central which permeated," an image which also characterizes
some of Woolf's other women and (as I will demonstrate in a later chapter) her narrative technique. The "something central" is warm and breaks "up surfaces" and ripples "the cold contact of man and woman, or of women together" (46). This something must be essential, at the center of the self, yet it must diffuse, spread outward. The image is problematic, for once the "something central" has permeated, it is no longer central. It suggests, moreover, a reliance on an essential self which transcends material circumstances. The something central permeates or passes through the boundaries enclosing and composing it. If these boundaries are the material circumstances constituting the self, then this image suggests that the something central, the essential self can avoid situation in a particular historical and social milieu and move beyond or transcend these boundaries. Moreover, it suggests a bifurcation of the self into a self that has a material existence and performs the actions necessary to function within the material world and an essential self that is extra-material and escapes the demands of this world. This image expresses the contradictory gestures made by Mrs. Dalloway and Mrs. Ramsay, who strive to protect an "essential" self even as they disperse it to accommodate others' needs. These gestures are further complicated because the women perceive them as means for achieving emancipation from the strictures placed on them by their society. On the contrary, these gestures demonstrate how firmly situated within the hegemony of their society these women actually are. The polarity of contraction and expansion breaks down, and the images take on a plurality of conflicting meanings. For Mrs. Dalloway, contraction protects the self even as it induces guilt over an abdication of duties; expansion fulfills these duties, but seems to allow for a transcendence of them. For Mrs. Ramsay, contraction and expansion are not counter movements but systolic-diastolic movements which
function principally to meet the demands of others. In both novels, in fact, contraction and expansion yield identical results. Both movements suggest preservation of the self and diffusion of the self.

Although Clarissa, in rejecting Peter for Richard, appears to be choosing contraction over expansion, to be preserving the thing that matters, the privacy of the soul, she links her identity to her position as Mrs. Dalloway. According to her, she chooses Richard over Peter because marriage to Richard would not carry the threat of the loss of "one's independence, one's self-respect—something, after all priceless" (181). Marriage should allow "a little licence, a little independence . . . between people living together day in day out in the same house." She recognizes that marriage to Peter would not afford this independence: with him "everything had to be shared; everything gone into" (10). Yet, in her life with Richard, she appears unable to sustain her independence:

She had the oddest sense of being herself invisible; unseen; unknown; there being no more marrying, no more having of children now, but only this astonishing and rather solemn progress with the rest of them, up Bond Street, this being Mrs. Dalloway; not even Clarissa any more; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway. (14)

Clarissa envisions herself now, at fifty, as devoid of the illusory independence she had as Clarissa Parry choosing a husband and of the social importance she had as a potential mother. Instead she recognizes herself as subsumed into her social role as the wife of Richard Dalloway and, consequently, "invisible." This sense of self loss underlies Clarissa's contractions and expansions, and the diamond problematically images both movements.

The diamond represents, for Clarissa, a contraction of the self, which she views paradoxically as preservation of both an essential self and a socially
defined self. This view contradictorily depicts the contraction into the diamond as a movement simultaneously of resistance and complicity. Clarissa visualizes her self as a diamond when she looks into her mirror. She recognizes in her face "the same imperceptible contraction. . . . That was her self--pointed; dartlike; definite." This "self" is her response to "some call on her to be her self," some demand that she draw "the parts together," some occasion like her party. Clarissa sees this drawing together as the contraction of "incompatible" parts "composed so for the world only into one centre, one diamond, one woman who sat in her drawing-room and made a meeting point, a radiancy no doubt in some dull lives" (55). The ambiguous placement of the adverb "only" extends its meaning backward and forward in the sentence: Clarissa's self is "composed so for the world only"; or Clarissa's self is "composed so" "only into one centre, one diamond." Her contraction of her self into a diamond is, in the first instance, her effort to compose a social self and, in the second instance, her effort to compose any self. Either way, the self she visualizes is constituted within her middle-class culture to fill the prescribed feminine role, to sit in a drawing-room, to create a "meeting point," to radiate outward toward others. 2 Thus, the image of the diamond suggests both contraction, preservation of the integrity of the individual, and expansion, response to the needs of others.

The meaning of the image of the diamond is complicated further by the importance that Clarissa places on it in connection with the Sally Seton of her past. Clarissa associates the diamond image with "the most exquisite moment of her whole life," the moment when Sally kisses her: "she felt that she had been given a present, wrapped up, and told just to keep it, not to look at it--a diamond, something infinitely precious" (52-53). Elizabeth Abel contends that Clarissa's love for Sally "assumes the place of the early female bond
unrepresented within the narrative," unrepresented because Clarissa's childhood is omitted and is suggested only in the undramatized loss of her mother and sister (32-34). Sally, the representative mother, metaphorically gives Clarissa the diamond, which for Clarissa, represents her essential self and for critic Emily Jensen is "Clarissa's real self." Jensen parallels Septimus' suicide with Clarissa's symbolic destruction of her "real self" in denying her love for Sally by marrying Richard (177-178). As Jensen and Abel both suggest, the love between Sally and Clarissa is a potentially subversive and emancipatory moment interrupted by the imposition of heterosexual authority in the persons of Peter Walsh and Joseph Breitkopf (Jensen 165-166; Abel 31-33). However, this diamond self, despite its suggestion of the pre-Oedipal bond and its emancipatory potential, is already constituted within the cultural definition of the feminine. Clarissa sees her self contracted into the diamond as covering over the "incompatible" parts of her self, "the other sides of her--faults, jealousies, vanities, suspicions," which she finds "utterly base." It is constituted to efface socially unacceptable aspects of the self and to serve others by providing "a refuge for the lonely to come to" (55). Moreover, it comes from Sally Seton, whom one might characterize, in Foucault's terms, as a point of resistance who compromises and becomes a "support" in the relations of power which determine class and gender definitions (History of Sexuality, Vol. I 95-96). In spite of her youthful resistance, her socialist and feminist ideas, she becomes Lady Rosseter, wife of a Manchester mill owner and mother of five sons. In other words, she not only complies with the dominant definitions of gender and class, but also reproduces them. In addition, the diamond image recalls Woolf's own "social side," which she identifies as "a piece of jewellery" inherited from her mother (Diary 2: 250). The diamond image, then, represents Clarissa's feminine self, a
legacy from the mother, who is complicit in perpetuating the ideology of femininity.

Clarissa also associates the diamond, the "something infinitely precious," with Septimus' "treasure" that he carries to his death, and she sees his action as potentially emancipatory (281). However, this association is also problematic because Septimus' resistance ends in death. Septimus' "treasure" is the "thing there was that mattered.... This he had preserved." But Clarissa recognizes that this treasure is "wreathed about with chatter, defaced, obscured in her own life, let drop every day in corruption, lies, chatter" (280). In her experience, this essential something is continually corrupted by contact with the external world so that it has become not the "something infinitely precious," but the memory of it. The treasure which Septimus takes to his death represents, for Clarissa, a self which can only be preserved unviolated in death. She perceives that preservation of this essential self, of this treasure appears possible only if the self can transcend its material circumstances, and she recognizes that such transcendence is impossible in her own life. The diamond comes to suggest contraction at its most extreme, death. At the same time, though, the diamond has become for Clarissa her self radiating out to others, the feminine self dispersing outward to fulfill the needs of others, to create a refuge from dull existence in the form of a party. The association of the diamond with Septimus' treasure compounds Clarissa's dilemma: an essential self untouched by material conditions exists only in death; in life, the self is immured in its material circumstances.

In addition, although Clarissa seems to desire contraction in her association of her self with the diamond image and her approval of Septimus' taking it to his death, she seems also to perceive contraction as a withdrawal from and an
abdication of her duties. Perhaps for this reason, the apparent movement of contraction represented in the composition of the self into the diamond shape is preliminary to the expansive movement of giving the party, of presenting oneself in society. This movement recalls the image of the "something central which permeated" and which Clarissa sees herself as lacking (46). Nevertheless, she is aware of the separate lives of individuals, which she considers "a waste," "a pity": "she felt if only they could be brought together; so she did it. And it was an offering; to combine, to create." She sees her ability to bring people together in a party as "her gift. Nothing else had she of the slightest importance; could not think, write, even play the piano" (185). She has no other accomplishment; her "gift" is her exemplary performance of the feminine role. In other words, she is culturally constructed to relate to others and provide the opportunity for them to relate to each other through her. Peter sees this gift as "a natural instinct," as something innate to "women of her sort" (117). Rather than being a natural, innate quality, Clarissa's gift is constituted through the social practices of her class. In Peter's view, the parties are all for Richard. Although this assumption probably arises from Peter's jealousy, his identification of Richard's crucial position is correct. Clarissa exercises her gift in fulfillment of her role as the wife of a member of parliament. Her own reflections substantiate, at least partially, Peter's view.

Clarissa closely links her identity to her social functions, which require expansion of the self, and although she doubts the value of these functions, any perceived failures in them threaten her sense of self. She thinks it "silly" that she wants to please people and that she acts to "make people think this or that" (13-14). Nevertheless, she agonizes over her suspicions that her party is "going to be a failure: a complete failure" (254). Moreover, she is conscious of having
failed Richard "on the river beneath the woods at Clievedon . . . then at Constantinople" (46). These failures, which she associates with "some contraction of this cold spirit" (46), seem sexual in nature, but they are also connected in her thoughts with social failures preventing her from being included in Lady Bruton's lunch parties (178). Even Richard recognizes that Lady Bruton considers Clarissa one of those "women who often got in their husbands' way, prevented them from accepting posts abroad, and had to be taken to the seaside in the middle of the session to recover from influenza" (160). Clarissa's "contraction of this cold spirit," her failure to expand to fulfill her social functions results in a kind of enforced contraction: the knowledge that she has been excluded from Lady Bruton's invitation makes her feel "herself suddenly shrivelled, aged, breastless," bereft of her youthful beauty and sexuality necessary to nurture and serve Richard (46, 45). This enforced contraction cannot provide protection for an essential self and instead highlights the dependence of Clarissa's perception of her self on her social role as Richard's wife. Failures in this role lead to a sense of self loss.

Clarissa's transcendental theory of the self, which both compensates for and arises from this sense of self loss, figures the expansive movement of the feminine self. She theorizes that each individual, rather than being completely autonomous, is "completed" by other individuals and places. All people, even ones who are unaquainted with each other, share "[o]dd affinities," so that to know "any one, one must seek out the people who completed them; even the places" (231). These affinities allow one to overcome the oblivion of death, to achieve a kind of immortality. According to Clarissa, people transcend death, living on "in each other," part of their surroundings. She sees herself as "part of people she had never met; being laid out like a mist between the people she
knew best, who lifted her on their branches as she had seen the trees lift the
mist, but it spread ever so far, her life, herself” (12). Clarissa’s expanding self,
in terms of her transcendental theory, seeks to avoid situation by making
connections beyond her particular circumstances. But this expansion
recapitulates the ideology of the feminine self.

The relevance of the social definition of the feminine in the formation of
Clarissa’s theory is emphasized in the images that she and Septimus share. They
both feel themselves connected to the trees. Clarissa contends that she lives on
in other people and things, "she being part, she was positive, of the trees at
home" (12). Septimus sees the trees beckoning to him, and "the leaves being
connected by millions of fibres with his own body," he shares in the statement
that they make (32). For Clarissa and Septimus, though, the shared image has
different meanings. Clarissa’s connection with the trees, according to her
transcendental theory, completes her self. Septimus’ connection with trees
means he is going "mad"; he sees it as the herald of "the birth of a new
religion" (33). This image also indexes the cultural prescriptions for femininity
and masculinity: women should be relational; men should be autonomous.
Clarissa should define her self in terms of others. But Septimus' "madness"
stimets in part from his self definition in terms of his relationship with Evans, his
officer, which is cut short by Evans’ death. Septimus' "manliness" mandates
that he accept the death with stoicism: "Septimus, far from showing any emotion
or recognising that here was the end of a friendship, congratulated himself upon
feeling very little and very reasonably. The War had taught him. It was
sublime" (130). Yet he panics because he realizes "that he could not feel," not
grief for Evans, not love for Rezia (131). Septimus’ perceived connection with
the trees compensates for his inability to grieve for Evans; Clarissa's connection
compensates for her sense of self loss. Septimus' connection goes against his social definition as masculine; Clarissa's complies with her social definition as feminine. Consequently, Septimus' identification with the trees is interpreted, according to the codes of the society in which he lives, as an aberration, whereas Clarissa's identification with inanimate objects is seen as acceptable and interpreted, by some critics, as emancipatory.

For example, Jean Wyatt sees this and other instances of Clarissa's merging as affirmation of "a sense of self in flux," of "a diffuse self" able "to merge with what is outside." This "capacity for opening up to identification and fusion reveals," according to Wyatt, "revolutionary and renewing powers" (115). Far from being revolutionary, though, Clarissa's merging duplicates the social definition of the feminine self as relational. A diffuse self is inscribed in the ideology of the feminine. Clarissa's transcendental theory of the self seems, then, a logical extension of the cultural prescription of the feminine role. If a woman spends her life parceling out her self to meet the needs of others, she would take special comfort in a theory that defines the individual in terms of his or her relations to others. For Clarissa, this theory mitigates not only the finality of death but also the sense of loss stemming from the dispersal of one's self. Nonetheless, her imagined self, freed from the material circumstances binding it and connected spiritually with others, resembles her culturally constituted self, embedded in the material circumstances composing it and connected emotionally with others.

Whereas Clarissa seems, albeit unsuccessfully, to resist definition within culturally constructed femininity, Mrs. Ramsay, of To the Lighthouse, is represented as unquestioning in her acceptance of this femininity, indeed, as revelling in it. She seems to see her expansion and contraction as the natural
state of woman. She expands "naturally" to meet the needs of others and contracts only in moments when her services are not in demand. However, like Mrs. Dalloway, she attempts to maintain a private self untouched by her material circumstances and believes that she transcends these circumstances through dissemination of her self into the lives of others. As with Mrs. Dalloway's, her expansions and contractions, figured in the images of a sponge, a closing flower, a wedge shape, and a dinner party, are rooted in the cultural definitions of the feminine prevalent in her time. But these images suggest that she is more complicit than Mrs. Dalloway. Moreover, her movements, more actively than Mrs. Dalloway's, support and reproduce the social definitions of class and gender in particular in her dinner party.

Moments of expansion and contraction alternate for Mrs. Ramsay in such a way that they seem to form a single movement, a systolic-diastolic movement in which contractions precede and follow expansions and represent an emptying out of the self. One metaphor describing her expansion represents her as "a sponge sopped full of human emotions" (51). Her self contracts like a dried sponge until others come "to her, naturally, since she was a woman, all day long with this and that; one wanting this, another that"; then her self expands to absorb their emotions, their needs. For her, this expansion is natural, her natural reaction as a woman and the natural reaction of others to her as a woman. Unlike Clarissa's contraction, which attempts to preserve an essential self, Mrs. Ramsay's contraction suggests an absence or lack filled only by an expansion which opens up a self responsive to others' selves. Mrs. Ramsay sees herself as "a sponge sopped full of human emotions" following her husband's verbal assault against what he perceives as her irrational persistence in believing that a trip to the lighthouse is possible. Her silent acquiescence to his view modulates
his anger and prompts him, "[v]ery humbly," to defer to her and to suggest consulting the Coastguards. Her unspoken condemnation of his behavior is thus short-lived and quickly replaced by feelings of reverence for him and deprecation for herself: "There was nobody she reverenced more. She was not good enough to tie his shoe strings, she felt" (51). She expands to sop up his humility and his criticism of her. As a consequence, she relieves him of his unpleasant emotions and, at the same time, adopts his view of her, thereby both dispersing and effacing her self.

Mrs. Ramsay also imagines her self expanding to assuage Mr. Ramsay's feelings of failure, to give him the sympathy necessary to restore him to "the circle of life" (59). She sees her self surrounding and protecting him, and the imagined action leaves "scarcely a shell of herself left for her to know herself by; all was so lavished and spent" (60). She disseminates her self, her personality, leaving an empty shell, a void where a self should be, and immediately, she contracts, folds in upon herself in a movement resembling a flower closing: "one petal closed in another, and the whole fabric fell in exhaustion upon itself" (60-61). This exhaustion is "an exquisite abandonment" which simultaneously evokes feelings of sexual and maternal satisfaction (61). The movement of expansion/contraction both depletes and fulfills her. Because she identifies her self in relation to others, her self is fleshed out by her responsiveness to their needs. The dispersal of her self, the fulfillment of her culturally constructed role to serve as care giver to her husband and as reflector of a positive image of him, causes feelings of ecstasy that seem to fulfill her own needs, like her need to nurture and gratify others, in other words, her need to feel needed.
The one moment of contraction which seems to protect and preserve an essential self, the contraction into the "wedge-shaped core of darkness," yields to a moment of expansion, the attachment to the lighthouse, which suggests the extent of Mrs. Ramsay's situation within the cultural definition of the feminine. The moment of contraction comes after the children have gone to prepare for dinner and bed: "now she need not think about anybody. She could be herself, by herself" (95). Again, contraction follows a period of expansion, in this case to care for the needs of her youngest child, James. But in contrast to the contraction following the confrontation with Mr. Ramsay, she sees this contraction as revealing her private self. Minow-Pinkney praises Mrs. Ramsay's transcendence of the personal, of the material by "shedding all attachments" and becoming the "wedge-shaped core of darkness" (96). In contrast, Patricia Waugh, who reads the novel through object-relations theory, sees this collapse into the nothingness of the wedge shape as a consequence of Mrs. Ramsay's total dependence on others for "self-definition" and thus not "a positive visionary alternative to the imperial ego," but "a product of the same repressive and oppressive social system" (105). Although I disagree with her valorization of the relational ego, I find Waugh's argument in this case more compelling than Minow-Pinkney's, for this contraction, like the contracting of the petals of the flower, suggests a self culturally constructed to draw identity in relation to others. More problematically, though, this movement suggests an attempt to replicate what Waugh refers to as "the imperial ego," a unified, transcendental self. Mrs. Ramsay's thoughts suggest that she believes in a self beyond her situation as mother, wife, and hostess, an essential or true self, which contrasts with one that does "[a]ll the being and the doing, expansive, glittering, vocal, evaporated" (95). Only by relinquishing associations with others and "[I]osing
personality" is she able to reach this self, and "[n]ot as oneself" is it possible to reach "this peace, this rest, this eternity" (96). Her distinction between the "wedge-shaped core of darkness" and the self that does "the being and doing," the self that functions in the material world of children, husband, and society, suggests a bifurcation of the self into something central, an essential self transcending situation, and a situated self.

This essential self, resembling Mrs. Dalloway's "something central which permeated," moves to expand and merge with something outside: "she looked out to meet that stroke of the Lighthouse, . . . for watching . . . in this mood always at this hour one could not help attaching oneself to one thing especially of the things one saw" (96-97). When alone, she leans "to inanimate things; trees, streams, flowers; felt they expressed one; felt they became one; felt they knew one, in a sense were one" (97). This movement recapitulates the culturally constructed movement to disperse the self or to merge the self to meet the demands of others. Mrs. Ramsay cannot sustain the independence provided by this moment in which no demands are made of her. Instead, she feels compelled to relate, in this case, to an object. Her union with the lighthouse also recalls Mrs. Dalloway's transcendental theory of the self. This movement seems no more emancipatory than Mrs. Dalloway's because, like hers, it is grounded in the ideology of the feminine inscribing her as relational. Neither woman can escape her situation within her middle-class culture; each continues to define her self in relation even in the absence of others.

As in Mrs. Dalloway, the dinner party in To the Lighthouse is an extended moment of expansion cited by many critics as a celebration of woman's art. This view recapitulates the conventional perception of an essential femininity relegating women to the production of art which is essentially different from
men's art and specifically domestic in nature. In an article that does not valorize "feminine art," Bill Martin discusses the dinner party in terms of domestic power relations and contends that it foregrounds the domestic (inhabited by "servants, children, and wives") which is usually background and silent; consequently, the dinner party deconstructs the hierarchy of the unitary (male) voice (311). But it is also possible to see the party as a site of power relations in which the relationship of forces upholds conventional gender and class positions and preserves the hegemony of the family. The party includes points of resistance manifested in the gestures of Mrs. Ramsay and some of the guests, but it functions as part of the power network of the middle class society in which they live.

At the center of the party is Mrs. Ramsay, who is both subject to power and the vehicle for power, who is both a point of resistance and a point of support for power. Her resistance takes the form of a feeling of weariness, a momentary contraction, "a sense of being past everything, through everything, out of everything," which stems from a perception that the life ahead of Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle has somehow slipped away from her. "They had that," some nameless prospect, and "she, only this--an infinitely long table and plates and knives," a life reduced to never ending domestic concerns (125). In her weariness, she doubts her love for her husband and perfunctorily performs her duties as hostess. But so strong is the cultural requirement that those at the table form a congenial group that she rechannels her resistance and moves to expand: "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." Accepting the cultural definitions of the feminine as flowing and merging
and of the masculine as separate and self-contained, she judges men, "without hostility," as inadequate to the task and exercises power to rectify the situation; "giving herself the little shake that one gives a watch that has stopped, the old familiar pulse began beating, as the watch begins ticking" (1126). Her contraction yields to expansion and, like systole followed by diastole, her pulse revives and allows her to resume her role; she exercises her power as hostess. This power helps produce the social practices maintaining class and gender hierarchies. In this sense, she and her dinner party become part of the power network determining gender definitions and class positions.

Mrs. Ramsay envisions a power network but mistakenly sees herself as having no part in its construction. The power network is, for her, the "admirable fabric of the masculine intelligence, which ran up and down, crossed this way and that, like iron girders spanning the swaying fabric, upholding the world, so that she could trust herself to it utterly" (159). She finds rest in "the still space that lies about the heart of things," which suggests a place of refuge from the dominant strategies of power (158). The position of rest precedes a sinking movement down onto the network woven from "what at the other end of the table her husband was saying" and "fabricated" continually in the conversation of the men (159). She assumes that the network sustains her and that she can hide in the spaces between the netting. But as Foucault suggests, "there are no spaces of primal liberty between the meshes of its network" (Power/Knowledge 142). Moreover, she is herself engaged in weaving a power network. As she leaves the dining room, she thinks "how, wound about in their hearts, however long they lived she would be woven" (170). Her network is woven not from intelligent conversation but from the needs of the individuals in her sphere, which she senses with her eyes, "so clear that they seemed to go
round the table unveiling each of these people, and their thoughts and their
feelings, without effort like a light stealing under water so that its ripples and the
reeds in it and the minnows balancing themselves, and the sudden trout are all lit
up hanging, trembling" (170, 160). Unveiling their thoughts with her gaze, or at
least what she expects their thoughts to be, she wields her power to satisfy their
needs, as she perceives them. Lily experiences Mrs. Ramsay's power and
recognizes it as "frightening" and "irresistible. Always she got her own way in
the end, Lily thought. . . . She put a spell on them all, by wishing, so simply, so
directly" (152). Mrs. Ramsay wields her power to preserve and propagate the
codes and values of her society, to arrange marriages, to raise feminine
daughters and masculine sons. Her power network is woven into the web of the
larger power network passing through the institutions whose strategies define
gender and class positions.

Mrs. Ramsay's incorporation into the larger power network is reflected in
her position on marriage. Although she recognizes flaws in the institution of
marriage, she never questions the necessity for it or imagines an alternative to it.
Instead, she actively promotes the production of marriages. The knowledge that
Paul and Minta are engaged arouses two emotions for her, "one profound—for
what could be more serious than the love of man for woman, what more
commanding, more impressive, bearing in its bosom the seeds of death; at the
same time these lovers, these people entering into illusion glittering eyed, must
be danced round with mockery, decorated with garlands" (151). Neither
emotion stems from a positive image of marriage. In the first, woman is the
object of man's "love," which is "commanding," "impressive," and potentially
fatal. In the second, both the man and the woman experience an illusion. But
Mrs. Ramsay seems unaware of the implications of this negative view of
marriage and sees Minta and Paul's engagement as requiring celebration. Mrs. Ramsay recognizes her own illusion concerning her husband: "She could not understand how she had ever felt any emotion or affection for him" (125). And she sees the physical toll that her marriage has cost her and feels, when she looks in her mirror, "a little resentful that she had grown old, perhaps, by her own fault. (The bill for the greenhouse and all the rest of it.)" (149). Despite her recognition of the illusion of marriage and its dangers for women, she encourages the courtship of Paul and Minta and plots to match Lily and William. Moreover, she relishes what she sees as Prue's awakening to the possibility of love between men and women manifested in Minta's happiness: "speaking to Prue in her own mind, You will be as happy as she is one of these days. You will be much happier, she added, because you are my daughter, she meant; her own daughter must be happier than other people's daughters" (165). Mrs. Ramsay's resistance causes her not to reject the dominant strategies but only to imagine a better position for her daughter within them. In other words, she sees the flaws in her own marriage, but does not see them as dependent on flaws within the institution of marriage itself. Her resistance yields to compromise because her position within the institution of marriage affords her power and knowledge that she cannot resist. Consequently, she becomes a support for the power network that in turn supports the institution and defines the gender positions within it.

The resistance and compromise of three guests, William Bankes, Charles Tansley, and Lily Briscoe, who are on the margin of the Ramsay's upper middle-class society, underscore the integration of Mrs. Ramsay's network into the larger power network, for they direct their resistance at her power as representative of the domestic sphere and compromise their resistance because of
the seductiveness of this power. William Bankes, marginal because he is a widower, with no children, living in lodgings, consistently declines Mrs. Ramsay's dinner invitations because he sees such dinners as a waste of his time. The interruptions of the maid serving food and of the children arriving late annoy him; he would prefer to eat alone and return quickly to his work. Nevertheless, he accepts this particular invitation and performs his role as guest "preserving a demeanour of exquisite courtesy" (133). He concedes that he must talk, must be sociable; his non-participation in the conversation would be treacherous: "Unless he were very careful, [Mrs. Ramsay] would find out this treachery of his; that he did not care a straw for her, and that would not be at all pleasant, he thought. So he bent his head courteously in her direction" (135).
He tacitly agrees to participate in the polite conversation of the party because he loves and reveres Mrs. Ramsay (151); he perceives her as the ideal woman, beautiful, but unaware of her beauty, and capable of creating a stable, peaceful refuge from the harsh disorder of the public sphere. For him, she represents order: "the sight of her reading a fairy tale to her boy had upon him precisely the same effect as the solution of a scientific problem, so that he rested in contemplation of it, and felt, as he felt when he had proved something absolute about the digestive system of plants, that barbarity was tamed, the reign of chaos subdued" (74). He invests her with a paradoxically natural power to impose peace and harmony over natural disorder and to bring civilization, in the form of a perfect Boeuf en Daube, to an otherwise uncivilized world.

The grandson of a fisherman and son of a chemist, Charles Tansley's marginal standing stems from his position in the gap between the working class and the middle class. His lower-middle-class background has provided him with the values of the middle class (values of work and education), but not with the
mannerisms necessary to function comfortably in social situations. Moreover, in Mrs. Ramsay's view, he is not marriageable: "no woman would look at him with Paul Rayley in the room" (156). Mr. Tansley both desires to be "alone in his room working . . . among his books" and to be able "to say something to Mrs. Ramsay, something which would show her that he was not just a dry prig" (131). Instead, he is openly rude to Lily Briscoe in his attempts to assert his own identity. Like Mr. Bankes, he participates out of a desire to please Mrs. Ramsay, whose presence at his side fills him with "an extraordinary pride" and whose attentions to him reflect an image of him as he would like to be, as "[h]e would like her to see him, gowned and hooded, walking in a procession. A fellowship, a professorship, he felt capable of anything" (25, 20). But he has an additional need to fit into this social scene. He must learn to speak the language of this class because his career aspirations require that he take a place within it. So although he resists, he finally compromises and succumbs to Lily's attentions, which relieve him "of his egotism" and allow him to participate in the polite conversation, even "to enjoy himself" (139, 140).

Lily Briscoe is marginal because she is thirty-three, unattractive, and unmarried; she is a daughter who should by now be a wife and mother. She and the two men are linked by their non-participation in the family structure, by their failure to meet the requirements for heterosexual relationships. In spite of their marginality, however, they cannot escape situation within the power network. Moreover, they are all persuaded to compromise by Mrs. Ramsay's feminine power which exacts adherence to the codes of heterosexual relationships. Lily recognizes this "code of behavior" as mandating an exchange; in exchange for man's physical protection, extravagantly imagined by Lily as a rescue from the burning Tube, woman must protect the ego of man. She understands "that on
occasions of this sort it behoves the woman, whatever her own occupation may
be, to go to the help of the young man opposite so that he may expose and
relieve the thigh bones, the ribs, of his vanity, of his urgent desire to assert
himself" (137). The woman must expand to meet the needs of the man, and at
the party, Mrs. Ramsay, Minta Doyle, and Lily all do their part by expanding to
relieve men, in particular William Bankes, Mr. Ramsay, and Charles Tansley,
of their vanities. In effect, all guests, despite their resistance, prop up the power
strategies at work in the party, strategies which place men, whether or not they
are educated, in positions of dominance over women, strategies which enforce
domestic, heterosexual relationships and marginalize those who fail to develop
them, and strategies which determine who sits at the dinner table and who serves
the dinner. And William, Charles, and Lily compromise because of Mrs.
Ramsay's power drawn from the ideology of the wife/mother, of the nineteenth-
century ideal of the angel in the house, creator of a stable, peaceful refuge from
the harsh disorder of the public sphere.

Lily's resistance and compromise is bound up with her construction within
her middle-class culture, which, given her relative youth, is different from Mrs.
Ramsay's. Nevertheless, her perception of Mrs. Ramsay and of their
relationship is a strong force motivating her to compromise. Lily's perception
casts Mrs. Ramsay as the mother with whom she seeks pre-Oedipal intimacy and
who champions the cultural status quo. Elizabeth Abel notes Lily's infantile
need both for fusion with and separation from the mother (68-69).8 From Mrs.
Ramsay, Lily wants "unity . . . not inscriptions on tablets, nothing that could be
written in any language known to men, but intimacy itself" (79). Yet she also
wants to assert her own identity, "her own exemption from the universal law,"
her own single life and her art (77). Lily struggles against the strong pull of the
ideology of heterosexual love and marriage, espoused by Mrs. Ramsay, who believes as an indisputable fact that "an unmarried woman has missed the best of life" (77). Although Lily asserts herself by laughing at Mrs. Ramsay's "presiding with immutable calm over destinies which she completely failed to understand," she allows that love and marriage are "necessary" (78, 155). She also seems to accept as necessary the role that Mrs. Ramsay plays to merge and unify the guests at the table: she notes with relief Mrs. Ramsay's pity for William Bankes and her consequent expansion to launch into her role as hostess (127). Lily even attempts to duplicate, in her painting, Mrs. Ramsay's ability to make "of the moment something permanent" (241). So she seems both to want to accept the definition of the feminine, epitomized in Mrs. Ramsay, as necessary for the continuity of the culture but to want to redefine it for herself.

With Lily, Woolf modifies the representation of the movements of expansion. Although Lily expands to provide the means for Mr. Tansley's (temporary) entrance into the society of the party, she does so with reluctance and regret. Admitting that she expects Mr. Tansley to follow the "code of behavior" and rescue her from the burning Tube in exchange for her attentions to him, she wonders, "But how would it be . . . if neither of us did either of these things? So she sat there smiling" (137). Lily does not rescue Mr. Tansley out of any compulsion to preserve the code. In fact, she sees her behavior as "the usual trick," marked by insincerity, and as an impediment to any genuine relationship between individuals (139). She is instead motivated by the unspoken demands of Mrs. Ramsay, who says "in effect . . . 'I am drowning, my dear, in seas of fire. Unless you apply some balm to the anguish of this hour and say something nice to that young man there, life will run upon the rocks'" (138). Lily responds, "for the hundred and fiftieth time," renounces her experiment,
"what happens if one is not nice to that young man there," and is "nice" (139). Ironically, she draws on the energy stimulated by her work to play her social part: "her spirits rose so high at the thought of painting tomorrow that she laughed out loud at what Mr. Tansley was saying. Let him talk all night if he liked it" (140). She rechannels the energy with which she resists to compromise and defines herself according to the dominant perception of the feminine by expanding to meet the needs of others, in this case, of both Mrs. Ramsay and Mr. Tansley.

In other situations, Lily resists the demand to expand and arrives at a way to relate to men that is "neutral, without that element of sex in it" (254). But in her encounter with Mr. Ramsay in "The Lighthouse," her anguish over her perception of inadequacy obscures her ability to recognize the possibility of a new way to relate. Refusing to play the role of the sympathetic woman induces Lily to perceive herself as "not a woman, but a peevish, ill-tempered, dried-up old maid" (226). She accepts the culturally prescribed definition of woman as merging and consequently, must define herself as something other than woman. When she inadvertently hits upon the one topic of conversation, his boots, that allows them to relate on neutral terms, as human beings rather than bereaved man and sympathetic woman, she discovers feelings of sympathy for him, feelings that come too late to satisfy his need. Her feelings are genuine, not part of a role that she must play, but she perceives his diminished need as a failure on his part to play his role (229-231). She does not seem to recognize the possibility that, at least for a moment, they both have managed to move outside the roles prescribed for them. She does recognize, however, that her relationship with William Bankes exists beyond these roles: "One could talk of painting then seriously to a man. Indeed, his friendship had been one of the
pleasures of her life. She loved William Bankes" (263). The love she feels for him is not the kind that Mrs. Ramsay advocates between men and women, but rather the kind that intellectual equals share.

Woolf also changes the terms of contraction in her representation of Lily, whose movements of contraction, unlike those of Mrs. Dalloway and Mrs. Ramsay, do not involve a protection of a transcendental self, but of a self situated within the material circumstances of work. She contracts from the image of heterosexual love between Paul and Minta, the image on Paul's face of "the heat of love, its horror, its cruelty, its unscrupulosiy" and the image of Minta "exposed to these fangs." She contracts into the solution of her artistic dilemma. "For at any rate, she said to herself, catching sight of the salt cellar on the pattern, she need not marry, thank Heaven: she need not undergo that degradation. She was saved from that dilution. She would move the tree rather more to the middle" (154). This depiction of contraction represents a departure from Woolf's depiction of similar movements by Mrs. Dalloway and Mrs. Ramsay and, unlike theirs, it offers a genuine possibility for emancipation. Lily's "treasure" is not an essential self, like Clarissa's, but "her work" (128).10 Her contraction does not assume the existence of a self capable of avoiding situation within material circumstances; instead, it assumes the possibility of a change of material circumstances, a change involving self-definition based not on a position within the domestic sphere but on one's work.

The definition of the feminine involved in the representation of Lily departs in a positive direction from the representations of Mrs. Dalloway and Mrs. Ramsay, but Lily's experience suggests that such definition is not easy. She must overcome the negative perceptions of others and her own internalization of these perceptions. The most blatantly negative view with which she must
contend is Mr. Tansley's opinion that 'Women can't paint, women can't write.' She recognizes that this comment indicates some need on his part to demean her in order to elevate himself rather than his belief in the ability of women; nonetheless, she cannot entirely discount it. "Why," she thinks, "did her whole being bow, like corn under a wind, and erect itself again from this abasement only with a great and rather painful effort?" (130). His comment affects her so profoundly because Mrs. Ramsay's opinion, though unspoken, is not substantially different. Although Mrs. Ramsay allows that Charles Tansley's work compensates him for his lack of love, she does not consider Lily's painting as possible compensation for her lack (156). The difficulty of defining oneself in terms of work that is disparaged by others is made clear in Lily's absorption of this attitude revealed in her inability to assert her art against Mrs. Ramsay's arguments for marriage. Lily does not dare "to say it, her painting" because that would amount to daring to assert an identity counter to that acceptable in Mrs. Ramsay's society. Lily constantly must face the angel in the house, the voice of the middle-class culture, in others and in herself, and attempt to kill her and the femininity she espouses.

Lily's gestures toward emancipation are more successful than those of Clarissa Dalloway and Mrs. Ramsay, whose movements of contraction and expansion fail to give them any more than temporary, illusory freedom from the strictures of their culture. Lily's material circumstances, like Miriam Henderson's, provide her with a perspective from which to counter the dominant discourses of individualism and femininity and to revise her own internalizations of these discourses. In the sense that her definition of herself is grounded in her work rather than in a transcendental self, she is more successful than Miriam. Lily's emancipation is qualified, however, by her continued position within the
hegemony of the family; she is an unmarried daughter living at home caring for her father. In addition, her art may be little more than an accomplishment; she suspects that her painting will be "hung in the servants' bedrooms" or "rolled up and stuffed under a sofa" (237). One might argue, then, that Lily remains situated within the domestic sphere. As I will show in the next chapter, continual situation within the domestic sphere, specifically in rooms attached to the family structure, poses problems for women who seek freedom to redefine the feminine self.

2 Rachel Bowlby, in her discussion of this scene, notes "the absence of unity behind the centred facade of 'a woman,'" which despite its apparent unity, actually "conceals multiplicity" (*Virginia Woolf: Feminist Destinations* [New York: Blackwell, 1988] 96-97).

3 Roger Poole has argued convincingly that Septimus is not mad in his *The Unknown Virginia Woolf*, 3rd ed. (London: Humanities Press International, 1990). Septimus' problems, according to Poole, are "more theological or philosophical than neurological or physiological" (189).


5 In her book, *The Appropriated Voice: Narrative Authority in Conrad, Forster, and Woolf* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1990), Bette London points out that the voice in the passage on the wedge shaped core of darkness "reveals . . . the layers of cultural constructs that comprise individual identity--comprise not only the surface selves others know us by . . . but also the 'true' self . . . that has, presumably, shed its personality" (139).

6 For example, Phyllis Rose sees both Mrs. Ramsay and Mrs. Dalloway in their roles as "hostesses as versions of artistic creation" (*Woman of Letters: A Life of Virginia Woolf* [New York: Harcourt, 1978] 151). Similarly, Maria
DiBattista views Clarissa's party as an example of "feminine art" (Virginia Woolf's Major Novels: The Fables of Anon [New Haven: Yale UP, 1980] 61). Minow-Pinkney offers the possibility that "the organising of dinner parties" may constitute women's work and suggests that "the novel is justly appreciative of the values that may be achieved" at parties (102). For a different interpretation, based on object-relations theory, see Patricia Waugh, Feminine Fictions: Revisiting the Postmodern (London: Routledge, 1989) 101-105.


8 Abel contends that Lily's painting "restores Mrs. Ramsay and asserts Lily's autonomy" (70). Compare Joan Lidoff, who sees the loss of the mother as only partially resolved. Lily resolves the loss as an artist, but not as a woman because adult sexuality is missing from "her revised vision of female being" ("Virginia Woolf's Feminine Sentence: The Mother-Daughter World of To the Lighthouse," Literature and Psychology 32.3 [1986]: 52-56). See also Jane Lilienfeld, 164-165.

9 Compare Rachel Blau DuPlessis' placement of Lily among other twentieth-century "fictional female artists" who do not follow the model of "male artist heroes of the modern period" in withdrawing from life. Lily creates art that follows the model of Mrs. Ramsay in incorporating "love, grief, and need," but rejects her feminine social duties (Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers [Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985] 97).

10 Sara Ruddick also remarks Lily's "identity as a worker" ("Learning to Live With the Angel in the House," Women's Studies 4 [1977]: 193). However, she emphasizes the importance of Lily's mourning in allowing her "to internalize" "the presence" of Mrs. Ramsay, the angel in the house, to identify "with her as an artist who makes of the moment something permanent" (195, 194).
Chapter Three
Cultural Constructions in a Space of One's Own

The room, as physical enclosure, as image of independence and autonomy, as embodiment of the self, figures prominently in the works of Woolf and Richardson. For the women in works by both writers, the room is sometimes a space to which the self contracts in an attempt to preserve its integrity and, at other times, a space situating the self within a particular culture. The self in the enclosed space is, contradictorily, both an essential self and a situated self. Woolf's most famous room is the one that she argues for in A Room of One's Own. This room, along with rooms in several novels, suggests definitions of the self that contradict and are self-contradictory, such as definitions of the self as centered and fragmented, situated and transcendent. In Pilgrimage, the image of the room underscores a tension between a definition of the self as autonomous and one of it as relational, a tension which parallels Miriam's struggle to define her self within the conflicting ideologies of the individual and the feminine. Woolf's and Richardson's uses of the room image indicate, as do the representations of women in the novels, a grounding in both ideologies, and although this image works to undercut these ideologies, its success depends on the position of the room, outside the family house, and on the self, recognized as situated, within it.

Inner space is frequently identified with women or woman, in works, both critical and creative, by women and men. Gaston Bachelard genders "inhabited space" as feminine by ascribing "maternal" attributes to it: "in our daydreams," he suggests, "the house is a large cradle" in which we begin life "enclosed, protected, all warm in the bosom of the house," "bathed in nourishment" (5, 7). Interestingly, the being that is cradled in the bosom of the house is masculine;
without the house, Bachelard avows, "man would be a dispersed being" (7). Jane Marcus, in Virginia Woolf and the Languages of Patriarchy, pushes the identity between women and inner spaces farther by asserting that "women are their houses." She makes this association in support of her view that "Time Passes," focusing on the empty house, is a "lament for the dead mother" (6). Although Marcus emphasizes the daughter's loss, her view of the maternal house resembles Bachelard's. Patricia Laurence, approaching the image from a feminist perspective, identifies the themes associated with the Victorian house as "confinement, chastity, illness, and marriage" (149). Whereas Bachelard focuses on space as protective, as enveloping and supporting, Laurence suggests that, for women, it can be confining and limiting. Similarly, Carolyn Williams notes the use of the room, specifically in Woolf's writing, as "a metaphor for the social forces that limit women's activity" (58). Elaine Showalter also emphasizes the negative aspects of the image for women, but she differs from Williams in focusing on women enclosing themselves rather than being enclosed. She notes the tendency in women's novels at the turn of the century to identify "the enclosed and secret room" with the womb functioning as a "refuge from the harsh realities and vicious practices of the male world" (33). This movement, "a feminine secession from the political world," does not place the woman within the nurturing space described by Bachelard. Instead, according to Showalter, it makes the room "a tomb" (319). Phil Powrie, focusing on the writing of contemporary French women, notes the shift in the room image from "a trope for confinement and monstrosity," as identified by Showalter in A Literature of Their Own and Gilbert and Gubar in The Madwoman in the Attic, to "a sign of independence and locus of transformation" and "rebirth" (197-198). Richardson
and Woolf gesture toward the latter position in Powrie's scheme, but with only minimal success.

Most critical discussions of the room image share a specific identification of it with the female body and with the spaces within the body. Marcus identifies the room of one's own in Woolf's essay as one of several images of "vaginal creative spaces" with which Woolf responds to "phallocentric culture" (75). In contrast to Bachelard's maternal space, Marcus' is virginal to emphasize the rejection of the cultural imperative to bear children, which Woolf recognized as stifling to many potential women writers (76). Williams also points out Woolf's use of the room as "a metaphor for the female," an analogy that suggests "generative power" (58). Whereas Marcus and, to a certain extent, Williams identify the feminine interior space as fertile ground for creating art and the movement into it as a positive gesture, Showalter contends that the space has lost its fertility in novels written by women in the early twentieth century. The movement toward an inner space becomes, in her view, "a flight from men and from adult sexuality" (33). In her study of Woolf's use of silence, Laurence focuses not on the uterine space, but on the sick female body containing a mind given over to delusions. She discusses Woolf's embodiment of female consciousness in the sick room, "a room that is marginal to a house, a room that is quarantined by Victorian society." She suggests that this marginal space may allow for self-exploration and self-expression: "the female imagination flourishes in this delirium." Although Laurence sees more positive practical possibilities for the self enclosed in the room than Showalter does, she concedes that if the sick room becomes a space for death, the possibilities for self-expression are necessarily temporary (145).
The identification of women with interior spaces, like houses and rooms, is complicated by the fact that most of the interior spaces, including those in which women seek refuge, are owned by men, by fathers, husbands, or brothers. As Gilbert and Gubar point out, women writers, specifically in the nineteenth century, were confined within "the architecture of an overwhelmingly male-dominated society" (xi). Consequently, works by these women enact a drama of enclosure and escape in reaction to their actual social condition of enclosure within men's spaces (83-85). In the novels of Woolf and Richardson, the spaces the women inhabit are still primarily within male-dominated architecture. Nevertheless, some of the women in Woolf's novels and the young Miriam in Pilgrimage seek rather than seek to escape these enclosed spaces. Focusing on Mrs. Dalloway, DiBattista suggests that women's "penetrations into the interior constitute the categorical imperative for the feminine consciousness, perhaps because men have abandoned--or delegated--responsibility for the house and its mysteries to women" (37). I would reformulate DiBattista's interpretation to suggest that women's tendencies to seek interior spaces and to define themselves in terms of interior spaces are grounded in the cultural limitation of women to the domestic sphere. In this sense, as the arguments of Laurence and Gilbert and Gubar on the Victorian house imply, the movement into the private enclosed space becomes a capitulation to the cultural definition of the feminine as contained within the domestic sphere.

For this reason, readings, like Bachelard's and Marcus', that equate the room with the female body or that see the enclosed room as a liberating space seem to me to be problematic. In Woolf's and Richardson's novels, the room as a physical enclosure ostensibly establishes an alternative space in which an essential feminine self is dominant, a private space in which a woman can
engage, without interruptions from domestic and social duties, in intellectual and creative pursuits. The essential feminine self embodied in the rooms supposedly transcends social situation because it is imagined, in terms of the discourse of individualism, as autonomous and self-realizing. However, individualism positions women within the discourse of domesticity, defining the feminine self as relational and self-denying. Most of Woolf's rooms and some of Richardson's recapitulate this relegation of women to domesticity because the rooms are either situated within the family house or funded by the family patriarch or his substitutes. Consequently, the social practices that support the dominant ideology infiltrate these spaces, sometimes through physical invasion by its representatives, both male and female, but, more threateningly, through the women's internalization of the vigilance enforcing this ideology. Although many of the rooms in Pilgrimage escape situation within the family structure, Miriam charges them with the power to protect an essential, untouched transcendental self, a power which they invariably fail to possess. The only woman's room in the works of either writer that offers the possibility for genuine emancipation, or in Powrie's terms, becomes "a sign of independence and locus of transformation" (198), is Mary Datchet's, in Night and Day, because it recognizes the self as situated: it does not function as a shelter for an imagined essential self imbricated in ideology but, instead, provides a link between the public and private spheres, a place from which the woman can enter the world of work to gain financial independence.²

The equivocal nature of the room image in Woolf's writing dates back to her youth and her own room at Hyde Park Gate. This room, which had been the nursery and was redone especially for the adolescent Virginia Stephen, consisted of two sides, a space for sleeping, with a bed, washstand, and mirror and a
space for reading and writing, with a wicker chair and a writing table. In "A Sketch of the Past," Woolf describes the two sides of the room in conflict:

Which should I describe first—the living half of the room, or the sleeping half? They must be described separately; yet they were always running together. How they fought each other; that is, how often I was in a rage in that room; and in despair; and in ecstasy; how I read myself into a trance of perfect bliss; then in came—Adrian, George, Gerald, Jack, my father. . . . I was thinking; feeling; living; those two lives that the two halves symbolized with the intensity, the muffled intensity, which a butterfly or moth feels when with its sticky tremulous legs and antennae it pushes out of the chrysalis and emerges and sits quivering beside the broken case for a moment; its wings still creased; its eyes dazzled, incapable of flight. (Moments of Being 123-124)

Woolf identifies the space in which she reads and studies as "the living half," the half in which she knows the "perfect bliss" of learning. The other side, "the sleeping half," is the site of such daily exercises of living as washing, dressing, and sleeping, during which, as Woolf suggests, an essential part of her self sleeps. Her half-brother George Duckworth dominates this half of the room as it is physically dominated by the large mirror he gave her "in the hope," she notes, "that I should look into it and learn to do my hair and take general care for my appearance" (122). This mirror links the sleeping half to the social duties required of her as a marriageable daughter. Although her half-sister Stella, the original owner of the writing table, seems to preside in the living side, George's presence is felt there too because he paid for the renovation of the entire room. Moreover, he and the other brothers, the brother-in-law, and the father may intrude into the living side at any time and interrupt the bliss of reading.3 Phyllis Rose suggests that the two sides of the room symbolize Woolf's bifurcated self: "one-half well-bred young lady, a body to be dressed up and put on display for the marriage market, and one-half intellectual, a mind to be
nourished and trained" (29). But despite Woolf's suggestions of the existence of an essential self, she seems to recognize that the self cannot be split in her description of the two sides "always running together," of the life of the mind being interrupted by the demands made upon the mind and the body by the social code. The room is only a partial refuge, for it is within the family house, and like the newly born butterfly "incapable of flight," the self cannot escape situation within social practices enforcing the separation of the spheres, limiting intellectual growth in women, encouraging social development, and mandating marriage, in effect, producing a family hegemony.

The space called for in *A Room of One's Own* offers the possibility of escape from the hegemony of the family, but in practice, escape is more difficult than Woolf suggests. A room of one's own, along with five hundred pounds a year, would, in Woolf's view, link the public and private spheres by making a woman financially independent and giving her an opportunity and a place to write, thereby providing a means of access to the outside world. She insists upon this access when she writes, "when I ask you to earn money and have a room of your own, I am asking you to live in the presence of reality, an invigorating life, it would appear, whether one can impart it or not" (114). This comment supports Marcus' contention that the private space of a room of one's own is not a "retreat." Marcus views it instead as a place in which the woman writer can "put on her armour for her assaults on the public world" ("Thinking Back Through Our Mothers" 5). Elaine Showalter, in contrast, sees this room as "a symbol of psychic withdrawal, an escape from the demands of other people" (286). There Woolf, and other women writers, including Richardson, identified by Showalter as "female aestheticists," retreat to avoid social and sexual engagement (34). Although Showalter's description may apply to the rooms in
the novels, particularly in *Mrs. Dalloway*, the room of one's own, at least in
theory, is not simply a place for withdrawal from participation in material life.
On the other hand, Marcus' military metaphor suggests a more vigorous
involvement in the outside world than the room allows. Woolf's admonishment
"to live in the presence of reality" implies that the room is the necessary private
space in which the writer will assimilate the lessons of "an invigorating life" and
transform them into history, poetry, or fiction. This ideal presents practical
problems, though, when one shifts the focus to obtaining such a space.

It must be private, "a room with a lock on the door," a space apart from the
"common sitting-room" where women are subject to the interruptions associated
with domestic and social duties (109, 69-70). Apparently, the room could be a
space within the family house, a private room granted to the woman by a father
or husband who owns the family house. Or it could be a room paid for by the
woman herself using her five hundred pound a year income or whatever money
she may earn. Woolf's narrator, however, casts doubt on the feasibility of
earning sufficient money to devote time and energy to writing by admitting that
the positions open to women--"reporting a donkey show here or a wedding
there" for a newspaper, "addressing envelopes, reading to old ladies, making
artificial flowers, teaching the alphabet to small children in a kindergarten" (37)-
-offer only a meager living. Sounding like Miriam Henderson reacting to the
jobs that she is forced to accept, the narrator complains of the unpleasantness of
having "always to be doing work that one did not wish to do, and to do it like a
slave, flattering and fawning." Such work may provide a measure of
independence from the domestic sphere, but it also induces "fear and bitterness"
with the power to kill off the gift to create (38). A fixed income of five hundred
pounds a year is by far the preferred means of footing the bill for the room of one's own, but the source of this income is also problematic.

Woolf's narrator's income derives from an inheritance bequeathed her by her aunt, who "died from a fall from her horse when she was riding out to take the air in Bombay" (37). How the aunt got the money is not specified, but it seems likely that it comes, at least indirectly, from the income of some man, a father, husband, or brother, working in the British civil service in India. The narrator probably gains her independence and freedom to write from the profits acquired through British imperialism, making her complicit in the oppression of others even though she may escape direct patriarchal control because it is mediated by her aunt, who passes the money on to her. Her situation (which resembles Woolf's) suggests that the need for an income large enough to provide the independence and comfort necessary to devote oneself to writing limits this vocation to women within the hegemony of the family, women supported by fathers or husbands, or to women of the upper-middle or upper class who have incomes of their own, incomes which directly or indirectly come from fathers. The independence then is qualified by class expectations for proper feminine behavior prohibiting women from entering the public sphere. The alternative situation is Miriam's (and Richardson's), which requires significant sacrifices in order to write at all. Most of the women's rooms in Woolf's works and in Richardson's are represented both as embodying a culturally constructed feminine self and as providing a private space in which this self can break free from cultural construction. Nonetheless, these rooms, because they fall within the hegemony of the family, contradictorily situate the feminine self within the body of late-Victorian middle-class culture defining it as pure, emotional, self-sacrificing, and ultimately inferior to the masculine self.
The attic room in *Mrs. Dalloway* illustrates this contradiction. It is a room of Clarissa's own, but it is an extension of the domestic space provided for her in her husband's house. The room becomes hers at the insistence of her husband and, presumably, on the advice of her doctor to facilitate her recovery from influenza, a detail which links this room to the one that Sir William prescribes for Septimus. Clarissa willingly complies with this decision and spends her nights reading Baron Marbot's account of the retreat from Moscow. In appearance, this room resembles the sleeping side of Woolf's adolescent room. It contains a narrow bed, a dressing-table, a mirror, and a cupboard. The cupboard contains Clarissa's evening dresses, those garments in which she plays her social part as the wife of a politician, a part similar to the one that the young Virginia Stephen would have been expected to take after marriage. The room is the space to which Clarissa retreats to preserve herself from the assaults of the external world. Minow-Pinkney calls it the "secret space within the self" wherein lies Clarissa's "total rejection of the masculine ego which constitutes this society" (66). However, the practical consequences of this rejection are limited. As DiBattista observes, the room is not a place for self-assertion in spite of Clarissa's "undisputed hegemony"; instead the bed and mirror symbolically suggest "self-abnegation" and "self-contemplation" (37). Moreover, Richard's "undisputed hegemony" over the property of the house places Clarissa's hegemony over her attic room in dispute. Her hegemony over this internal space is, like her autonomy over her self, conditionally granted through her position within the hegemony of marriage and family.

Clarissa's belief in the value of the internal space draws support from the apparent autonomy of the old woman in the adjacent house. However, the scenes between Clarissa and the woman undercut her perspective. She thinks of
the woman in contrast to the threat she sees posed by Miss Kilman and all she represents. Clarissa associates Miss Kilman with the "cruelest things in the world," "love and religion." For Clarissa, love and religion are "clumsy, hot, domineering, hypocritical, eavesdropping, jealous, infinitely cruel and unscrupulous" (191). As she watches the old lady climb the stairs in the house opposite, she sees her as emblematic of "the privacy of the soul," something to be "respected" (192, 191). Clarissa often watches her and recognizes that the woman is "quite unconscious that she [is] being watched" (192). As Clarissa observes the old woman, her thoughts assert, "Did she not wish everybody merely to be themselves?" (191). Despite her disclaimers, Clarissa herself is being "hypocritical," "eavesdropping," and "unscrupulous." Her actions reveal her part in the domineering, panoptical community which constantly violates "the privacy of the soul." As the old woman moves about her bedroom, the space that should be most private, Clarissa watches her, following her movements "from chest of drawers to dressing-table," watches her "quite quietly, going to bed," watches her, even after the woman has drawn her blind, until she puts out her light (193, 283). The old woman is also complicit in this panopticism; when Clarissa retreats from the social space of the party after hearing the news of the suicide, she discovers the old woman staring "straight at her" from her window opposite (283). The old woman watching Clarissa watching her stresses the all pervasive power of society to control through its intervention into apparently internal spaces like the room in which Clarissa takes refuge. The old woman and Clarissa participate in the power identified by Foucault in Discipline and Punish as "the vigilance of intersecting gazes." They become part of "the panoptic machine, invested by its effects of power, which we bring to ourselves since we are part of its mechanism" (217). Clarissa's
complicity in the invasion of "the privacy of the soul," her surveillance of the old woman in her private space, her bedroom, underscores the futility of Clarissa's own attempts to retreat from the external world through the contraction of her self into the interior space of her own bedroom within the hegemony of the family.

Clarissa's complicity rests on her internalization of the discipline producing women according to particular middle-class codes. She internalizes the surveillance enforcing these codes, represented in the old woman's gaze, and becomes self-vigilant, "the principle of [her] own subjection" (Foucault, Discipline and Punish 202-203). The strength of these codes is suggested in the repetition of "must": "Women must put off their rich apparel. At midday they must disrobe"; "she must sleep undisturbed"; "she must also write" (45, 46, 56). More significantly, her memories of the past, particularly of Sally Seton and their youthful radicalism, indicate her acceptance of what Adrienne Rich has identified as compulsory heterosexuality (140-145). Recalling her passion for Sally, she notes that it means "absolutely nothing to her now. She could not even get an echo of her old emotion." Yet the "old feeling" does return prompting the memory of the kiss (51). Just as that moment had been interrupted by the intervention of Peter Walsh and Joseph Breitkopf, this memory is interrupted by the memory of Peter's influence on her: "Yet, after all, how much she owed him later" (53). The memory of Peter leads to speculation on his perception of the changes in her, specifically her aging, which in turn leads to her contraction into the diamond shape in preparation for her party, which leads to her physical preparation for her party, the mending of her dress. In effect, she revises the homoerotic moment with Sally to fit into the larger scheme of heterosexuality to which she ultimately submits. Any
replication of this moment with another woman is checked by the codes internalized in her room: "Against such moments (with women too) there contrasted (as she laid her hat down) the bed and Baron Marbot and the candle half burnt" (47). The parenthesis setting off women, in effect, marginalizing her passion for women, is telling since the description of the erotic feeling leading up to this repudiation involves only women. Even in denying her emotion she must deny the necessity for such a denial.

Whereas Clarissa's private room is compromised by internalization of cultural perceptions of the feminine, Rachel Vinrace, in The Voyage Out, suffers from physical invasion of her private space by the social practices shaping femininity. Rachel's room in her aunt's villa is "cut off from the rest of the house, large, private--a room in which she could play, read, think, defy the world, a fortress as well as a sanctuary. Rooms, [Aunt Helen] knew, became more like worlds than rooms at the age of twenty-four." For Rachel, it is "an enchanted place, where the poets sang and things fell into their right proportions" (123). This room appears to be an improvement over her attic room at her aunts's house in Richmond, which is like the tower room of an imprisoned princess. Containing a piano, the attic room serves Rachel for her entire world since music is her only interest and the only subject in which she has received any training. Her life outside it is so restricted that she spends it "in interminable walks round sheltered gardens, and the household gossip of her aunts" (124). Her room on her father's ship is less restrictive, but also less private. It is her space only when the ship is not full, when it is not "the resort of elderly sea-sick ladies." Like her attic room in Richmond, it contains a piano and many books, and Rachel occupies her time there by playing, reading, or doing "absolutely nothing" (33). Laurence identifies Rachel's rooms as the
space "where she establishes a reality, separate from social definitions, that no one else can enter" (145).

However, Rachel's rooms are fortresses and sanctuaries that are constantly being invaded. The independence of the reality established in the attic room is qualified by its connection to the domestic practices of her aunts. In addition, her music, with which she shows such promise, appears destined to be no more than an accomplishment to display in the drawing room. Moreover, the two other private spaces, the rooms on the ship and in the villa, in which Rachel finds refuge are violated by individuals who threaten her with social definitions that would shape her reality. The threat of Clarissa Dalloway, who bursts into Rachel's room to hear her playing and interrupts her instead, comes from her insincerity, which Rachel is too inexperienced to recognize. She sees Clarissa as a beautiful society woman and cannot understand that Clarissa's charm is part of the role that she must play. The men who invade Rachel's space pose a greater threat. Her fiancé Terence brings the threat of domesticity into her room where he sits reading or writing and competes with her piano for her attention. His interruptions prompt an angry response: "'here I am, the best musician in South America, not to speak of Europe and Asia, and I can't play a note because of you in the room interrupting me every other second!'" (292). Terence wants her to leave her own art to respond to his, to tell him what she thinks of what he has written about the differences between men and women. He is already expecting her to assume the wifely role of mirror to the vanity of her husband. Richard Dalloway, whose threat is physical and perhaps more ominous, follows her into her room and accuses her, after kissing her passionately, of instigating his physical assault: "'You tempt me,' he said. The tone of his voice was terrifying. He seemed choked in fight" (76). Defining her according to the contradictory
image of woman as dangerous seductress and as guardian of morality, he seems to feel justified in blaming her for being attractive to him and for not preventing his assault. None of Rachel's rooms provides protection or allows for development of an autonomous self; instead, they function as prisons keeping Rachel in and limiting her to roles sanctioned for her by her culture.8

In Night and Day, Katharine Hilbery's room at the top of her parents' house also fails to provide her with a private space because it, like Rachel's, is invaded by representatives of the domestic ideology and because Katherine has internalized the perceptions of these representatives. As a result, her room emphasizes her position within her upper-middle class society. The room contains a large looking-glass and a skewer with bills stuck on it, both indicators of her role within her society and her family. The large looking-glass emphasizes her position as the marriageable daughter whose social functions include luncheon, calls, tea, and dinner, each requiring specific dress. The mirror reflects Katharine as she should look to take her place within her society, in the drawing room pouring out tea, in the dining room entertaining her parents' guests. The skewered bills resting on the mantle stand for her domestic duties, including ordering dinner and paying the family accounts. Moreover, Ralph Denham comes to her room to ask her to marry him, to offer her another position within the domestic sphere. The only items in the room that suggest a private side of Katharine are kept hidden within a large Greek dictionary: sheets of paper covered with mathematics problems. "No force on earth would have made her confess" her "furtive and secretive" behavior; late at night and early in the morning, she works at mathematics (45). Working the problems makes her feel as if she has "somehow risen to be mistress in her own kingdom" (479). Yet she hides her actions and their results from intruders into her room for two
reasons; she "instinctively" recognizes "the unwomanly nature of the science," and, more significantly, she realizes that her love of it goes against her family's literary tradition (46). Katharine has internalized the definitions of woman that deny her an ability to reason and preclude an interest in science. Moreover, she has internalized the vigilance guarding against violations of these definitions. Her room remains within the family house and fails, as do Clarissa's and Rachel's, to offer her a private space in which she can define her self apart from the domestic ideology.

The rooms in Woolf's novels that are outside the family house do not go any farther in allowing women spaces within which they can escape domestic definition. These rooms are noticeably shabby, as if to stress the diminished status of women who are, in the view of their culture, redundant and no longer sheltered by the patriarch. But even these rooms carry traces of the family house and of the domestic ideology. In The Years, Maggie and Sara's rooms at the top of a house on a noisy street near Waterloo Road emphasize the negative consequences for a woman of their class of losing her position within the family. Nonetheless, their sitting room contains a "crimson-and-gilt chair" that stood in the hall of their parents' home and an Italian looking-glass that hung in their mother's bedroom (165). The chair follows Sara to her lodging-house room after the marriage of Maggie. In Eleanor's "'work-man's flat at the top of six flights of stairs,'" the portrait of her mother as a young woman hangs over the writing table from the front drawing-room at Abercorn Terrace (331). The writing table, which became Eleanor's when she took over her mother's duties after her death, is the sign of her position as dutiful daughter at home, caring for her father until his death releases her. Among the women in The Years pictured in rooms outside the family house, only Sara, who is apparently forced by her
extreme poverty to get a job to supplement her family income after Maggie's marriage, appears to work for wages. The others do unpaid philanthropic work, so the money that pays for the rooms evidently comes from an inheritance, however meager. Although these rooms are outside the family house, they remain, with the possible exception of Sara's, within the private sphere constructing dependent, self-sacrificing feminine selves. Consequently, they do not suggest alternative ways to define a feminine self.

Richardson's principal female character manages to get free of the private sphere, but only after serving time in spaces within it. Miriam Henderson's bedroom at home is, like Virginia Stephen's bedroom, a partial refuge, a place in which she and her sisters attempt to escape the worries infiltrating the downstairs rooms of their father's house, a place in which Miriam tries out new roles and freedoms. Like the children in To the Lighthouse, who seek "their bedrooms, their fastnesses in a house where there was no other privacy to debate anything, and everything" (16), the sisters in Pilgrimage feel free to discuss topics such as religion and the future in their bedroom. The room functions as a kind of feminine sanctuary allowing them to try out ideas and at the same time protecting them from censure for these ideas. But the ability of the bedroom to protect them is contingent upon their father's ability to provide the space for them in his house. Consequently, their growing concern over his financial troubles undercuts their feelings of security in the room. The worries that dominate the lower levels of the house infiltrate the bedroom as well in the form of the trunk, packed and ready for Miriam's trip to Fraulein Pfaff's school in Germany. It reminds her that when it is taken away, she will soon be gone and the room will no longer be hers (1: 15). It seems to contain Mr. Henderson's strained finances, which break out and into the thoughts and conversation of the
sisters, leaving Miriam relieved to be going away (1: 17). She sees the room as "safe" only after her luggage has been removed: "It was away somewhere in the house; far away and unreal and unfelt as her parents somewhere downstairs. . . . Nothing was real but getting up with old Harriett in this old room" (1: 22; ellipsis added). The absence of the luggage returns the room to Miriam in its old form, but only temporarily, because its absence also signals her departure, exposing the room as a false sanctuary.

The difficulty of finding a private space within the family house is brought home to Miriam by the experiences of her mother. She senses the horror of her mother's life: "Mother--almost killed by things she could not control, having done her duty all her life . . . doing thing after thing had not satisfied her. There was something she had always wanted, for herself . . . even mother. . . ." (1: 472). Her mother blames herself for failing to measure up, for failing to fill the role her culture and her husband expect of her. Her husband's house does not provide a space in which she can either escape her role or escape the consequences of her perceived failure to fill it, to escape the "nerves" that keep her from sleeping and threaten her with the fear of madness (1: 475). She fears and loathes her room, where she lies awake at night. Miriam marvels that her mother, "always gently scolding exaggeration, used and meant that violent word," loathe (1: 476). This room cannot offer protection because Mrs. Henderson shares it with her husband, and it is the scene, as Miriam recognizes, of endless conflict: "Voices were sounding in the next room. Something being argued. A voice level and reassuring; going up now and again into a hateful amused falsetto. Miriam refused to listen. She had never been so near before. Of course they talked in their room. They had talked all their lives; an endless conversation; he laying down the law . . . no end to it." She hears her mother's
reply, a "tearful, uncertain voice" (1: 460). For Mrs. Henderson, no physical place, within or without her husband's house, will protect her because she is trapped within the hegemony of the family and seems only able to escape through death. As Patricia Laurence notes, in another context, "[w]e think back through our mother's rooms" (149). Miriam's recognition of her mother's imprisonment within the marriage room contributes to her desire to avoid the room for herself.

The rooms connected with Miriam's teaching positions are outside the family house, but they still support the ideology of domesticity because she is charged with constructing girls according to the definitions of this ideology even as she is being constructed according to them. At Fraulein Pfaff's school in Germany, she inhabits two rooms that afford her different levels of status defining her according to two versions of femininity based on class divisions. The attic room that she shares with Mademoiselle locates her in the servant class. Moreover, it embodies Fraulein's vigilant gaze enforcing the codes of femininity. The room is "candle-lit," has "high uncurtained windows," and contains "red-covered box beds" (1:37). The darkness of the room and the inaccessible windows give the space the appearance of a prison cell, of an enclosure from which there can be no escape. The box beds with their red covers are also enclosed spaces, suggesting the image of female space, the womb. The female space is Fraulein Pfaff's, though, and she is a childless woman who enforces sexual repression, who forbids the girls to go out in twos, is openly angered by Miriam's association with Pastor Lahmann, and chastises the girls for talking about men (1: 104, 129-130, 179). She vigorously and continuously enforces the cultural mandate that women be pure and pious. In the attic room, her metonymic substitutes, "Fraulein Pfaff's cobwebs," watch over "the island made by [Miriam}
and Mademoiselle's] two little beds and the matting and toilet chests" (1: 111, 110). These cobwebs represent her gaze, as Mademoiselle suggests when she warns Miriam, "'Les toiles d'arrainées auront peur'": Miriam's music made with "a paper-covered comb," a behavior unbecoming to a daughter of a gentleman and a teacher of young ladies, will frighten Fraulein's spider webs (1: 111, 110). This warning is substantiated later when Mademoiselle is punished for an indiscretion, observed by one of Fraulein's spies, by being forced to share the attic room with the new housekeeper. As a consequence, Miriam receives an apparent promotion, a place in a room on a lower floor. This change appears to reward Miriam for compliance with Fraulein's expectations as it punishes Mademoiselle for failure to comply.

The new room contrasts sharply with the dark attic space. Because Miriam shares the room with two of the German pupils, daughters of gentlemen, she herself rises in social status. She no longer shares a servant's attic room. In addition, the room is large and well-lighted, with screens dividing it into thirds, lace and embroidered linens, "polished furniture, gold and cream crockery," with finery befitting the position of a lady in upper-middle class society. In contrast to the enclosed, red-covered beds, Miriam's new bed is covered in white (1: 134). The entire room evokes the purity demanded in Fraulein's definition of the feminine. Miriam's new position reiterates the "psychic split," described by Gilbert and Gubar, between the rebellious woman who is confined to the attic and the submissive woman who resides in the parlor (Madwoman in the Attic 86). Mademoiselle, accused of unfeminine behavior and banished to the attic, embodies Miriam's (and the pupils') repressed rebellion against Fraulein's strict codes. The two rooms also identify Fraulein as an agent of the ideology enforcing the cultural restrictions on feminine behavior, which induces
a dangerous splitting of the self into a part that functions within society and a part that allegedly transcends situation. But Miriam's submission is short-circuited by Fraulein's use of Mademoiselle's dismissal as the occasion to reprimand the pupils and Miriam for private conversations that she condemns as "'this vile talk of men'" (1: 179). Miriam recognizes that Fraulein's power to enforce societal codes governing feminine behavior reaches into every corner of her school, and Miriam finally refuses to submit to this power.

Although the two rooms at the Pernes's school in Banbury Park also support the ideology of domesticity, they reflect Miriam's need to find a space which can contain her "essential" self, a self that she imagines is capable of transcending her material circumstances. When she shares a room with two of the boarding pupils, she envies the servants who have "two rooms, the kitchen at the bottom of the house, and a bedroom at the top, your own. It would not matter what the family was like. You would look after them, like children, and be alone to read and sleep" (1: 269-270). In contrast, Miriam never escapes "the family," neither the girls that she is charged with shaping according to the middle-class mold of femininity, nor the three spinsters who attempt to shape her along the same lines. After the pupil-teacher, Julia, arrives, Miriam gets a room of her own in which she reads novels long into the night, an indulgence that she suspects is a "sin." Nevertheless, her late night reading helps her rediscover "the self she had known at home, where the refuge of silence and books was always open." She feels relieved to know that this self is "not dead," that it has not succumbed to the hardships of the past fifteen months, that they have "not even touched it" (1: 282). This room at the Pernes's is one of many, like her rooms at the Brooms's, the Wilsons', and the Roscorlas', that, for Miriam, embody her essential self and appear to allow her to transcend her circumstances. However, these provisional
rooms of her own expose the myth of the transcendental self because they situate her within specific class and gender definitions that shape and reshape her self.

Miriam's room in Mrs. Bailey's lodging house is outside the domestic sphere and on the margin of the middle class, offering her potential emancipation from these class and gender definitions. Moreover, it approaches the description in A Room of One's Own. After false starts in two boarding houses recommended by others, Miriam herself finds a room in the house of a woman, a widow living with her two daughters on Tansley Street in Bloomsbury. Like Virginia Stephen's room, Miriam's has two sides, "half dark shadow and half brilliant light" (2: 13). This shared imagery suggests the tendency of many women to bifurcate the self into an essential and a social entity, but this room seems to contain the potential to mend this split. The dark side is the sleeping side, containing a bed with "a small globeless gas bracket" over it, a grate and mantelpiece, a chest of drawers with a small mirror standing on it, a wardrobe, and a sideboard (2: 14). In the sunlit side is "a firm little deal table covered with a trim, brightly coloured printed cotton table-cloth" (2: 13). Beneath the cloth, the table is "inkstained": it bears the signs of the writing of past residents (2: 22). The table stands in the space before a dormer window, a "barred lattice window" that looks out upon the "outside world" (2: 13-14). Miriam's first action is to open two of the small "square four-paned frame" windows and remove the bars by lifting the iron frame and attaching it to a ring in the ceiling above the window (2: 14-15). After removing the bars from the window, Miriam is able to lean out and view the surrounding neighborhood as she feels "a soft fresh breeze" and hears the mixed sounds of traffic, birds, and a violin. She feels herself "passing some boundary, emerging strong and equipped in a clear medium" (2: 15). Freeing the window from the bars parallels her sense of
freeing her self from the circumstances which have oppressed her, her father's financial collapse, her mother's death, her confining work. In the room, she thinks that her thoughts are "untramelled," unconfined by the worries that formerly beset them (2: 21). The room offers a private space in which Miriam can process the sensations and information she garners through the open window, on the streets of London, at Wimpole Street, in the public rooms of Mrs. Bailey's house. It also provides a table with a tradition of writing inscribed on its surface. With this available space, Miriam should "live in the presence of reality, an invigorating life" and possibly "impart it" to others (A Room of One's Own 114).

Although Miriam's room at Mrs. Bailey's is a material space with the potential to overcome the bifurcation of the self, it represents, for Miriam, a private, secret space embodying her essential self. On her first night in the room, she evaluates her life: "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" (2: 16). The lodging-house room holds no associations with her past; nonetheless, it calls up the self of her youth, the self which she believes has been in abeyance. Miriam's reliance on the notion of an essential self, suspended for nearly three years, eclipses the time that she has spent as a teacher and governess, a time during which her father's troubled finances finally collapsed and her mother committed suicide. Her belief in this untouched self also convinces her that the room will contain this self during the time she must spend performing her work in Wimpole Street and associating with others in the outside world: "Outside one need do nothing but what was expected of one, asking nothing for oneself but freedom to return, to the centre," to "a clear cold
room" (2: 321). She concedes, "In my secret self I should love a prison" (2: 336). She desires a space to which she can contract to escape the demands of the external world. The promise of this space allows her the illusion of entering into the life of the external world confident not only that she can retreat to her welcome prison, but also that her essential self will transcend the circumstances, however painful, of her material life. Consequently, the room fails to mend the split in the self and instead reiterates this split.

Despite Miriam's reliance on her room to protect her essential self, this room sometimes fails her. Sometimes it becomes "a cell of torturing mocking memories and apprehensions, driving her down into the house to hear the dreadful voices, giving out, in unchanged accents, the unchanging words and phrases" of the boarders (3: 31). These failures indicate that the room does not contain a transcendental self but rather reflects the material circumstances that Miriam faces outside the room. These circumstances, pleasant and unpleasant, are mirrored in the walls of the room, which sometimes reflect back her freedom or the radiance of her happiness and at other times, mock her (3: 86-87). The failure of her center to hold sends her to Mrs. Bailey, "a recognized centre," whose room, where she lies suffering from a migraine headache, gives Miriam a sense of freedom and of being "strangely accepted and indulged" (3: 38-39).

Mrs. Bailey, lying ill, talking of her concerns for her daughters, recalls Miriam's own mother. But Mrs. Bailey, unlike Mrs. Henderson, is the mother who survives illness and hardship, retaining "the reassuring inexhaustible substance of [her] being" (3: 38). Miriam appears to seek out a domestic space in which she can take shelter. Mrs. Bailey and her room with its association with the body of the mother provide the temporary center that Miriam needs
until her own room can be renewed. The activity that renews the attic room and opens it up as a space for creative expression is writing.

The act of writing, initially the simple task of revising, for money, a bad lecture written by a Frenchman, seems to renew the room and Miriam's self by offering a new means for transcending her material situation, for rendering "all the circumstances of her life" into a fiction "as if narrated from the fascinating life of someone else" (3: 133). Writing suggests to Miriam the renewal of her autonomous identity, of her self capable of determining her own reality. After hours of intense work, she discovers that she is not exhausted but exhilarated:

Rising from the table she found her room strange, the new room she had entered on the day of her arrival. She remembered drawing the cover from the table by the window and finding the ink-stains. There they were in the warm bright circle of midmorning lamplight, showing between the scattered papers. The years that had passed were a single short interval leading to the restoration of that first moment. Everything they contained centred there; her passage through them, the desperate graspings and droppings, had been a coming back. Nothing would matter now that the paper-scattered lamplit circle was established as the centre of life. Everything would be an everlastingly various joyful coming back. Held up by this secret place, drawing her energy from it, any sort of life would do that left this room and its little table free and untouched. (3: 133-134).

Miriam seems to rediscover her essential self and to center it within the table, within her writing. The table becomes "herself, alive with her life" (3: 136). She concludes that if her self is centered in the table in the attic room, what happens to her outside the room does not matter. Neither her own actions nor the actions of others toward her will make a difference in her essential being. This attitude is problematic because writing, which could be a means to connect with the outside world, seems to become, instead, for Miriam a means of isolation.
The importance of writing to the preservation of her essential self is underscored by the contrast between the Tansley Street room and the ones in Flaxman's Court that she shares with Selina Holland. She discovers that their bedroom has no center (3: 418). Unlike her room at Mrs. Bailey's, these rooms do not greet her when she enters; instead, they disown her. She senses that she has left her self behind in Tansley Street and feels a profound sadness: "Not only of her self, left behind irrevocably in the old room, but also, now that she surveyed it undisturbed by Miss Holland's supporting presence, of the bright motley of her outside life. Everything had thinned, was going thinly forward without depth of background" (3:446). In Miriam's view, without the presence of her essential self, autonomous, self-determining, and capable of transcending her material circumstances, her external life loses meaning. In Flaxman's Court, she feels the presence of her self only when she writes on "the extended flap" of her small bureau, the descendent of her ink-stained table in her attic room. Writing there allows her to transcend the sordid atmosphere of Flaxman's Court and the "pervading presence of Selina" (524). These two tables eventually merge with the other writing table that centers her self, the table in the summerhouse at Dimple Hill (4: 523-524). Through the act of writing on them, Miriam endows these tables with her essential self transcending her material circumstances and determining a reality apart from them. She imagines the tables as providing a secret place, a welcome prison outside the Tansley Street room. These rooms and the tables within them fail to mend the bifurcated self because Miriam imagines them enclosing a transcendental self.

Mary Datchet's room in *Night and Day*, though still technically within the family hegemony, is the most successful room of one's own in the canon of either author because she is not enclosed within it. Moreover, although her first
job is an unpaid secretarial position with a suffrage society, her next job is a paid position, which moves her room out of the hegemony of the family. Katharine Hilbery sees Mary's room as a place where "one could work--one could have a life of one's own," where one could be "engaged in this exalted way, which had no recognition or engagement-ring" (272). She is responding to the table in the corner, under the green shaded lamp, where Mary secretly works on her manuscript, "'Some Aspects of the Democratic State'" (267). Mary hides her work, as Katharine does, by keeping it inside a locked drawer. Her secret manuscript differs from Katharine's secret pages of mathematics problems because it is political whereas Katharine's work, like Clarissa's reading and Rachel's music, is merely aesthetic. Katharine and Mary both finally share their work: Katharine shares with Ralph, who adds the strange papers to his fantasy view of her; Mary shares her ideas, if not her actual manuscript, with Mr. Basnett, whose society she joins and who employs her as its secretary. Although Katharine values Mary's room as an enclosed space in which to work, Mary values it because she leaves it to work: "Every day, as she stood with her dispatch-box in her hand at the door of her flat, and gave one look back into the room to see that everything was straight before she left, she said to herself that she was very glad that she was going to leave it all, that to have sat there all day long, in the enjoyment of leisure, would have been intolerable" (77-78). Mary's room is not her refuge; it is instead the place in London which gives her access to the public world of work, offering the potential for self definition in terms apart from those inscribed in the domestic sphere. She follows the dictum of her creator; she lives "in the presence of reality, an invigorating life, it would appear, whether one can impart it or not" (Room of One's Own 114).
Mary's rooms allow her the perspective that Lily Briscoe's art potentially provides for her: they place her outside the domestic sphere and away from the social practices at work within it. She does not imagine a self that is autonomous, self-realizing, and transcendent or one that is relational and self-denying. Instead her self, like her rooms, is situated within the changing social and cultural context of early twentieth-century London. Her rooms function as a place within which the feminine can be reformulated, as Clarissa's, Rachel's, Katharine's, and Miriam's rooms do not, because Mary imagines a self within them that is not imbricated in either notions of a transcendent, essential individuality or of a self-sacrificing domesticity. In the next two chapters, I will suggest other ways in which Richardson and Woolf move beyond these ideologies.
Notes

1 In "Theory and Space, Space and Woman" (Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature 7 [1988]: 261-82), Ruth Salvaggio notes a similar identification of space as feminine and traces the feminizing of theoretical space in modern and post-modern critical theory. She cites in particular Gaston Bachelard, Roland Barthes, Adrienne Rich, and Luce Irigaray and contends that "theoretical space became increasingly associated with the feminine gender and, ultimately, with the voices and experiences of women themselves" (265).

2 Although I have limited my discussion in this study to women's rooms, my interest in rooms in works by Woolf and Richardson does not stop there and instead includes other rooms like those of Jacob, Orlando, and Purling, a male character in a short story by Richardson. These rooms are significant, in part, in the context of the definition of the feminine self. For example, the women's rooms in Woolf's novels are charged with a definition of the self that Jacob's Room seems to deny is possible. Whereas in Jacob's rooms, the self is situated but fragmented, in the women's rooms, the self strives to be unified and to transcend situation. Richardson's story "Haven" questions the gender definitions limiting the relational self to the feminine, particularly when the story is read in the context of Pilgrimage. Miriam envisions her rooms as embodying her self and as guarding her independence. Purling also values a secluded room as necessary for preserving the isolation he must have to write, but the narrative indicates that isolation actually hinders him. Pilgrimage leaves the impression that Miriam will continue to seek spaces of isolation. In contrast, "Haven" ends with Purling seeking not isolation but connection. The distinction between the positions of the two characters appears to invert the equation of autonomy with masculinity and relation with femininity.

3 Several critics deal with the more ominous circumstances of George's interruptions into the living and sleeping sides of Virginia Stephen's room. The most thorough works dealing with George and Gerald Duckworth's sexual abuse of Woolf and its effects on her are Louise DeSalvo's Virginia Woolf: The Impact of Childhood Sexual Abuse on Her Life and Work (New York: Ballantine-Random, 1989) and Roger Poole's The Unknown Virginia Woolf, 3rd ed. (London: Humanities, 1990).

4 The differences between Marcus and Showalter on this issue reflect their contrasting views of Woolf. Marcus sees her as a socialist feminist, a view
which Marcus elaborates in essays, particularly those included in her *Virginia Woolf and the Languages of Patriarchy* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1987). In *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists From Bronte to Lessing* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1977), Showalter sees Woolf as a "female aestheticist" and emphasizes "the tragedy of her personal life" and "the betrayal of her literary genius, her adoption of a female aesthetic that ultimately proved inadequate to her purposes and stifling to her development" (264). I see Woolf as somewhere in between these two views, neither as political as Marcus perceives her or as withdrawn as she is in Showalter's work, but instead as revealing signs both of construction within the upper-middle class in which she lived her life and resistance to the ideology of this class.

5 Woolf's own rooms were extremely important to her, as her letters and diary entries indicate, and they were not simply retreats. In a letter to Violet Dickinson written in 1905 while Woolf was on holiday, she expresses her desire for her room of her own: "I shall be rather--in fact very--glad to be home, in my own room, with my books, and I want to work like a steam engine" (*The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann, vol. 1 [New York: Harvest-Harcourt, 1975] 172).


8 The final threat to Rachel comes when she is ill and her room becomes a sick room. Laurence suggests that Woolf "makes the silent speak by bringing into being the symbolic weight of female consciousness in the sick room," thereby infusing "women's silence with a new psychic life." But as Laurence acknowledges, Rachel's early death cuts short "the female voice" (145).
9 In an April 1950 letter to Henry Savage, Richardson remembered her own days in the boarding-house room in Bloomsbury: "Instantly I was back in my freezing attic, ill-fed and worse clothed, solemnly remarking in a letter, that the only thing I really cared about was the dawn, in my mind, of a new idea!" (Dorothy Richardson Papers, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University).

10 Perhaps this failure of the attic room has prompted Thomas F. Staley to contend that Miriam's London rooms "reflect the dullness and near despair of [her] life" (Dorothy Richardson [Boston: G. K. Hall, 1976] 104). Apart from the misconception that Miriam's life is dull and full of despair, this analysis fails to recognize that these rooms function in complex, diverse, sometimes contradictory ways. Staley's study of Richardson contains numerous errors in the reporting of details. These errors suggest that his interpretations may be based on misreadings.
Chapter Four
Dual Perspectives on the
"Being at the Heart of All Becoming"

Richardson's narrative strategies of point of view parallel and dramatize the attempts to resolve the tension between the ideology of the individual and the ideology of the feminine in her representation of Miriam. The narrow focus on the perspective of a single character and the use of a narrative voice that appears to coincide with the voice of that character suggest the focus on the individual manifested in Miriam's consistent belief in the primacy of the individual and the existence of an essential self. This technique creates the illusion that Miriam as autonomous individual is the sole authority in determining her reality. However, individualism, positing the individual as autonomous and self-determining, fixes women within the discourse of domesticity, defining the feminine self as relational and self-denying. Women, in effect, sustain relationships that make individuality possible for men (Fox-Genovese 115, 127-129). Miriam's authority is compromised by this exclusion of women from individualism. Moreover, her reality hinges on an extra-textual circumstance that also affects the narrative strategies. Given the significant parallels between Richardson's own life and her character's, the reality that Miriam appears to determine for herself has already been experienced by Richardson. Rather than casting her text in the person of autobiography, Richardson chooses to use third person, opening up a distance between the narrative voice and perspective and the character that first person elides. This choice also places a narrative space between the writer and the character, who resembles her, that allows for a disjunction between the two. In addition, it allows for authorial control over the character through mediation and interpretation of her experience. Miriam's
reality, then, is determined by a narrative consciousness that provides a corrective to her perspective and maps the process of her identity. In effect, the narrative technique of point of view undercuts the notion of an autonomous individual determining her own reality by providing two points of view, Miriam's and a narrator's. This dual perspective builds into the text a subtle refutation of the notions grounding the ideology of individualism, notions central to Miriam's view of her self, by presenting the material circumstances that shape her identity, by subtly correcting her perspective, and by exposing the problematic relationship between the discourse of individualism and the discourse of domesticity.

In the foreword to Pilgrimage, Richardson states that her writing is an attempt "to produce a feminine equivalent of the current masculine realism," and she also claims that her style of punctuation is typical of feminine writing (1: 10, 12). Nonetheless, like Miriam, praising a feminine identity defined in relation to others and excluding herself from it, Richardson valorizes the identity of "the womanly woman" and excludes herself from it in rejecting the narrative parallel of this feminine identity. In several essays, Richardson defines "the womanly woman," whose "essential characteristic" is the ability "to act as a focus for divergent points of view" ("Leadership in Marriage" 347). In "Women in the Arts," she suggests that this woman's "fascinating burdensome gift of sight, her gift for expansive vicarious living" should aid her in her creativity and make her man's equal in the production of art. But, she notes, this "gift" inhibits her instead because she is hampered by "the human demand . . . for an inclusive awareness, from which men, for good or ill, are exempt." She observes that "even vicarious expansion towards a multitude of details, though it may bring wisdom, is fatal to sustained creative effort" (100). In her personal life,
Richardson attempted to evade the demand made of her to expand her awareness to include the points of view of others, to the annoyance of some female friends.¹ In her fiction, she also rejects the narrative equivalent of the "womanly woman"; her narrative voice does not act as a focus for multiple points of view or grant a perspective or voice to any character other than Miriam.

Richardson's technique, according to her theory, presents the "being at the heart of all becoming" and "contemplated reality having . . . its own say" ("Continuous Performance: The Film Gone Male" 424; Foreword to Pilgrimage 1: 10). The "being" corresponds to Miriam's notion of an essential self, autonomous, self-determining. This "being" alone supposedly gives meaning to her reality, which becomes "contemplated reality," the subject of the text. Richardson's narrative aim is "to break through & state experience in its fulness, in its own right as experience without reference, so that its actual nature should stand revealed, its quality of being central & convincing" ("Literary Essays").

To get at "first-hand life," to place experience in a central position, Richardson creates the illusion that Pilgrimage contains only one perspective, Miriam's, and that the text reproduces her experiences as she perceives them. The only meaning given these experiences would come, then, from Miriam's consciousness.² Richardson's theories give the impression that Pilgrimage keeps the reader locked up inside Miriam's consciousness, or, in the words of Anita Levy, that "the world [is] represented as being inside a woman" (64n38).

However, Richardson's narrative focus is not as narrow as Woolf contends in her diary when she criticizes Pilgrimage for its domination by "the damned egotistical self" (2: 14). Although few are as critical as Woolf, critics generally agree that, as Thomas Staley puts it, the point of view in Pilgrimage is "severely
restricted" (38). Gillian Hanscombe asserts that nothing in the entire work is "extraneous to the perceiving consciousness of Miriam Henderson." She also contends that Richardson's realism requires the removal of "the distinction between author and persona by removing the author entirely." Richardson's technique, according to Hanscombe, links autobiography and fiction through the combination of the "egocentricity of Miriam's viewpoint" and the "absence of ironic detachment" on the part of the author-narrator ("Dorothy Richardson Versus the Novvle" 86). Elaine Showalter, more critical than Hanscombe, describes the technique as "the annihilation of the narrative self" that Showalter sees as symptomatic of Richardson's "struggle to depersonalize and control a female identity that was potent with the promise of self-destruction" (33, 248). Gloria Fromm stands virtually alone in identifying a point of view that counters Miriam's. She sees a difference between the depictions of the men "indirectly drawn" through the narrative and the portrayals of them through Miriam's subjective view ("What Are Men" 172). Close examination of the text suggests that Fromm is correct in locating a perspective outside Miriam's consciousness and that this perspective undermines Miriam's view of her self.

Richardson points to the possibility of a perspective other than Miriam's in her recognition that even the most effaced authorial consciousness reveals the writer's personality. Although she criticizes fiction "backed by an idea" ("Literary Essays"), she sees this personality in the work:

And is not every novel a conducted tour? First and foremost into the personality of the author who, willy-nilly, and whatever be his method of approach, must present the reader with the writer's self-portrait. He may face his audience after the manner of a lecturer, tell his tale, interpolate the requisite information, descriptions, explanations; or, walking at his side, letting the tale tell itself, come forward now and again to make comment or drive home a point; or, remaining out of sight and hearing
may, so to speak, project his material upon a screen. In either case he will reveal whether directly or by implication, his tastes, his prejudices, and his philosophy. ("Novels" 434)

Richardson's narrative technique most closely resembles the third description. Her narrative consciousness generally stays hidden and merges with the voice and perspective of the character. However, the relationship between the narrative consciousness and the character is complicated by the autobiographical nature of the work. Richardson began Pilgrimage when she was almost forty; her character is seventeen at the start of the first chapter-volume, Pointed Roofs. Her letters suggest that she was annoyed by readers who conflated the author and her young character and attributed the ideas and thought processes of Miriam to her. She writes to Edward Garnett that she is offended by a reviewer who concludes that her "view of life is fragmentary" because she has attempted to present the "world of an adolescent" (Letter 7 Feb. 1920). And again, she praises Garnett for his interpretations of her novels: "For I know you won't credit me with her doctrines" (Letter 26 Oct. 1923). Nevertheless, Miriam espouses many of the philosophical and aesthetic beliefs held by the author, as Richardson's letters, notes, and essays verify. Richardson needed a narrative strategy that would allow Miriam the space to be autonomous, to appear to determine her own reality, and at the same time provide a perspective to function as a corrective to her attitudes and beliefs that signal immaturity.

Much of Pilgrimage presents Miriam's thoughts and her interpretation of experience, but as Fromm observes, much also follows the method of "objective accuracy achieved in the subjective mode" ("Variations on a Method" 47). The novel contains a substantial quantity of "reference" that situates Miriam so firmly within a particular historical moment that the novelist Bryher enthusiastically remarked to her female friends, "'Somebody is writing about
us'" and in her autobiography, declares that Richardson "was the Baedeker of all our early experiences" (168). As Shirley Rose points out, Richardson envisions the experimental novel focusing on "an individualized character" occupying a "particularized environment" ("Dorothy Richardson's Theory of Literature" 21). And Richardson's novel, through specific detailed references, places Miriam within a particularized, changing culture. Although Miriam's consciousness provides some of the specific details of the environment, the narrative consciousness, as I will demonstrate, sets the stage and peoples it with characters with whom Miriam interacts in situations which materialize her in ways new to women in the fictional and actual world.4

To examine Richardson's techniques, I will borrow Dorrit Cohn's terms for conventional methods for rendering consciousness. These techniques emphasize Gérard Genette's differentiation between who sees and who speaks (186). They are, in Cohn's terms, psycho-narration, quoted monologue, and narrated monologue. The first two techniques indicate the extremes in the relationship between perspective and voice. Psycho-narration implies the presence of a narrator interpreting the perspective of the character. Quoted monologue, in contrast, allows for the illusion that the narrator does not mediate the character's thoughts. Psycho-narration is "the narrator's discourse about a character's consciousness" (14). The dominant technique in novels through the nineteenth-century (21), psycho-narration is signaled by narrative tags, such as "she knew that" and "she wondered if." This technique also allows for the presentation of consciousness through psycho-analogies, which use language and images "too complex to be attributed to inner speech" (44). Quoted monologue is "a character's mental discourse" (14); sometimes called interior monologue, it is distinguished from other narrative forms by a shift from third to first person and
from past to present tense. Falling between the two other techniques, narrated
monologue renders "a character's thought in his own idiom while maintaining
the third-person reference and the basic tense of narration" (100). It
superimposes two voices that are distinctly separate in quoted monologue and
psycho-narration, the voice of the character and the voice of the narrator (105).
These three modes function in fiction that is both authorial, narrated by dissonant
narrators, who are "prominent" and "distanced" from the narrated
consciousness, and figural, narrated by consonant narrators, who are "effaced"
or fused with the narrated consciousness (26, 274n10).

Distinguishing between the perspectives and voices of the narrator and the
character is not always easy. As Cohn notes, techniques like psycho-narration,
in which the narrator seems prominent, are sometimes affected by "stylistic
contagion," infection of the narrative idiom "with the mental idiom of the mind
it renders" (33). Similarly, the surrounding text, even in narrative situations that
are figural, usually signals a point of view separate from the character's, which
surfaces as a sympathetic or ironic tone. In quoted monologue, titles or
adjectives applied to characters may reveal the narrative attitude (66). In
narrated monologue, the casting of "the language of the subjective mind into the
grammar of objective narration" amplifies "emotional notes" and throws "into
ironic relief all false notes struck by a figural mind." In this way, the narrator's
attitude, either sympathetic or ironic, is revealed (117). Pilgrimage is figural,
and the narrator is primarily effaced and fused with Miriam. But the distance
between the narrator and Miriam fluctuates throughout, with an increasing
dominance of quoted monologue in the later chapter-volumes. These shifting
distances present a perspective other than Miriam's, qualifying her attitudes or
opinions, sometimes validating, sometimes correcting them. They also qualify
her status as an individual, self-determining and autonomous, and reveal her as constructed within the ideology of the feminine, as positioned by the discourse of individualism, in which she has such faith, within the discourse of domesticity requiring self-denial, structuring desire, and mandating marriage.

Before moving on to more obvious examples of narrative intervention, I want to examine a scene that seems to fit into Richardson's aim of presenting "experience without reference." This mode of presentation requires an effacement of the narrative consciousness, a consonance between the narrative consciousness and the narrated or figural consciousness. It should align the reader with Miriam, but in its extreme form it distances the reader from the reference, the circumstances triggering the experience, to such an extent that recognizing what occurs is difficult or impossible. However, even the most extreme example of this technique, the narration of Miriam's reaction to the death of her mother, suggests a perspective other than Miriam's and undercuts the notion of a self-determining individuality. The death occurs in the page break between the second to the last and the last paragraph of Honeycomb, the third chapter-volume. The actual circumstances of the death are omitted, leaving only Miriam's uninterpreted perception, experience not given meaning by consciousness:

The bony old woman held Miriam clapsed closely in her arms. "You must never, as long as you live, blame yourself, my gurl." She went away. Miriam had not heard her come in. The pressure of her arms and her huge body came from far away. Miriam clasped her hands together. She could not feel them. Perhaps she had dreamed that the old woman had come in and said that. Everything was dream; the world. I shall not have any life. I can never have any life; all my days. There were cold tears running into her mouth. They had no salt. Cold water. They stopped. Moving her body with slow difficulty against the unsupporting air, she looked slowly about. It was difficult to move. Everything was
airy and transparent. Her heavy hot light impalpable body was the only solid thing in the world, weighing tons; and like a lifeless feather. There was a tray of plates of fish and fruit on the table. She looked at it, heaving with sickness and looking at it. I am hungry. Sitting down near it she tried to pull the tray. It would not move. I must eat the food. Go on eating food, till the end of my life. Plates of food like these plates of food. . . . I am in eternity . . . where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched. (1: 489-490)

The narrator's consonance with Miriam is conveyed through narrated monologue and quoted monologue with only limited narrative description that, through stylistic contagion, borders on narrated monologue. The effacement of the narrative consciousness is so complete that, as Michèle Barrett and Jean Radford note, the third-person pronouns in this passage can be changed to first-person pronouns without altering the text in any other way (268).

Dominated by short, choppy sentences, this passage suggests the suppression of contemplation, the inability of Miriam to face the fact of her mother's suicide, the inability to make meaning of her experience. Her distance from the crucial fact of the suicide, despite the elimination of the distance between the reader and Miriam brought about through the effacement of the narrator, leaves the reader in the dark. Knowledge of the suicide must be gathered from the concern of the doctor who, in the strongest terms, has advised Miriam to find trained attendants to stay with her mother day and night and in her mother's despair that his advice has come too late. But most of the verification of what occurs in the gap in the text comes from the biography of Richardson, whose mother committed suicide under identical circumstances, in a room at a boarding house in a seaside town during the brief period when her daughter Dorothy, alone with her on a therapeutic holiday, went out for a walk (Fromm, Dorothy Richardson: A Biography 22). In order to understand the reference behind Miriam's
experience, the reader is forced to see the novel as a conducted tour of the personality of the author, to search for a perspective other than Miriam's.

A more traditional choice to convey this scene would have been psycho-narration, through which the narrator would give the reader access both to Miriam's reactions and to the impetus for her reactions. Psycho-narration would depict what Miriam is unable to think and what she is unable to think about. The scene, then, might have been presented with more clarity and with no loss of affect or effect. However, narrated monologue and quoted monologue, techniques that efface the narrator, maintain the fiction that Miriam controls her own reality and is unable, in this case, to assimilate her experience to make a comprehensible reality from it. Consequently, the events of the death and Miriam's thoughts about it are left out; they are not presented as contemplated reality. In this sense, Miriam seems to maintain authority since the narrative presents only what she is able to assimilate and she is unable to assimilate the fact of her mother's death. But this scene reveals a gap over which Miriam has no authority, a gap in which language fails, in which rational thought cannot impose an order. So the death is left unnarrated, as is her sister Eve's death, which surfaces only in a comparison between her and the maid who works in the dental office. These omissions, indicating the absence of rational thought, attribute an irrationality associated with the feminine to Miriam. In addition, they reveal that the notion of the self-determining individual is a fictional construct.

_Pilgrimage_ also exposes the fictional nature of the self-determining individual by detailing the various circumstances within which Miriam undergoes the process of definition, circumstances so vividly portrayed that they elicited Bryher's recognition of herself struggling within them. In the third chapter of
The Tunnel, the fourth chapter-volume, the narrative focuses for forty-two pages on one of Miriam’s days at work in the dental office. Through a combination of narrative techniques, this chapter gives minute details of Miriam’s activities. Techniques revealing the perspective of the narrator, like narrative description and psycho-narration, dominate when Miriam is busiest, when the narrative presents her occupied at some task that does not require reflection. When her pace slows down, narrated monologue, in which the narrator merges with Miriam, dominates as she reflects on her actions or indulges in thoughts unrelated to her task. The narrative consciousness situates Miriam’s consciousness within the circumstances of work that is both confining and liberating, confining in its tediousness, but liberating in its financial remuneration, however small. These circumstances allow the possibility for redefining the self outside the middle-class culture in which she is constructed. But, at the same time, the narrative strategies indicate the limits on her as an individual and show her defining her self according to received notions of gender and class.

The situation of Miriam’s consciousness within particular circumstances defined by a narrative consciousness is illustrated in a long passage from the first part of the chapter. Miriam and Mr. Hancock, the dentist who is her principal employer, are preparing his surgery for the next patient:

Miriam swept from the bracket table the litter of used instruments and materials, disposing them rapidly on the cabinet, into the sterilizing tray, the waste basket and the wash-hand basin, tore the uppermost leaf from the headrest pad, and detached the handpiece from the arm of the motor drill while the patient was being shown upstairs. (2: 39)

Miriam’s routine, hurried actions are presented through narrated description. In this sentence, she is neither the seer nor the speaker; the use of narrative
description places the narrator close to Miriam, but observing her rather than seeing with her. This technique suggests that she performs her duties thoughtlessly. The sentence that follows, beginning in narrative description, suggests that the narrator adopts Miriam's perspective and indicates the narrowness of her perception:

Mr. Hancock had cleared the spittoon, set a fresh tumbler, filled the kettle and whisked the debris of amalgam and cement from the bracket table before he began the scrubbing and cleansing of his hands, and when the patient came in Miriam was in her corner reluctantly handling the instruments, wet with the solution that crinkled her finger-tips and made her skin brittle and dry. (2: 39-40)

The verbs in the past perfect tense indicate that Miriam notices what Mr. Hancock has been doing only after they are both finished with their chores and he has begun to wash his hands. The second half of the sentence shifts to psycho-narration, expressing Miriam's distaste for her job based on its effects on her hands, which should be badges of feminine beauty but are becoming the signs of menial labor.6 In addition, the progressive past tense verb slows the tempo; Miriam ceases to act automatically and begins to think about her actions. The next sentence in narrated monologue--"Everything was in its worst state"--indicates the frustration Miriam feels over this part of her work. The pace slows as she continues the tedious task of cleaning the instruments, described in a long sentence containing a series of gerunds that stress the duration of each activity, the "drying," "cleansing," "freeing," "polishing," "repolishing," "scraping," and "clearing" (2: 40). Dominated by the narrative consciousness, this part of the passage fixes Miriam within her job requiring rote work and providing little intellectual stimulus, little space for self-determination.
A shift to a more direct form of narrated consciousness indicates that Miriam sees this aspect of her work as little better than domestic service. The shift follows a sentence describing the "tedium" of her task in language that includes the idiom of Miriam but takes the form of narrative description. After a set of ellipsis points, the frequent sign of monologue in Pilgrimage, Miriam's consciousness takes over:

... Were there any sort of people who could do this kind of thing patiently, without minding? ... the evolution of dentistry was wonderful, but the more perfect it became the more and more of this sort of thing there would be ... the more drudgery workers, at fixed salaries ... it was only possible for people who were fine and nice ... there must be, everywhere, women doing this work for people who were not nice. They could not do it for the work's sake. Did some of them do it cheerfully, as unto God? It was wrong to work unto man. But could God approve of this kind of thing? ... was it right to spend life cleaning instruments? ... . the blank moment again, of gazing about in vain for an alternative ... all work has drudgery. That is not the answer. ... Blessed be Drudgery, but that was housekeeping, not someone else's drudgery. ... (2: 40)

The mixture of past and present tense verbs, questions, and elliptical references indicates that this passage combines narrated monologue and quoted monologue in focusing on Miriam's reflections on her job and her prospects for improving her lot. Her thoughts, stimulated by her physical actions, are limited to the question of the value of such work for the individual. She seems to appreciate the advances in the profession and to recognize that her own position with Hancock and the Orlyss is better than most. But she also indicates dismay at the prospects of women who enter the work force only to be stuck in low-paying, menial jobs.7 The use of the similar phrases "sort of people" and "this sort of thing" reveals a condescending attitude toward women who would willingly confine themselves to this work, a class snobbery evident elsewhere in Miriam's
attitudes. However, she reiterates the discourse of domesticity which endorses the same type of work if the worker is a wife or daughter in the family home. The phrase "the blank moment again, of gazing about in vain for an alternative," the only words that appear to belong to the narrator, suggests that Miriam's frustration with this job is a symptom of other frustrations in her life that she struggles to determine for herself.

Yet the narrative in this chapter indicates that Miriam is content with certain aspects of her work mainly because she feels a respect that borders on infatuation for Mr. Hancock. Narrated monologue presents her praise of him as a dentist: "no one could be quite like him. No other patients had the lot of his patients. No other dentist was so completely conscious of the patient all the time, as if he were in the chair himself. No other dentist went on year after year remaining sensitive to everything the patient had to endure. No one else was so unsparing of himself" (2: 41). The inflated rhetoric that the narrative attributes to Miriam hints at more than just professional respect; it hints at feelings that Miriam does not acknowledge. Through psycho-narration, the narrator indicates more specifically the nature of Miriam's feelings. As Mr. Hancock approaches her desk, Miriam seems "to sit through a long space waiting for him to speak, in a radiance that shaped and smoothed her face as she turned slowly and considered the blunted grave features, their curious light, and met the smiling grey eyes" (2: 48). The description of Miriam's face is not her own; it depends on an external view of her, a perspective other than her own. It suggests that her face reveals her physical response to his presence, a response not to him as a dentist, but as an attractive man. In both passages, and others throughout Pilgrimage, the narrator provides a subtle corrective to Miriam's perspective and
shows her responding to a man in a "feminine" way that she criticizes in other women.

The narrative seems to provide another corrective to Miriam's perspective in an implicit comparison between Mr. Hancock, Leyton Orly, and Mr. Orly that reveals her unacknowledged attraction to Mr. Hancock. In the description of Leyton at tea, the narrative stance is close to Miriam, looking at him but not through her eyes. Neither is the voice Miriam's, although it is tinged with her attitude through stylistic contagion:

She glanced impatiently at Mr. Leyton's bent unconscious form. His shirt and the long straight narrow ends of his tie made a bulging curve above his low-cut waistcoat. The collar of his coat stood away from his bent neck and its tails were bunched up round his hips. His trousers were so hitched up that his bent knees strained against the harsh crude Rope Brothers cloth. The ends of his trousers peaked up in front, displaying loose rolls of black sock and the whole of his anatomical walking-shoes. Miriam heard his busily masticating jaws and dreaded his operations with his tea-cup. (2: 69)

Miriam's impatient glance and dread framing the description of Leyton indicate that she is observing him and link the negative language describing his awkward posture, slovenly attire, and unpleasant manners with her attitude toward him. The connection with her attitude is clarified on the next page describing Mr. Hancock at tea: "his flat compact slightly wrinkled and square-toed patent leather shoes gleamed from under the rims of his soft, dark grey, beautifully cut trousers with a pleasant shine as he sat back comfortable and unlounging, with crossed knees in the deep chair" (2: 70). The context of this passage does not connect the content of it with Miriam; however, the similar positions of the two men suggest that Miriam or the narrative consciousness with Miriam's attitude in mind compares the two men to Mr. Hancock's distinct advantage. His better
fitting, finer quality clothes and his demeanor, relaxed but erect, are superior to Leyton's. Leyton sinks lower in the hierarchy of males when his father is added to the comparison on the following page; Mr. Orly "subsided into his chair, his huge bulk poised lightly and alertly, one vast leg across the other knee" (2: 71). Mr. Orly does not come up to Mr. Hancock's level, but he surpasses his son.

The comparison of the three men seems more to characterize Miriam at this point in her life than to characterize them. The three descriptions of the men, though separated by narrative time and space, imply a comparison of them that Miriam would be likely to make. Because the comparison is not specifically linked to Miriam, the narrator appears to endorse the implied conclusions. However, the negative description of Leyton does not constitute a definitive character portrait of him since the narrative portrays him more positively elsewhere. Nor does it indicate Miriam's entire opinion of him. In this comparison, the men are judged, by Miriam via the narrative consciousness, on the basis of their appearances and their adherence to specific middle-class codes of masculine dress and behavior. Mr. Hancock ranks higher because he provides a link to the comfortable middle-class, cultured life that Miriam knew before her father's bankruptcy. Although she desires to move beyond this life, with its restrictive view of women, she is unable to resist his offers to include her in lectures and parties, which demand conventional feminine behavior on her part. Ironically, Leyton contributes more to her quest for independence. Whereas Mr. Hancock always behaves toward her in ways consistent with the conventions governing relationships between women and men, Leyton teaches her to ride a bike, loans her cycling equipment, and gives her practical advice, all of which enable her to take a biking holiday alone, an experience that makes a significant change in her definition of her self. But the narrative suggests that
at this point Miriam's views of men and her relationships with them are still constructed by conventional middle-class perceptions of class and gender.

Psycho-narration frequently discloses Miriam capitulating to the feminine role that she condemns in more direct forms of narration. For example, through narrated monologue, she expresses her condemnation of women who "smile those hateful women's smiles--smirks--self-satisfied smiles as if everybody were agreed about everything. She loathed women" (1: 21). Similarly, in a letter she writes that she will not "'be party to the way of settling difference that is known as feminine'" (3: 486). But at times she becomes a smiling woman, as she does when she is caught up in feelings for Michael Shatov that become clear to the reader before she acknowledges them:

She smiled encouragingly towards his talk, hurriedly summoning an appearance of attention into her absent eyes while she contemplated his glowing pallor and the gaze of unconscious wide intelligence, shining not only towards her own, but also with such undisturbed intension upon what he was describing. She could think later on, next year, when he had gone away leaving her to confront her world with a fresh armoury. (3: 77)

The first sentence, conveyed through psycho-narration, focuses not on what Miriam thinks but on what prompts her thoughts and on the sensation aroused in her. The second sentence shifts to narrated monologue and focuses on her thoughts. It implies that Miriam sees her relationship with Michael as temporary and as intellectual rather than romantic. When he is gone, she will be able to think about what she has learned from him and put this knowledge to her own use. But the first sentence reveals that she has been watching him rather than listening to him. She is attracted not by what he says but by how he looks as he talks. The first sentence also reveals that Miriam succumbs, like the smiling women that she condemns, to conventional feminine deception to hide her
inability to attend to his words and to keep him talking there with her. The narrative technique offers a stance other than Miriam's that reveals feelings that she is barely aware she has or that she seems to misinterpret.

The failed sex scene between Miriam and her would-be lover Hypo is a complicated mixture of perspectives that also fixes Miriam in terms of conventional femininity, as mother and as sexual object. The shifting perspectives distance Miriam and the reader from the specific circumstances involved in the scene. After a break in the page, the scene shifts from Miriam and Hypo dining in a private room to them undressed but unable to have sex. The scene shift is initially presented through narrated monologue, a technique delaying the revelation that they are nude because Miriam's consciousness does not focus on the fact. The narrated monologue presents Miriam contemplating not present reality but Hypo's "constricted, biological way of seeing sex that kept him blind" and the barrier that it places between them (4: 231). With a switch to psycho-narration, the narrator presents Miriam looking at herself through the perspective of another. At Hypo's urging, Miriam sees herself but only through the mediating lens of her friend Amabel, who for a time is closer to her than any other person:

With the eyes of Amabel, and with her own eyes opened by Amabel, she saw the long honey-coloured ropes of hair framing the face that Amabel found beautiful in its "Flemish Madonna" type, falling across her shoulders and along her body where the last foot of their length, red-gold, gleamed marvellously against the rose-tinted velvety gleaming of her flesh. Saw the lines and curves of her limbs, their balance and harmony. Impersonally beautiful and inspiring. To him each detail was "pretty," and the whole an object of desire. (4: 231)

Miriam conflates her own point of view with Amabel's and sees herself in aesthetic terms, as an object of conventional beauty, in terms of purity and
motherhood. She gives meaning to her experience by adopting the perspective of Amabel, whose empathic understanding, Miriam thinks, takes presidency "over my life with others. She stands permanently in my view of life" (4: 251). But Miriam also sees from Hypo's perspective and considers herself as object of sexual desire. Psycho-narration emphasizes the distance between Miriam and her experience and extends the distance between the reader and the experience.

In the scene with Michael, Miriam seems unaware that her feminine construction is showing, but in the failed sex scene with Hypo, the narrative technique reveals that she recognizes her complicity. She rejects Hypo's perception of her as sexual object and, in her "solicitude" for him over their sexual failure, casts herself in a role imagined for her by Amabel; taking him in her arms and rocking him, she murmurs, "'My little babe, just born.'" She becomes the madonna that Amabel envisions, although she recognizes the inappropriateness of her behavior. This recognition does not prevent her, however, from denying her own convictions and reaching out to him, "dismayed to feel in him the single, simple, lonely helplessness of the human soul from which his certainties, though they seemed blind, had made him imagine him exempt, and wanting now only to restore him as swiftly as possible to his own world, even at the price of pretending she believed in it" (4: 232). Psycho-narration exposes her capitulating to the feminine role of self-denial and self-sacrifice. She voluntarily becomes the "womanly woman," sees from Hypo's perspective, and reaches out to assuage his vanity. Because she recognizes the source of her actions, she appears to be determining her own reality, but her choices for her autonomy are fixed within the prescriptions for feminine behavior prompting her to define her self in terms of his needs.
The scene in which Michael kisses Miriam also reveals her construction within the discourse of the feminine structuring desire and romantic love. Richardson uses psycho-narration to carry out her strategy of conveying her notion of "experience without reference" in this scene; the reference, the physical act of the kiss, is unclear until the following page. But this scene is also without experience because Miriam's experience of kissing is not presented. Instead, the narrator conveys her consciousness attempting to make meaning of her experience.

His solid motionless form, near and equal in the twilight, grew faint, towered above her, immense and invisible in a swift gathering swirling darkness bringing him nearer than sight or touch. The edges of things along the margin of her sight stood for an instant sharply clear and disappeared leaving her faced only with the swirling darkness shot now with darting flame. She ceased to care what thoughts might be occupying him, and exulted in the marvel. Here, already, rewarding her insistence, was payment in royal coin. She was at last, in person, on a known highway, as others, knowing truth alive. She stared expostulation as she recognized the celebrated nature of her experience, hearing her own familiar voice as on a journey, in amazed expostulation at the absence everywhere of simple expression of the quality of the state. . . . A voyage, swift and transforming, a sense of passing in the midst of this marvel of flame-lit darkness, out of the world in glad solitary confidence with wildly, calmly beating morning heart. (3: 192)

The language and psycho-analogies, the images that depict Miriam's thoughts, in this narration of a "kiss" are borrowed from the fiction of romance. Michael is imaged as large and powerful, as taking control. Miriam, in contrast, is weak, small, and submissive. The kiss takes on the fairy-tale quality of transformation, changing Miriam into an initiate of a society sharing a knowledge of "truth," a truth with a basis in the ideology of gender. The kiss awards her status, identity as a "woman" attractive to a man, the object of his attentions. She sees herself
as society sees her, as on the "known highway" toward her fulfillment in marriage.

This passage demonstrates Miriam's belief in her own autonomy and, at the same time, reveals the fallacy of self-determination and exposes the link between the discourse of individuality and an aspect of the discourse of domesticity, romantic love. Miriam appears to find solitude, to retreat into her individuality, even in a kiss, as she imagines herself "passing . . . out of the world in glad solitary confidence with wildly, calmly beating morning heart" (3: 192). The narrative tone is both sympathetic and mocking, emphasizing Miriam's naiveté and her inability to place her experience in rational terms, as it gives the reader a perspective on Miriam outside her own. It stresses her attempts to intellectualize her experience, her tendency to evaluate rather than feel. But more importantly, it demonstrates the position allotted to Miriam as a woman. The kiss opens up a path toward a domestic future that begins in romantic love and generally ends in marriage. This path holds the "truth" that others know and Miriam can now share. Moreover, this truth is possessed by Michael and attainable for Miriam only through her desire for him. The narrative technique in this scene exposes Miriam's construction within the ideology of the feminine. Despite her desire for independence and her professed aversion to marriage, she imagines herself in terms dictated by her cultural construction, as enhanced by her relation to a man and as transformed through her submission to him.

In the unfinished chapter-volume, March Moonlight, the narrative technique seems to allow Miriam more autonomy because quoted monologue becomes prevalent. Miriam appears to rewrite some of her past experiences, thereby determining a reality in retrospect. However, specific differences between the third-person account of Densley's implicit proposal of marriage in Dawn's Left
and the first-person remembrance of it bring to mind a number of questions concerning her authority. In the first account, presented through narrative description, psycho-narration, and dialogue, Densley speaks in his "gentlest voice" and murmurs "thoughtfully," "Isn't that where people go for their honeymoon?" Miriam waits "for words more in harmony than . . . this arch jocularity with the steady return of the strange new light within her" (ellipsis added). He apparently interprets her failure to respond as a rejection and says, "'Ye still scorn honeymoons!'" (4: 153). His face looks both "sad" and "stern" (4: 153). In the account, rendered in quoted monologue several years later, Densley asks his question in "his deepest tone, a little shaken." Miriam's failure to respond turns him into "an offended stranger" (4: 645). She remembers,

Even then I could have recalled him. Was it because I knew myself not only beloved but, henceforth, free from the inconveniences of living, as Hypo had remarked long ago, only just above the poverty line, that I had stepped out alone, in blissful silence? Or because I suddenly realized that speech and emotional display in face of a lifelong contract were out of place. (4: 645)

In the first account, though, she does attempt to recall him, "[b]ut he held her off with casual talk" (4: 154). She leaves in embarrassment and only slowly becomes reconciled to the outcome of their interview:

Yet she was approving the rescue of Densley. Vibrating within her, side by side with resentment, was relief. And as she surveyed the little back street, . . . she felt, with a comfortingly small pang of wistfulness, the decisive hour that had just gone by slide into its place in the past and leave her happily glancing along the shopfronts of this mean little back street. (4: 155, ellipsis added)

The bliss comes with her recognition that the street, long associated with her mother, no longer has the power to throw her back to the time of her mother's
death and to renew her feelings of guilt. Miriam, in her quoted monologue, fails to remember this crucial point.

The specific differences in the two accounts suggest differences in perspective. In the first account, Densley seems more tentative, almost jesting, not quite committing himself. In the second, his earnestness is implied in his shaking voice and offended manner. There are at least two possible reasons for the discrepancy. One is technical: the narrator may present Densley's approach as less obvious in order to reproduce the perception of Miriam, who only suspects his intention after she has had time to contemplate the experience. This method would follow Richardson's stated intention to present "experience without reference" and would lend support to Miriam's belief in individual self-determination. Another possibility is that, in recalling the episode, Miriam misremembers it, inadvertently making herself more in control and Densley less so. Either way, the two versions provide a perspective other than Miriam's that reveals her misapprehensions, that shows that she is not the sole authority over her reality. The first account also exposes Miriam's construction within the ideology of the feminine underscored by her willingness "to throw in her lot with his" (4: 155). On a more positive note, her revision converting her willingness to marry him into her choosing not to recall him to her side suggests a change in her subjectivity enabling her to define her self outside the discourse of romantic love and marriage.

Ironically, when the narrative most fails to meet Richardson's stated goals, to present Miriam's being contemplating her own reality, to present her "experience without reference," it most succeeds in undermining the ideologies in which it is grounded. When the narrative consciousness intervenes to qualify Miriam's perspective, it exposes the fallacy of the self-determining individual. It
also reveals her construction within the ideology of the feminine when she inadvertently capitulates in adopting attitudes and behaviors required for middle-class women. But in portraying Miriam's self, which she sees as constant, as in the process of changing, the narrative opens up the possibility for genuine independence because these changes point toward new definitions for the feminine self. And in detailing material circumstances that allow Miriam to gain physical and fiscal independence, Pilgrimage imagines a female character "whose identity," as Nancy K. Miller writes of Lucy Snowe in Villette, "is modulated through the cadences of work" (116). Consequently, Richardson's point of view questions the discourse of individualism and the associated discourse of the feminine naturalized by her narrative. In the next chapter, I will show Woolf's point of view working with similar results.
Notes

1 Letters between Veronica Grad and Rose Odle indicate that they considered Richardson selfish because she did not respond to their needs as they expected that she should (qtd. in Gillian E. Hanscombe, The Art of Life: Dorothy Richardson and the Development of Feminist Consciousness [Athens: Ohio UP, 1982] 169-186). Nonetheless, Richardson's letters indicate that she constantly responded to the needs of her husband at the expense of her own work. For example, in a letter to her friend Peggy Kirkaldy, dated December 3, 1928, she describes a typical day containing only isolated periods of writing an article, not her novel. Most of the day is taken up with housecleaning, dealing with merchants, and tending to Alan, who works at his drawing. She writes, "A. can't find his knife. Find knife. Attend to dinner. . . . Think out supper. Assemble same. A. at work. Clear tea. Make up fire" (Dorothy Richardson Papers, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale U).

2 Shirley Rose states that for Richardson, "consciousness is not experience per se, but where experience is finally meaningful to the individual" ("The Unmoving Center: Consciousness in Dorothy Richardson's Pilgrimage," Contemporary Literature 10 [1969]: 370).


4 Levy notes that Pilgrimage is one of the few works that represents "the radical attempt to preserve gender outside of the institutions that previously materialized it" ("Gendered Labor, the Woman Writer and Dorothy Richardson," Novel 25 [1991]: 70).

5 Cohn distinguishes narrated monologue from free indirect discourse because she applies her term only to the representation of inner speech, whereas free indirect discourse (or style indirect libre or erlebte Rede) represents both inner and outer speech (Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction [Princeton: Princeton UP, 1978] 109 ff).
6 See Backwater (2: 283) for Miriam's preoccupation with her hands as "her strength" but as unfeminine in their large size and "lack of feminine expressiveness."

7 In her column "Comments by a Layman" for The Dental Record, Richardson describes the position of "lady secretary assistant to a dentist" as providing a variety of work and better conditions than a city office, but as being "a 'blind-alley' profession" that could not "be pursued after early middle age" (36 [1916]: 541-542).
Chapter Five

Like the Mist in the Trees:

Point of View and Woolf's Feminine Narrators

Woolf's narrative strategies of point of view, like her representations of women, are grounded in the ideology of the feminine. Her narrative voice giving voice to perspectives of multiple characters—which recalls Richardson's "womanly woman" acting as "a focus for divergent points of view" ("Leadership in Marriage" 347)—suggests the dispersed feminine self embodied, in her novels, in Clarissa Dalloway and Mrs. Ramsay. Like these women, gesturing to protect the self and to diffuse the self in response to contradictory demands of their own identities and their societal duties, Woolf's feminine narrators also contract and expand, and as in the representation of character, these different movements yield identical results for the narrative consciousness. Narrative strategies that emphasize the consciousness of the character or appear to present thought or speech without mediation efface the narrator. The narrator appears to contract so that her presence is obliterated. Other techniques disperse point of view and voice among the characters; in these instances, the narrator expands, giving over the narrative to the characters. The distinction between these movements is blurred, however, because the result of either movement is the apparent absence of a dominating narrative ego. This ego is replaced by one that seems to be relational, self-denying, and self-sacrificing, in other words, one that fits the definitions of the culturally constructed feminine self. Although the movements of contraction and expansion fail to provide emancipation for Mrs. Dalloway and Mrs. Ramsay, who are locked into their situations, these movements afford a kind of freedom for the narrators because they dominate and control the characters to whom they give voice. In this way, Woolf's personalized feminine
narrators call into question the cultural definition of the feminine self by either subsuming the characters into the narrative consciousness, as in "Kew Gardens" and To the Lighthouse, or by underscoring the isolating divisions between individuals, as in Jacob's Room and The Years. In all four works, the narrators claim an authority and an autonomy for themselves granted, by the culture in which they narrate, exclusively to the masculine self.

Woolf joins other modernists in advocating the exclusion of the personality of the author from the literary text. She criticizes the techniques of Richardson and Joyce for allowing "the damned egotistical self," the overpowering personality of a character, to mar their novels. The effect of their method on the reader is a sense of "being in a bright yet narrow room, confined and shut in, rather than enlarged and set free, . . . centerd in a self which . . . never embraces or creates what is outside itself and beyond" ("Modern Fiction" 115).¹ For Woolf, this technique sets a trap that she would like to avoid. She asks, can one be "pliant & rich enough to provide a wall for the book from oneself without its becoming, as in Joyce & Richardson, narrowing & restricting?" (Diary 2: 14). Woolf's goal appears to be to find a fictional mind that can embrace and create "what is outside itself and beyond" without becoming itself the central focus of the fiction. The flip side of this problem is suggested in Bernard's question in The Waves: "But how describe the world seen without a self?" (287). These questions suggest an aesthetic dilemma involving the search for narrative techniques that minimize the role of the author, who dominates the nineteenth-century narrative. Bernard's question also suggests another kind of dilemma, however, one in which the problem is not the lack of an aesthetic technique, but of a self, a dilemma familiar to women prohibited, on the basis of their gender, from gaining autonomy as individuals, women who absorb the cultural value for
the individual but whose selves dissipate in the face of the demands of others. Woolf's fiction resolves both dilemmas by creating narrators who have the characteristics of the culturally constructed feminine but who also maintain individuality by dominating the texts, narrators who are both consonant with and dissonant from characters, who are effaced and fusing but also sometimes prominent and distant.\footnote{2}

Feminist critics commonly gender the traditional narrative perspective and voice, primarily distinguished by dissonance, as masculine, in Virginia Blain's words, as "the masculine voice of the omniscient narrator" (119). Many also characterize Woolf's style, revelatory of her rejection of this tradition, as distinctly feminine and feminist. Critics see Woolf's narrative techniques, such as multiple perspectives, fluidity of voice, absence of judgment and interpretation, all characteristics of the culturally constructed feminine self, in opposition to and subversive of "male rationality and narrative" (Minow Pinkney 60). These same techniques characterize writing labeled experimental. As Nancy Gray points out, experimental writing is "frequently recuperated as a means to invoke The Feminine to retain the culture's investment in gendered constructs of meaning." Experimental works by men are seen "as avant-garde uses of The Feminine" whereas works by women are seen "as instances of The Feminine" (4). Even critics who do not label these characteristics feminine writing and recognize them in the writing of male modernists (who are decidedly not feminist) claim that the characteristics distinguish Woolf's feminist aesthetic. Taking Gray's analysis of experimental writing a step farther, I want to suggest that Woolf's style is perceived as feminine because the characteristics of it parallel the characteristics of the culturally constructed feminine, as the characteristics of nineteenth-century narrative parallel those of the culturally
constructed masculine. We perceive Woolf's narrative strategies as feminine because we recognize them, consciously or unconsciously, as fitting the definitions of the feminine. In other words, both Woolf's narrative strategies and readers' perceptions of them are situated within particular cultures that share many assumptions about gender; consequently, claims for Woolf's feminist aesthetic have a basis in the ideology of gender difference.

Although I make no claim for Woolf's feminist aesthetic, I do contend that her narrative strategies reveal the cultural construction of a gendered subject. The narrators, or narrative minds, in most of her fiction are female. Moreover, it is possible to ascribe a personality to each of them. The first assumption rests in part on the element that Susan Sniader Lanser identifies as the extrafictional voice, the voice heard in the extrafictional apparatus, such as the title page (122-132). She suggests that the reader who notes the gender of the author indicated on the title page is likely to extend the "image of a female social identity" to the narrator even if the narrator is unmarked (167). Although all readers at all times will not necessarily share a specific image of feminine social identity, this image will likely be informed by the definitions of the feminine dominant in the discourse of the culture in which the writing is situated. The second assumption has a basis in Gérard Genette's critique of the inaccuracy of the designation of narrative as first-person or third-person "because the narrator can be in his narrative (like every subject of an enunciating in his enunciated statement) only in the 'first person.' Insofar as the narrator can at any instant intervene as such in the narrative, every narrating is, by definition, to all intents and purposes presented in the first person" (244). If all narrators could say "I," then they also could be subjects and, as such, could have personalities, "beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, desires, and interests" (Lanser 226-227). Each Woolf work is
dominated by a distinctive narrator whose voice, as Ian Gregor observes, has "its own inflections, its own nuances, its own register of feeling, and is not "shared with any particular character" (589). These narrative voices show signs of construction according to the cultural definitions of gender, but they differ in the extent to which they break free from this construction.

In "Kew Gardens," Woolf begins to work toward a technique that she discovers in Mrs. Dalloway and perfects in To the Lighthouse. This technique involves connecting characters on a subterranean level: "I dig out beautiful caves behind my characters; I think that gives exactly what I want; humanity, humour, depth. The idea is that the caves shall connect, & each comes to daylight in the present moment" (Diary 2: 263). The narrative strategies that achieve this connection in "Kew Gardens" and To the Lighthouse appear to efface and disperse the narrators but, in fact, foreground the narrative minds. Instead of creating communities of individuals, these narrators absorb individuals into their own identities. Jacob's Room also foregrounds the narrator as she attempts to connect despite her exclusion from the masculine society of her central character. But in Jacob's Room, as well as in The Years, the narrative strategies involving contraction and expansion call into question the possibility of connecting and stress the isolation of the individual. The Years, the last novel Woolf supervised through publication, not only admits the difficulties but seems to concede the impossibility of connecting isolated individuals. The narrative strategies in Woolf's fiction, giving voice and perspective to multiple characters, deauthorize the characters because these strategies deconstruct the notion of identity (London 143). At the same time, these strategies authorize and empower a feminine voice. In The Years, though, in rejecting the movement
to connect, these strategies also reject the culturally constructed relational feminine identity.

"Kew Gardens" introduces a narrative mind that seems to fulfill Woolf's mandate in "Modern Fiction" for an embracing and creating self and to answer Bernard's question. However, the connecting impulse of this mind results in a leveling of all elements that abolishes distinctions between things, people, and abstractions and leaves an impression of a distinctly personalized narrative self that dominates the text. The narrator recalls the culturally constructed feminine self: she is an effaced perceiver that also disperses herself and gives voice to everybody and everything within her field of perception. Yet the spatial position of the perceiver suggests a central, unified perceptual base near which people and other life forms pass. Moreover, the discourse is the narrator's; she rarely adopts the idiom of a character. The spatial position and uniform discourse define a dominant feminine personality controlling the narrative.

Because the narrator performs few of the functions of the traditional narrator, she appears effaced, but she reveals her presence in subtle ways. For example, the absence of narratorial tags to direct the dialogue appears to efface her. In the dialogue between Eleanor and Simon, the only tag, "he thought," comes at the beginning of a long passage of quoted monologue apparently shifting to dialogue with the question, "Tell me, Eleanor, d'you ever think of the past?" (90, 91). No narratorial tags, except quotation marks and indentations that suggest two speakers, indicate the movement from thought to speech. Similarly, in the "very complicated dialogue" between the two women of the lower middle class, these tags no longer function in the conventional manner:

"Nell, Bert, Lot, Cess, Phil, Pa, he says, I says, she says, I says, I says, I says--"
"My Bert, Sis, Bill, Grandad, the old man, sugar,
Sugar, flour, kippers, greens
Sugar, sugar, sugar." (93)

The narrator, as an ordering principle, all but disappears; she seems capable only of an inadequate recording of the words of the two women. She appears to relinquish control to the characters; nonetheless, her personality, revealed in the subtly conveyed attitude about class, dominates. The structure of the two sections stresses the comparative sophistication of the characters, underscoring the limited education and experiences of the two lower-middle-class women. The unconventional structure of the dialogue between the two women implies that they are not understandable to the perceiver, who appears to be in a class above them, and consequently, makes a value judgment about what they have to say. The narrator contradictorily both effaces herself, by eliminating signs of her presence, and asserts herself, through the structure of the dialogue.

The narrator also appears to efface herself by indirectly referring to the agency of perception. The narrator describes the movement of light from the point of view of "one": "falling into a raindrop, it expanded with such intensity of red, blue and yellow the thin walls of water that one expected them to burst and disappear" (90). Here "one" may function as the impersonal pronoun, but it also may function as a substitute for "I," as it does frequently in Woolf's diaries. In the diaries, "one" often obscures agency by distancing Woolf from opinions expressed. In the short story, the narrator also hides her "I" behind "one."

She uses the passive voice, with similar results, to indicate perception of the passing people. The old man "could be heard murmuring" and people "were spotted" (93, 95). The passive voice hints at the existence of a perceiver, but obscures the identity. The use of qualifying words and phrases like "perhaps" and "seemed" to suggest interpretation of an expression or action (92) adds to
the self-effacement of the narrator, for she is not always external to the characters that she speculates about. She describes William wearing "an expression of perhaps unnatural calm," suggesting that she is merely speculating about the feeling behind the expression on his face, yet she identifies his intention for touching a flower with his cane, "in order to divert the old man's attention" (92). The narrator selectively positions herself within or without the characters, sometimes effacing herself, sometimes revealing herself.

Qualifiers also indicate the narrator's dispersal, her expansion to consider the perspectives of "characters," like the snail and insect, that are not commonly allowed a point of view. The snail "appeared to have a definite goal in front of it"; in contrast, "the singular high-stepping angular green insect who attempted to cross in front of it" seems to wait "with its antennae trembling as if in deliberation" (91). The qualifying words "appeared" and "as if" indicate that the narrator is projecting herself to imagine the thoughts of the snail and the insect and giving them the ability to deliberate and set goals. Moreover, she positions herself spatially at their level, within the "[b]rown cliffs with deep green lakes in the hollows, flat blade-like trees that waved from root to tip, round boulders of grey stone, vast crumpled surfaces of a thin cracking texture" (91-92). She adopts a stance close to them and appears to be looking with them at the plants and stones in the flower bed. Like Clarissa Dalloway, who sees herself dispersed like the mist in the trees, the narrator disperses herself to give voice and perspective to these creatures of the non-human world.

The narrator, however, goes much farther in dispersing point of view. The snail considers, is "doubtful," and finally determines a course under the leaf (93). Horses become impatient; birds choose; "in the drone of the aeroplane the voice of the summer sky murmured its fierce soul" (92, 95). The animate and
inanimate alike see and speak through the narrative voice. Even spoken words appear to perceive: "words with short wings for their heavy body of meaning, inadequate to carry them far and thus alighting awkwardly upon the very common objects that surrounded them and were to their inexperienced touch so massive" (94). The words separate from the speakers and gain a substance of their own, apparently acquiring the ability to perceive through touch. The narrator in effect creates "a psychic life" for the spoken word. Allowing perception to everybody and everything, including the spoken word, blurs distinctions between them and imposes connections among them. The narrator links all objects, but instead of being fused into a harmonious whole, they are subsumed into the personality of the narrator, a dominant feminine consciousness.

Although the narrator is effaced and dispersed, specific signs of a strong central personality surface throughout the text. The spatial position of the narrator implies a central perceptual base, whose compass is narrowly confined, apparently in the vicinity of the oval flower bed. This central base is like the point to which Clarissa contracts her self prior to her dispersal at her party. Like Clarissa's diamond shape, the perceptual base makes a "meeting-point" for the disparate characters that pass through Kew Gardens (Mrs. Dalloway 55). Objects within the scope of the perceptual base become distinct; objects away from it, in contrast, are seen reduced in size and heard indistinctly. Away from it, the objects perceived by the narrator also seem to disperse. In addition, the language throughout the text is not specific to individual characters, but to a central voice. This discourse implies not a multiplicity of voices but an appropriation of all voices into one.
In the last paragraph, which John Oakland sees as "the universality of the voices" (267), the narrator seems not so much giving voice to the characters as giving substance to their voices even as the characters themselves dissolve:

Thus one couple after another with much the same irregular and aimless movement passed the flower-bed and were enveloped in layer after layer of green-blue vapour, in which at first their bodies had substance and a dash of colour, but later both substance and colour dissolved in the green-blue atmosphere. . . . Yellow and black, pink and snow white, shapes of all these colours, men, women and children, were spotted for a second upon the horizon, and then, seeing the breadth of yellow that lay upon the grass, they wavered and sought shade beneath the trees, dissolving like drops of water in the yellow and green atmosphere staining it faintly with red and blue. (95)

The characters do not speak, and only the word "sought" suggests their perceptions. The voice and the perception belong to the narrator as she watches from a great distance as the characters lose substance. At the same time, she gives their voices shape through her simile: "their voices went wavering from them as if they were flames lolling from the thick waxen bodies of candles" (95).

At the end of the paragraph, she creates more voices:

Voices, yes, voices, wordless voices, breaking the silence suddenly with such depth of contentment, such passion of desire, or, in the voices of children, such freshness of surprise; 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; on the top of which the voices cried aloud and the petals of myriads of flowers flashed their colours into the air. (95)

The narrator creates voices with no words; she subsumes their meanings into her own. As James Hafley notes, the focus in this passage is not on what the narrator describes but on "the act of describing" (38). The narrator is Woolf's "centred self" that "embraces or creates what is outside itself and beyond"
("Modern Fiction" 151). She creates lively perceptions for all within her compass and embraces all, grasping all within herself, thereby claiming an authority for herself that her culture reserves for the masculine self.

In To the Lighthouse, the narrator's presence is more subtly revealed, paradoxically, through the same techniques that appear to give the narrative over to the characters. Much of the "action" occurs on a psychic level within the consciousness of the narrator. The use of quoted dialogue without quotation marks as narrative tags, for example, blurs the distinctions between characters' thoughts and their spoken words, emphasizing the presence of a narrative consciousness holding both within it. Unlike Joyce, Woolf does not eliminate quotation marks altogether but instead uses them infrequently. Rather than completely renouncing the convention, she undermines its reliability as an indicator of quoted dialogue. She uses it occasionally to indicate speech within a longer passage that is, according to the context, also speech but that is not designated as such with quotation marks. And she uses it occasionally to indicate thought, as she does when Mr. Ramsay bids Cam and James, "'Walk up, walk up,' without speaking" (243). This intermittent use of narrative tags coupled with the narrator's proximity to multiple characters merges their spoken and unspoken ideas and feelings and subsumes the characters into a "common feeling [holding] the whole" that stresses the presence of the dominant connecting narrator (286).

In an ostensibly verbal exchange between Lily and William, their spoken and unspoken views of Mr. Ramsay merge in the absence of quotation marks that usually indicate dialogue, and these linked views connect them on a psychic level, within the narrative consciousness. Lily and William wonder "why he needed always praise; why so brave a man in thought should be so timid in life;
how strangely he was venerable and laughable at one and the same time," but the narrator does not specify whether their wondering is voiced or silent (70). It is unclear initially whether they share a view of Mr. Ramsay within the narrative consciousness or whether they have arrived at a shared view through a discussion of him. As the passage continues, it becomes a scene in which the ambiguous thoughts become more clearly part of a narrated dialogue:

Teaching and preaching is beyond human power, Lily suspected. (She was putting away her things.) If you are exalted you must somehow come a cropper. Mrs. Ramsay gave him what he asked too easily. Then the change must be so upsetting, Lily said. He comes in from his books and finds us all playing games and talking nonsense. Imagine what a change from the things he thinks about, she said. . . .

Yes, Mr. Bankes said, watching him [Mr. Ramsay] go. It was a thousand pities. (Lily had said something about his frightening her—he changed from one mood to another so suddenly.) Yes, said Mr. Bankes, it was a thousand pities that Ramsay could not behave a little more like other people. (For he liked Lily Briscoe; he could discuss Ramsay with her quite openly.) (70-71)

The conventional narrative tag "she said" suggests that the opinion is vocally expressed rather than silently thought, but the appearance of the verb "suspected" in the first sentence continues the ambiguity. Moreover, the first parenthesis in the second paragraph, indicating the comment to which William responds, does not match what Lily has said in the narrated dialogue. The ellipsis (not in the original) stands in for a description of Mr. Ramsay followed by a chapter break. The description indicates behavior that might have prompted Lily's comment summarized in the parenthesis. William does not appear to reply to the words attributed to Lily in the first paragraph, but rather to "something" that Lily has said that the narrator chooses not to narrate. Lily might have voiced aloud the sentences of the first paragraph, or she might have
thought them and merely commented on Mr. Ramsay's moods and their effect on her. This ambiguity suggests that the characters have affinities on a non-vocal level, that they and their thoughts are connected within an all-encompassing narrative consciousness.

In a scene in "The Lighthouse," involving Mr. Ramsay, Cam, and James, the characters are similarly merged on a psychic level. In this scene, though, what is ostensibly unspoken appears, through the narrative techniques, to be conveyed through spoken discourse. Cam and James are initially connected in their attitudes toward their father to such a degree that they seem to be thinking with one mind. The narrator's spatial proximity to both characters is revealed in her initial reference to them using the plural third-person pronoun in her psycho-narration of their dual resistance to his power. Silently they vow "to stand by each other and carry out the great compact—to resist tyranny to the death." The narrator makes no mention of this "compact" as a spoken agreement. It appears to arise from their shared fear of and anger toward their father in their struggle to break free from "his gloom and his authority" (246), but there is no evidence that they have spoken aloud of their feelings. In this scene, their individual thoughts are sometimes indistinguishable: "they hoped it would be calm. They hoped he would be thwarted. They hoped the whole expedition would fail, and they would have to put back, with their parcels, to the beach" (243). When their thoughts are identified individually, they are often linked through parallel structures: "So James could tell, so Cam could tell" (245). Even at the end of "The Lighthouse," after they have struggled individually to resist his authority, they seem unified in their capitulation: "What do you want? they both wanted to ask. They both wanted to say, Ask us anything and we will give it you" (307-308). This technique stresses the relation between people rather than their
individuality and emphasizes the presence of the narrator as the vehicle within which the characters relate.

The struggle involving Mr. Ramsay, Cam, and James, despite the divisive emotions behind it, also stresses their connection because it occurs within their consciousnesses rather than through verbal communication. A long passage containing a combination of quoted monologue, narrated monologue, and psycho-narration reveals Mr. Ramsay's motivation for seeking Cam's attention and his intention to gain a response from her: "I will make her smile at me, he thought. She looks frightened. She was so silent... He would make her smile at him. He would find some simple easy thing to say to her. But what? For, wrapped up in his work as he was, he forgot the sort of thing one said" (250). But his opening shot is an unproucative question (minus quotation marks) about her puppy. The actual struggle for Cam's loyalty occurs below the surface, on a non-vocal level that the three characters share. Although they sit like "calm, resolute people," Cam recognizes the inner demands of her father, who would have her respond, and her brother, who would have her resist (251). Her father, she realizes, entreats her "forgive me, care for me; while James the lawgiver, with the tablets of eternal wisdom laid open on his knee (his hand on the tiller had become symbolical to her), said, Resist him. Fight him... . . . Her brother was most god-like, her father most suppliant. And to which did she yield, she thought" (252). The psycho-analogy of James as lawgiver, emphasizing the presence of the narrator as mediator, establishes a context in which the physical actions of the characters matter much less than actions taking place within their consciousnesses. This silent struggle within the consciousnesses of the characters takes place within the larger consciousness of the narrator, the relational feminine consciousness.
Despite the connections forged through the consciousness of the narrator, the
text also hints at the difficulties, emphasized more strongly in *Jacob's Room* and
*The Years*, involved in relationships between individuals, the difficulties,
indeed, impossibility of knowing another. The narrator concedes that Cam and
James never know the thoughts of Mr. Ramsay (283). Although they silently
reach out to him in the boat, they fail to connect with him: "He sat and looked at
the island and he might be thinking, We perished, each alone, or he might be
thinking, I have reached it. I have found it; but he said nothing" (308). The
narrator is also unable to gain access to his thoughts. This inability to connect
undercuts the general impression of unity conveyed throughout the novel and
suggests the failure of the relational ego, explored more fully in *Jacob's Room*
and *The Years*. In these novels, the failure to connect dominates the text,
stressing the isolation of the individual.

*Jacob's Room* seems to place the difficulties of connecting within a polarity
between masculine and feminine modes of perception as exemplified in the
efforts of the narrator to relate to her protagonist. The narrator is, by virtue of
her sex, excluded from the sphere in which Jacob lives, the public sphere
inhabited by middle-class, Cambridge-educated men. Karen Lawrence suggests
that this cultural exclusion is the basis for Woolf's narrative technique, a
deliberate abdication of narrative authority "to circumvent and expose the pitfalls
of the egotism of traditional narration." This exclusion, according to Lawrence,
frees the imagination, netting Woolf an "aesthetic boon" (35). The narrative
strategy of exclusion, however, does not prevent the narrator, in keeping with
her cultural construction, from dispersing herself in an attempt to form links
between herself and the characters, including Jacob. Her status as an outsider
determines her spatial position with respect to individual characters depending on
the characters' positions within or without the sphere inhabited by Jacob. Consequently, she has greater access to those inhabiting the sphere to which her culture limits her, the private (domestic) sphere.

Jacob is infrequently the one who sees and generally is, instead, the object of another's perception. The first physical view of Jacob as a young man comes through Mrs. Norman who rides opposite him on the train. This incident testifies to the inadequacy of the exterior view in capturing another and emphasizes the narrator's position with respect to Jacob as comparable to Mrs. Norman's. The perspective on the scene belongs to Mrs. Norman, to whom the narrator gives voice through narrated monologue, mapping the woman's movement from fear of the unknown young man to recognition of him as a student, like her own son. She notices first that he is "powerfully built," which adds to her nervousness at being "shut up alone, in a railway carriage, with a young man." She determines "to decide the question of safety by the infallible test of appearance":

Taking note of socks (loose), of tie (shabby), she once more reached his face. She dwelt upon his mouth. The lips were shut. The eyes bent down, since he was reading. All was firm, yet youthful, indifferent, unconscious—as for knocking one down! No, no, no! She looked out of the window, smiling slightly now, and then came back again, for he didn't notice her. Grave, unconscious . . . now he looked up, past her . . . he seemed so out of place, somehow, alone with an elderly lady . . . then he fixed his eyes—which were blue—on the landscape. He had not realized her presence, she thought. Yet it was none of her fault that this was not a smoking-carriage—if that was what he meant. (30)

The narrator's spatial stance is close to Mrs. Norman, both looking at her and with her at Jacob. His shabby clothes, youth, and indifference persuade her that he is harmless. His indifference relieves her but also annoys her because she
interprets it as irritation on his part, irritation because he cannot smoke, a conclusion that she draws from the evidence of his age and sex.

In commenting on this scene, the narrator stresses the impossibility of knowing another, particularly if the two individuals are separated by age and sex: "Nobody sees any one as he is, let alone an elderly lady sitting opposite a strange young man in a railway carriage. They see a whole--they see all sorts of things--they see themselves" (30-31). Mrs. Norman's perception of Jacob is restricted by her exclusion from his social realm, which she knows only peripherally because she has a son who inhabits it too. She sees Jacob according to the cultural definitions determining middle-class Oxbridge masculinity, and she sees him through her own cultural construction. Mrs. Norman's outsider's stance parallels the narrator's since the narrator is female and ten years older than Jacob (94). Moreover, the process that the narrator follows in adopting Mrs. Norman's point of view exemplifies the primary means that the narrator uses to gain insight into Jacob: "One must do the best one can with her report. Anyhow, this was Jacob Flanders, aged nineteen. It's no use trying to sum people up. One must follow hints, not exactly what is said, nor yet entirely what is done" (31). The narrator concedes that her attempts to connect, to know, like Mrs. Norman's, will fail. Nonetheless, she relentlessly continues with her attempts "to sum people up," in particular Jacob.

The narrator's position of exclusion is best exemplified in the description of Jacob and his fellow students in their college rooms. Her spatial position is not only exterior to Jacob but also to the rooms she describes. She has access to the scene only because the students have left the window open, and from her position in the courtyard, she can see a portion of the room. The only sound she hears coming from the room is their laughter, and she must follow the
conversation by observing whose movements suggest speech. The narrative is thick with qualifiers, such as "presumably," "seemed," "as if," "perhaps," and "it may be" (44-45). They indicate the narrator's distance from the characters in her narrative. In addition, her speculations on the content of the conversation take the form of questions: "Was it an argument? A bet on the boat races? Was it nothing of the sort? What was shaped by the arms and bodies moving in the twilight room?" (44). As did Mrs. Norman, the narrator must rely on assumptions based on the cultural definitions of the masculine to guess at what might interest university students.

In contrast, the narrator has intimate knowledge about concerns within the private sphere. She aligns herself with Clara Durrant, for example, and outlines the duties of a typical day, which include buying stockings for a widow on relief, leaving cards, and arranging parties (84). The narrator also devotes herself to the question of the best choice of flowers for parties:

On the whole, though the price is sinful, carnations pay best;—it's a question, however, whether it's wise to have them wired. Some shops advise it. Certainly it's the only way to keep them at a dance; but whether it is necessary at dinner parties, unless the rooms are very hot, remains in dispute. Old Mrs. Temple used to recommend an ivy leaf—just one—dropped into the bowl. She said it kept the water pure for days and days. But there is some reason to think that old Mrs. Temple was mistaken. (83)

Although extensive attention to such a trivial topic suggests parody, the narrator is far more familiar with it than with the possible topics of conversation of the young men at Cambridge. She is also privy to thoughts of other inhabitants of the private sphere like Fanny Elmer and even minor characters like Mrs. Jarvis and Mrs. Pascoe.
Through the perspectives of these women and others, the narrator constructs her image of Jacob. In order to determine Jacob's maturity, she catalogues views of him from women who know him with varying degrees of intimacy. The chambermaid in Jacob's Greek hotel knows from "emptying his basin upstairs, fingering keys, studs, pencils, and bottles of tabloids strewn on the dressing-table" that "he had grown to be a man, and was about to be immersed in things." Her perspective is based not on a first-hand view of him but on contact with his possessions, which for her are signs of masculine maturity. Florinda knows the same fact "by instinct." His mother "even now suspected it" from reading his letter from Italy, "'Telling me,' she complained to Mrs. Jarvis, 'really nothing that I want to know'; but she brooded over it." She senses a division between herself and her son that comes with his newly gained position in the public sphere. Fanny Elmer feels a similar division between herself and Jacob "to desperation. For he would take his stick and his hat and would walk to the window, and look perfectly absent-minded and very stern too, she thought" (139). Her view of Jacob is, like Florinda's, based on an intimacy unavailable to the other two women. But she differs from Florinda in that she loves Jacob as Florinda never has. She sees Jacob as "grown to be a man" and "about to be immersed in things" because she senses his indifference to her and, like Betty Flanders, his position in a sphere she cannot occupy. The image of Jacob constructed from the perceptions of these women relies heavily on cultural stereotypes of masculine identity seen through feminine identity.

In the sex scene between Jacob and Florinda, the narrator adopts a maternal perspective in taking the point of view of Mrs. Flanders, a perspective that stresses the narrator's exclusion from Jacob's sphere. The narrator does not even gain access to Jacob's bedroom, as Florinda does. Instead, the narrator is
locked out of his sphere, to which women of Florinda's "sort" gain temporary admission (79), and is instead locked into the domestic sphere. Mrs. Flanders' perspective, lodged in her letter lying in Jacob's sitting room, appears to be the only one available to the narrator. She projects the feelings of the mother imagining "[b]ehind the door . . . the obscene thing." She recognizes the jealousy aroused in a mother at the prospect of her son engaging in sex: "Better, perhaps, burst in and face it than sit in the antechamber listening to the little creak, the sudden stir, for her heart was swollen, and pain threaded it. My son, my son--such would be her cry, uttered to hide her vision of him stretched with Florinda." Although the narrator judges the mother's attitude as "inexcusable, irrational, in a woman with three children living at Scarborough," her understanding suggests an affinity with Mrs. Flanders impossible with Jacob. The narrator gets no closer to Jacob's feelings than to the external view of him after the fact, "in his dressing-gown, amiable, authoritative, beautifully healthy, like a baby after an airing, with an eye clear as running water" (92). Jacob's feelings are only implied in the simile comparing him to a baby, whereas his mother's, although the narrator only imagines them, are more directly revealed.

When the narrator attempts to report Jacob's thoughts, she must rely on what she can infer. She suggests that Jacob esteems Clara and sees through Fanny's attempts to impress him by falsely claiming to like Tom Jones. But, according to the narrator, Jacob cannot abide the formality of tea that comes with seeing Clara: sitting "at a table with bread and butter, with dowagers in velvet" unable to "say more to Clara Durrant than Benson said to the parrot when old Miss Perry poured out tea, was an insufferable outrage upon the liberties and decencies of human nature--or words to that effect. For Jacob said nothing" (123). The narrator infers this opinion from Jacob's exterior: "Only he glared at
the fire" (123). She implies that this opinion of tea at Mrs. Durrant's keeps him at Fanny's fireside although he has little respect for her and prefers the company of Clara. The spatial position of the narrator is in the room with Jacob and Fanny, both observing them and seeing with Fanny, whose thoughts she narrates. She does not see with Jacob; instead, she speculates about his thoughts based on what she can infer from his demeanor.

At times, the narrator's attempts to see from Jacob's perspective result in a merging of her with him that obscures the agency of perception, but reveals little about Jacob. The narrator's position is close to Jacob and looking with him as he watches the street from the window of his London rooms. The narrator describes what Jacob sees and notes the feeling inspired by the scene:

The rashest drivers in the world are, certainly, the drivers of post-office vans. Swinging down Lamb's Conduit Street, the scarlet van rounded the corner by the pillar box in such a way as to graze the kerb and make the little girl who was standing on tiptoe to post a letter look up, half frightened, half curious. She paused with her hand in the mouth of the box; then dropped her letter and ran away. It is seldom only that we see a child on tiptoe with pity--more often a dim discomfort, a grain of sand in the shoe which it's scarcely worth while to remove--that's our feeling, and so--Jacob turned to the bookcase. (64)

This passage begins with an opinion, apparently presented through narrated monologue, that is prompted by the scene described in the next two sentences. The opinion appears to belong to Jacob because he is standing at the window looking out at the scene described and because the adverb "certainly" suggests the confidence in one's opinion that Jacob elsewhere exhibits. The first-person plural pronouns, however, suggest an identification between the narrator and Jacob that leaves unclear the source of the opinion and of the feeling described in the last sentence. The feeling might be one generally held or one held by the
narrator and Jacob. At any rate, the pronouns qualify the narrator's authority. She appears to project her own feeling onto Jacob rather than to narrate his thoughts.

Even the presence of the first-person pronoun in a passage devoted to Jacob does not insure identification of the "I" with him. The passage begins with a use of the second-person pronoun that opens up the possibility of quoted monologue: "It is a strange reflection that by travelling two days and nights you are in the heart of Italy." The narrator views the scene from the carriage with Jacob, and the reflection is one which Jacob is likely to make. But the idiom is not distinctly Jacob's, and the narrator frequently uses the second-person pronoun as an indefinite pronoun. Nonetheless, the three sentences that follow describe the scenery that Jacob sees from the train window, the scenery that would suggest the sort of reflection contained in the first sentence. Then the narrator appears to yield to Jacob: "And there is a lonely hill-top where no one ever comes, and yet it is seen by me who was lately driving down Piccadilly on an omnibus. And what I should like would be to get out among the fields, sit down and hear the grasshoppers, and take up a handful of earth—Italian earth, as this is Italian dust upon my shoes" (136). Convention indicates that the "I" is Jacob, but since the narrator has characterized herself through the use of the first-person pronoun, the identity of the speaker remains unclear, leaving open the possibility that the narrator, travelling with Jacob, seeing from the same spatial position, speaks for herself.

Like the narrators in "Kew Gardens" and To the Lighthouse, this narrator gives voice and perspective to multiple characters, but generally only to those who are excluded, as she is, from Jacob's sphere. Despite the narrator's attempts to disperse herself among the characters to build an image of Jacob, she
leaves us finally with an empty room and an impression of her personality that is in many ways more vivid than our impression of Jacob's. She is also more vividly personalized than the feminine narrators of "Kew Gardens" and To the Lighthouse, but she is less successful than they are at forging relationships with and between characters. The narrator in The Years is perhaps the least personalized of the narrators considered in this study, yet she is also engaged in contraction and expansion, effacement and dispersal, to allow for the voices and perspectives of multiple characters. As in Jacob's Room, though, the text stresses the futility of these movements by underscoring the impenetrable boundaries between individuals. The Years goes farther, though, in suggesting the failure of the relational ego to create any sort of community of characters.  

Two incidents in The Years function as analogies for the distance between individuals and between the narrator and the characters. In the first, Sara watches from her window as people attending a party come and go in a garden: "They were talking and laughing; but they were too far off for her to hear what they were saying. Sometimes a single word or a laugh rose above the rest, and then there was a confused babble of sound" (133). In the second, Eleanor sits in the drawing room listening to a noise in the hall: "It was the wind, but it was also a voice, talking. It must be Martin. But who could he be talking to, she wondered? She listened, but she could not hear what he was saying because of the wind" (155). In both incidents, the physical distance between the listener and the speakers prohibits understanding, but another gulf also separates them. Sara can only imagine party conversation because she does not go out in society, prevented perhaps by her deformed shoulder. Eleanor's gender seems as much a barrier to conjecturing about what Martin might be saying as the door that separates them: "She could not hear what he was saying, but from the sound of
his voice it came over her that he must have a great many love affairs. Yes—it became perfectly obvious to her, listening to his voice through the door, that he had a great many love affairs. But who with? and why do men think love affairs so important? she asked as the door opened" (155). Reminiscent of Mrs. Norman, Eleanor can only define her brother in terms of the stereotypes of masculine behavior, which her own gender prohibits her from comprehending. As in these two incidents, the barriers between people depend on their situation, on their gender and class and the definitions governing both. But the barriers depend on something else, on an inability to express oneself, to make oneself understood using talk, "'the only way we have of knowing each other,'" as Rose observes (171). And in this novel, the narrator’s consciousness does not provide a place within which the characters can communicate on a non-vocal level.

The boundaries between this narrator and the characters make her one of Woolf’s most dissonant. In a single scene, her distance shifts frequently, aligning her sometimes with minor characters to observe the principal characters. These external perspectives occur often in Woolf’s fiction, but usually they emphasize connections, as they do in Mrs. Dalloway. In The Years, they stress differences, namely class and gender differences, and the divisions that these differences accentuate. In a scene in which Eleanor rushes home for luncheon, the narrator shifts position from Eleanor to a man on the bus watching her back to her and then to Mrs. Lamley, the proprietor of a neighborhood shop. The perspectives of the man and Mrs. Lamley on Eleanor define her as a late-Victorian type. The man sizes "her up; a well-known type; with a bag; philanthropic; well nourished; a spinster; a virgin; like all the women of her class, cold; her passions had never been touched; yet not unattractive" (102). As the man fixes her with his gaze, he labels her negatively
as a redundant woman, "a spinster," typical of her class, "cold," and meddling under the guise of doing good, but having no real warmth or passion. He sees her through his own masculine identity and through cultural assumptions about unmarried (or unmarriageable) upper-middle-class women. Mrs. Lamley views Eleanor in the same light but with sympathy rather than scorn: "It was such a pity she didn't marry--such a mistake to let the younger sister marry before the elder. But then she had the Colonel to look after, and he was getting on now" (103). Mrs. Lamley's perspective is also informed by cultural codes that govern the lives of women in Eleanor's class. These external perspectives make Eleanor an object, either of ridicule or pity. They neutralize any authority allowed Eleanor when the narrator gives her a voice and perspective. They also place a barrier between the reader and Eleanor that corresponds to the barrier between characters.

These barriers are obvious even between members of the same family, or perhaps especially between members of the same family. The shifting position of the narrator suggests that in this novel the caves of the past behind the characters fail to connect in the present. Delia's party emphasizes this disjunction. Peggy and North must "fall back on childish slang, on childish memories, to cover their distance, their hostility" toward each other (395). But their narrated thoughts reveal different memories of their shared past and negative perceptions of each other's present life. Moreover, these thoughts do not seem congruent with their cool conversation about the young woman that North has met (396). The comical meeting between Peggy and deaf, old Patrick consists of her questions and his misapprehensions triggering a conversation in which the caves of their private pasts almost connect only when she inadvertently laughs at a funny story that she has not heard because she has been following her
own thoughts instead (352). The division between them is underscored by the narrator's proximity to Peggy and distance from Patrick and from their spoken words. The narrator presents Peggy's silent thoughts rather than the oral conversation. The narrator's stance also emphasizes the disjunction between the inner thoughts and the public words of a character. Peggy has an idea that she must express, but she fails because the words come out wrong. Although the narrator presents both Peggy's thoughts and her speech, she reveals not the idea, but Peggy's feelings about her failure to convey her idea. The narrator's limited access stresses disconnections between characters and within characters. She provides the reader with fragments of thought and conversation, thoughts that do not match words, words that fail to respond to other words.

In The Years, as in Jacob's Room, the narrator's limited scope suggests the inadequacy of the relational ego as a means to connect individuals isolated by barriers of gender and class.¹² By giving her narrators feminine characteristics in "Kew Gardens," To the Lighthouse, and Jacob's Room but allowing these narrators to dominate the texts, Woolf seems to call into question the assumptions about essential femininity and to expose these assumptions as part of the cultural construction of gender identity. In The Years, she seems to go farther in rejecting the culturally constructed feminine self as an identity for her narrator. If one were to argue for Woolf's feminist aesthetic, one might base this argument in these dominant feminine narrators who undermine their own femininity.
Notes

1 In "Modern Fiction," Woolf is writing about her generation of writers, in contrast with Wells, Bennett, and Galsworthy. Her specific example is Joyce, but her remarks apply to Richardson as well.

2 These terms are borrowed from Dorrit Cohn's *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* ([Princeton: Princeton UP, 1978] 26). For an explanation of these terms and others used in this chapter, see my previous chapter on Richardson’s narrative techniques.

3 Makiko Minow-Pinkney, in *Virginia Woolf and The Problem of the Subject* (Brighton: Harvester, 1987), contends that Woolf’s style opposes traditional masculine narrative (60, 59). Karen Lawrence expresses a preference for "the wonderfully fluid narration in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, which does allow privileged entry into the minds of the main characters and avoidance of the egotistical narrative self" ("*Gender and Narrative in Jacob’s Room* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,*" *James Joyce: The Centennial Symposium* [Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1986] 35). Sandra Kemp discusses Woolf’s work as an example of "feminist modernist fiction," which involves, in her view, "fiction as a particular kind of vision: 'seen without a self'" ("'But How Describe a World Seen Without a Self' Feminism, Fiction and Modernism," *Critical Quarterly* 32 [1990]: 104). All of these critics avoid essentialism, but imply that the characteristics they observe in Woolf’s writing are feminine in their identification of contrasting characteristics as masculine. Pamela Transue, however, observes that Woolf’s allowing the point of view "to float free" suggests "a willingness to share authority, to give as much credibility to the perceptions of others as one does to one’s own," and she sees this technique as "decidedly female" (*Virginia Woolf and the Politics of Style* [Albany: State U of New York P, 1986] 108). For a different approach to the question of Woolf’s feminist aesthetic, see Pamela L. Caughie’s *Virginia Woolf and Postmodernism: Literature in Quest and Question of Itself* (Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1991). Caughie is interested not in revealing the "essence" of Woolf’s feminist aesthetic but in understanding how such an aesthetic "comes about" (20).

4 Rita Felski, in *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1989), makes a convincing case against the
arguments for a feminist aesthetic. See in particular chapter one, "Against Feminist Aesthetics."


How far from the mark is a reading that identifies (often without thought) the 'I' with a woman because a woman wrote the story—or worse with Virginia Woolf because she wrote it—and then looks to the voice's subject as to some revelatory 'idea' or 'message.' Nothing, evidently—not even the explicitly male narrator of Orlando—will stop this kind of misreading; and yet of course the only unfortunate consequence is that to read this way is to lose (I surely believe) all the art. (35) Hafley, however, apparently identifies the narrative voice of The Voyage Out as masculine in his description of the voice changing 'like a boy's at puberty into a pretty steady bass accompanying Rachel's sadly arrested voyage' (41). Hafley's irritation with critics who focus on the gender of Woolf's narrators and his own implicit assumptions about the gender of these narrators suggests another assumption about the nature of narrative authority. As Lanser notes, '[t]he use of the generic 'he,' which subsumes the female within the male, not only symbolizes a failure to recognize gender in the study of point of view but also perpetuates the idea that writers and narrators are properly male or that women writers and narrators speak and are heard as men' (The Narrative Act: Point of View in Prose Fiction [Princeton: Princeton UP, 1981] 46-47). Sharon Hohner Sweeney's 1989 unpublished dissertation, in which she uses the masculine pronoun to identify all Woolf's narrators with the exception of the one in Jacob's Room ("Using Gerard Genette's Narrative Theory to Study Virginia Woolf," Drew University, 44), is evidence that some readers continue arbitrarily to see narrators as masculine.

6 J. Hillis Miller observes that personality is generated by language: "The novel as a genre, 'almost one might imagine,' is no more than the systematic and highly conventionalized exploitation of the potentiality within ordinary language to generate and project manifold illusions if selfhood, in the wind or in the light if not in some 'he' or 'she' named 'Mr. Ramsay' or 'Lily Briscoe'" ("Mr.

7 The term deauthorize, as applied to Woolf's narrative strategies, comes from Bette London's The Appropriated Voice: Narrative Authority in Conrad, Forster, and Woolf (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1990). These techniques, according to London, deauthorize the characters who speak because they appropriate other voices and are themselves appropriated, "subsumed by more powerful voices, absorbed into the narrative matrix, reduced to the configurations of prescribed cultural exchange" (132, 143). These deauthorizing techniques, in London's view, also present a narrative voice that "resists self-identification" (143). Compare Virginia Blain, who notes that in Jacob's Room, "Woolf's technique deconstructs the whole notion of an integrated self as a unifying principle either for characterization or for narration" ("Narrative Voice and the Female Perspective in Virginia Woolf's Early Novels," Virginia Woolf: New Critical Essays, ed. Patricia Clements and Isobel Grundy [Totowa, NJ: Barnes, 1983] 133). I agree that Woolf's techniques of narrative voice and perspective do obliterate distinctions that serve to establish identity, but, particularly in The Years, they also accentuate boundaries between individuals. Moreover, they emphasize a controlling voice, a narrator whose presence is felt as the voice containing all other voices.

8 Compare John Oakland ("Virginia Woolf's 'Kew Gardens,'" English Studies 3 [1987]: 264-273) who asserts that "Woolf is clearly the third person omniscient narrator who reveals as much (or as little) as she wishes." However, Oakland sees the narrator and the characters as making up "a collective theme-voice" that results in a "fusion," "an organic whole" (267). Hafley contends that the narrator is "the true subject of the story" (37). In his view, though, the narrator speaks "beyond the confines of personality," but "for a self alone" (42).

9 For example, Woolf attributes comments about Katherine Mansfield to "one": "We could both wish that ones first impression of K.M. was not that she stinks like a--well civet cat that had taken to street walking" (The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Vol. One 1915-1919, ed. Anne Olivier Bell [New York: Harcourt, 1977] 58); and in responding to Mansfield's death: "At that one feels--what? A shock of relief?--a rival the less? . . . And then one pitied her" (Diary II 1920-1924 226). The use of "one" here suggests Woolf's ambivalence toward
Mansfield, who was a rival but also a fellow writer with whom Woolf felt able to discuss writing.

10 In Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature (trans. Willard R. Trask [Princeton: Princeton UP, 1953]), Erich Auerbach calls the narrative technique in To the Lighthouse "the multipersonal method with synthesis as its aim" (536). This technique leaves the impression that the narrative comes entirely through the characters with no intervention from an authoritative narrator. But as Judith Espinola argues, the novel contains "a controlling narrative presence" through which the perceptions of the characters are "filtered" (30). This narrator is the "semi-transparent envelope" of "Modern Fiction" (150), and according to Espinola, she controls the narrative through her own narrative speech and indirect discourse, including "indirect speech" and "free indirect speech" (31-36; 36-40).

11 Rachel Blau DuPlessis, in her chapter "I" Rejected; "We" substituted": The Later Novels of Woolf," sees "a communal protagonist and a collective language" substituted for narrative forms that focus on the individual (Writing Beyond the Ending [Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985] 163). Although the novel gestures toward community, the divisions between individuals, between characters and between the narrator and the character, remain distinct.

12 Patricia Waugh (Feminine Fictions: Revisiting the Postmodern [London: Routledge, 1989]) points to techniques that "undermine the concept of fixed subjectivity and suggest a more fluid, social, relational view of identity." I concede that the techniques that Waugh mentions, "the inconsequential interludes, the conversations left unfinished, the repetition of the same phrase by different characters" (124), work in this way, but I maintain that the narrative consciousness calls this view of identity into question.
Conclusion

Rita Felski contends that a text is "feminist only insofar as its content or the context of its reception promote such a reading" (32). Measuring Richardson's and Woolf's fiction against Felski's guideline underscores the problems connected with assessing the fiction of the two writers with respect to a feminist discourse. Early readings of the chapter-volumes of Pilgrimage, such as Bryher's reading of them as an accurate account of the experiences of contemporary women (168) and Woolf's observation of Richardson's development of "the psychological sentence of the feminine gender" ("Romance and the Heart" 229), suggest an initial reception of Richardson's fiction as feminist. More recent studies of both writers indicate that their fiction is increasingly read within a context of feminism.¹ But there is much in the content of their fiction that argues against such readings because their texts valorize dominant ideologies that continue to subordinate women. As I have shown, though, these texts also expose these same ideologies by subverting them. Although this subversion or "'negative aesthetics,'" as Felski argues, does not necessarily have any relationship to feminism as a political practice (31-32), I do see a value in the fiction of Richardson and Woolf for a feminist discourse in the conflicted relationship of both to the dominant ideologies of their culture and, to a significant extent, of the present culture. Both writers add to the dialogue about the individual and the feminine that continues to concern women.

The question of the individual and the feminine self explored in the fiction of Richardson and Woolf has relevance for women engaged in a feminist discourse. Nancy K. Miller notes that women "have not had the same historical relation of identity to origin, institution, production, that men have had." Women have
"juridically been excluded from the polis"; consequently, the "female subject" is already "decentered, 'disoriginated,' deinstitutionalized." This different relation to identity makes the decentered self, adumbrated by modernism and assumed by post-modernism, less appealing to women than to men (106). As Felski aptly puts it, the "assertion that the self needs to be decentered is of little value to women who have never had a self." Felski credits this circumstance with the continuing interest of women writers "in defining an independent identity beyond that shaped by the needs and desires of those around them" (78). This problem certainly interested Richardson and Woolf, whose female characters seek protection for an individuality threatened by societal demands that they play the feminine role of creating and sustaining community. As Elizabeth Fox-Genovese explains, this feminine role of sustaining community values anchors masculine individualism--masculine rationality, accountability, and autonomy--from which women are excluded (16-17, 123). This exclusion increases the difficulty of defining an individuality for a feminine self.

The representations of female characters in fiction by both Richardson and Woolf indicate adherence to different notions of individuality; nonetheless, these apparently contrasting positions share a value for a transcendental self and reveal situation within the linked discourses of the individual and the feminine. Miriam's (and Richardson's) belief in an untouched, unified self contrasts with Mrs. Dalloway's and Mrs. Ramsay's inclination to expand a dispersed self. Miriam, ostensibly autonomous and self-determining, appears to adopt a masculine position whereas Clarissa and Mrs. Ramsay seem to fit the definition of the feminine self as relational and self-denyng. But Woolf's women also gesture toward a unified self in their contractions to preserve individuality in the face of demands to fill their social roles. And Miriam shows signs of her
cultural construction as feminine in her capitulation to demands that she fill a conventionally feminine role in her work and in her relationships, in particular with men. In addition, all three women rely on the notion of a transcendental self, Miriam in her faith in an essential self untouched by material circumstances and Clarissa and Mrs. Ramsay in their connection with other people and things that supposedly lifts them above their material circumstances. The selves imagined by these women reveal both a desire for an individuality valued in their culture but generally reserved for men and an internalization of the codes of femininity inscribed in this culture. The characterizations of Lily Briscoe and Mary Datchet point toward the possibility of a redefinition of the self that avoids a reiteration of the discourses of a transcendental, essential individuality and a self-denying femininity. Both imagine a feminine self that is not located exclusively in a private space or in the needs of others.

The strategies of point of view in the fiction of both writers reveal similar positions and similar contradictions within these positions, but they also undermine the ideologies in which they are grounded, the discourses that they seem to naturalize. In Pilgrimage, the narrow focus on Miriam's perspective and the use of a narrative voice merging with hers parallel her belief in her self as an autonomous individual. But the dual perspective provided through the narrator, who details Miriam's changing circumstances and perceptions of her identity, undercuts Miriam's sense of autonomy and self-determination and her belief in an untouched self, thereby exposing the transcendental self as a fictional construct. In Woolf's fiction, the female narrators appear to coincide with the culturally constructed definitions of the feminine in their dispersal of perspective and voice among multiple characters. However, in their failures to connect the isolated characters to whom they give voice, they expose the cultural barriers of
gender and class that prevent them from making connections, thereby
undermining the notion of the feminine as relational. Moreover, in their
domination of the narratives, they gain an autonomy generally denied women.
Consequently, these personalized narrators achieve a kind of freedom that eludes
Woolf’s female characters and Richardson's Miriam.

Richardson's undermining of individualism and Woolf’s, of the feminine,
ideologies in which their texts are based, are subversive movements, and
subversion provides an unstable ground on which to build an argument for a
feminist aesthetic. Nonetheless, the instability in their texts, the tension between
the individual, transcendental, essential feminine self that dominates their fiction
and the situated self implicit in their representations of women and their
narrative strategies, contributes to the dialogues necessary for the development
of feminist discourses.
Notes

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