

Michael Patrick Hart’s essay, “‘That Detestable Place:’ Destroying (and Rebuilding) Cambridge with Virginia Woolf,” sees into the depths of Woolf’s creative and academic agendas. When discussing her fervent fury at the anti-feminist and misogynist foundations of Cambridge, Hart identifies how

[p]revious Woolf scholars, for the most part, have squarely placed her in the “burn-it-down” camp when it comes to the academy. However, Woolf also promoted the idea of recreating the academy just as fervently as she called for dismantling it. Woolf’s letters, essays, and short fiction—in particular her story “A Society”—illuminates her cyclical approach of building, destroying, and rebuilding the university as an institution.

Hart traces the not-very-deeply-hidden subtext of anger throughout Woolf’s writings and how that anger fueled her passion for (re)envisioning what a truly progressive liberal arts education and approach to literary studies would look like. Hart writes: “the Woolf Academy students would create fictional texts and write into existence the world they want to see.” And this is the power of *logos*, of storytelling, and of art—to rebuild the shopworn tools and to create new realities from words.

Elissa Greenwald’s essay, “Public Spaces and Private Places in *The Portrait of a Lady* and *Mrs. Dalloway*,” is exemplary in her comparison of what may be two of the most frequently taught texts in the public school systems of the United States. Greenwald uses James’s architectural metaphors to explain subjectivity and character development. She then applies this motif to Woolf’s themes regarding the murky and permeable boundaries of public versus private spheres of existence. Greenwald examines both *The Portrait of a Lady* and *Mrs. Dalloway* for how consciousness reflects structure (and vice versa) and asserts “*Mrs. Dalloway* embodies this view through Woolf’s use of stream of consciousness. Clarissa Dalloway, the protagonist, shares not only the London streets but her very perceptions with others: strangers, friends, and especially World War I veteran Septimus Smith.”

dichotomous attitude toward authorship. For instance, he favors the writers of the distant past, whose creations Jacob and Timmy Durrant feel were only intended for them: “‘Probably,’ said Jacob, ‘we are the only people in the world who know what the Greeks meant’” (122).

The novel hints that Jacob’s literary preferences are not so decisive. While the impressionable Fanny Elmer begrudgingly reads Henry Fielding’s *Tom Jones* to entice Jacob’s affections, she recalls a past conversation with him: “For he never read modern novels. He liked Tom Jones” (200). These sentences, however, present an oxymoron to the reader. Although it is an eighteenth-century novel, *Tom Jones* is considered a “modern” text when compared to the “ancient” literature of the Greeks. Jacob prefers to read Greek and Latin works but he does, according to Fanny, enjoy *Tom Jones*. In refusing to alter the sentence to more logical semantics—“For he never read modern novels. [*But*] he liked Tom Jones”—the narrator aligns Jacob’s tastes with an eighteenth-century novelist who was known to be a hack and solitary writer. The omitted “but,” therefore, echoes Jacob’s, the narrator’s, and perhaps Woolf’s precarious perception of what is considered valuable authorship. As Chan puts it, “the narrative claims to depict Jacob’s life, yet simultaneously undercuts its own ability to represent and understand him” (21). Indeed, the authorial trajectory of Fielding himself can also be viewed as akin to Woolf’s own. Fielding, for example, was also a journalist and revelled in this vocation for at least five years. Despite his career, however, he was known to speak vulgarly about this hackish form of authorship. As Iona Italia points out, “[he] comments acidly in 1752 that most journalism serves only as toilet paper: the large number of periodicals proves ‘there are . . . many B—ms in the World [as there are mouths]’” (1).

While Byron’s works and literary aesthetics mirror and appeal to Jacob’s own experiences, there is also a sense that the poet’s enterprising spirit was aroused in Woolf. Indeed, Byron was not solely confined by the standards of refined aestheticism bestowed upon him in his time, and he actively participated in more commercial spheres. By “rapidly transition[ing] from manuscript,

and monumental time of feminine immanence (Woolf, *Dalloway* 8; Castle 238).

Simone de Beauvoir discusses the concepts of transcendence and immanence: transcendence meaning the active and dynamic personal growth that nurtures an individual to surpass the limits of a basic human existence, and immanence referring to the static state of repetitive stagnation when an individual is denied a transcendent lifestyle. de Beauvoir recognizes that both experiences of transcendence and immanence are essential to personal growth, writing that “to go beyond itself, it must maintain itself; to thrust itself toward the future, it must integrate the past into itself” (1056). Putting this into conversation with Kristeva’s notion that women have been excluded from the “project, teleology, linear and prospective unfolding” through being trapped in the “cycles [and] gestations [of] eternal recurrence,” there is a clear explanation for why Clarissa possesses such a strong “grief for the past” (Kristeva 16). Unable to “thrust herself toward the future,” Clarissa is confined to the cyclical repetition and monumental stagnation of heteronormative feminine time.

The temporal impositions within heteronormative female development narratives, Marianne Hirsch writes, are “a death warrant” (26). Once fulfilling the patriarchal expectations of marriage and motherhood, “her life is static; ahistorical” (26). Although physically, Clarissa is permitted to enter the dynamic physical space of urban London and its “swing, tramp, and trudge; [its] bellow and the uproar [,]” she is continuously reminded of the heteronormative temporal framework she is confined to and its imposing expectations (Woolf, *Dalloway* 4). The “leaden circles” of Big Ben’s chimes that sound a “warning” within the first pages of the novel have been long interpreted by critics as “a great masculine bully” (Woolf, *Dalloway* 4; Marcus 6). This Bergsonian rejection of spatialized time through the symbol of Big Ben, who “constantly reminds us of the contrast between the external, quantitative time and the inner, qualitative time,” also doubles a critique of the heteronormative notion of female development (Hasler 148–49). Suzette A. Henke states that whenever Clarissa hears Big Ben, “she cuts her life into

(16). More than a plurality of independent voices, Bakhtin identifies that a combination of voices is woven into a tapestry of distinct yet collective ways: “In the novels, the major characters and their worlds are not selfenclosed [sic] and deaf to one another; they intersect and are interwoven in a multitude of ways” (72). Consequently, there is no single truth, but many truths,⁶ and it is the different voices of the text that are juxtaposed, even confronted, which reveal them. But, according to Bakhtin, this narrative technique “presupposes a radically new authorial position with regard to the represented person” (57). It is about “the discovery of a new integral view on the person” (58). For Woolf, it is “the common life [that] is the real life and not of the little separate lives which we live as individuals” (*Room* 113). Indeed, the modern novel to which Woolf and Hébert aspire should be able to render life in its totality.

The two novelists consequently claim the plurality of identity, which would be a powerful motive for creation. In 1982, when *In the Shadow of the Wind* had just been completed, Hébert stated in an interview, “Perhaps the human being is a being full of contradictions. There are people who succeed in creating unity within themselves. Me, I did not make a unity in me. Fortunately, because that would mean the death of many of my characters” (qtd. in Vanasse 444).⁷

In October 1931, shortly after the publication of *The Waves*, Woolf made a similar statement in a letter to her friend Goldworthy Lowes Dickinson: “I’m getting old myself—I shall be fifty next year; and I come to feel more and more how difficult it is to collect oneself into one Virginia; even though the special Virginia in whose body I live for the moment is violently susceptible to all sorts of separate feelings” (*Letters* 4, 397). But the creation of a polyphonic work is not easy. On July 7, 1931, Woolf wrote in a letter to her friend Ethel Smyth, noting, “Its [sic] not the writing of the *Waves* that takes time, but the architecture: and its [sic] not right yet” (*Letters* 4, 354). The narrative construction is a problem for Woolf, as well as for Hébert who also affirms:

I fumbled a long time before finding the right tone [for *In the Shadow of the Wind*]. I started by telling all this in the third person: but there

love-letter in literature” (202), fully acknowledging that it was written about his mother in earnest by Woolf.

In Woolf’s letters, it becomes obvious that she equates “red, red roses” as symbolizing an intense burning passion. Reminiscing in “A Sketch of the Past,” the author relates her first experience of passion with feelings arising from the engagement of her sister, Stella Duckworth to Jack Waller Hills. She states: “My first vision—so intense, so exciting, so rapturous was it that the word vision applies—my first vision between a man and a woman. It was to me, like a ruby; the love I detected that winter of their engagement, glowing, red, clear, intense (*Moments of Being* 105). Woolf later exclaims: “My love’s like a red, red rose, that’s newly sprung in June” (105). It seems clear that roses, glowing rubies, and vibrating reds are significant as a burning passion to Woolf.

Echoes of Additional Pre-Raphaelite Paintings in the Works of Virginia Woolf

How much was Woolf influenced by Burne-Jones’s paintings? Martin alleges that *Mrs. Dalloway* echoes the fairy tale “Cinderella” due to the clock often striking twelve at various points in the novel. Taking that notion further, Alfred Lord Tennyson’s poem, “The Day Dream,” describes a noise of thundering clocks striking during the pivotal awakening scene of *Sleeping Beauty*. Also, Burne-Jones’s 1863 painting of “Cinderella” features a figure in a green dress with a large patch near the hem. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, the protagonist, Clarissa Dalloway plunges her hand into a closet to find a dress for a party: “She gently “detached the green dress and carried it to the window. She had torn it. Someone had trod on the skirt [*near the hem*]” (55). Although the dress is described as silky and shimmering, at the moment that Clarissa holds the dress up to the light (the truth), it is dull, like Cinderella’s dress made with poor fabric: “By artificial light, the dress shone, but lost its colour: now in the sun. She would mend it” (55-56).

Erick Verran also locates a Burne-Jones’s painting in *Mrs. Dalloway* in a most compelling argument. Verran notes that the artist’s (1886-1887) painting of “The Baleful Head” is significantly

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