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Beyond the Fringe: A Hidden Pattern in Mrs. Dalloway's Moments of Being

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Introduction

As human beings, we are in constant awareness of our past and memories. We tend to attach significance to life events, places and people that make up our lives. Remembering a memory allows us to relive that moment once again, nevertheless it never evokes the same feelings that the original did. Moreover we are not able to remember everything, but unconsciously, we retain specific moments in our mind. Aware of all of this, Virginia Woolf wrote "A sketch of the past" published in "Moments of being", A Collection of Autobiographical Writings. In this work, Woolf tells us about her early years, and she describes and introduces people and places that build her life. She feels so connected to these situations, that she made them part of her memory. But she also discusses that certain things may get remembered, while others simply fade away. Because of this, she says that she does not control these moments and in the same way that she kept them in her memory, they came to her present reality, making her feel powerless. Although all of these descriptions Woolf never gives an accurate definition of "moments of being", instead she asserts that these episodes of "ecstasy" are "embedded in a kind of nondescript cotton wool" (Woolf, 'Sketch'72) forgotten in the everyday life were "a great part of every day is not lived consciously" (Woolf, 'Sketch'70). These moments are called "moments of non-being". Moments of being can be related to a moment of evocation, as they reveal something beneath the "cotton wool".

When reading Virginia Woolf's novels one can realize that we might find these moments in each novel experienced by different characters in distinct ways. Woolf makes her characters to undergo "moments of being", taking them out of their quotidian life, and without awareness they are introduced in an inner reality. For no apparent reason, characters are introduced in a parallel existence, they go into a trance as they live through it, and then without awareness, in the same way that they went into the trance they go out of it and come back to their "real existence".

Moments of being are unstable, imprecise and abstract moments that captivate any reader. As they are immersed in Woolf's not lineal-predicted plot, they catch the reader unaware and captivate him/her in a pleasant experience. "They offer illuminating hints to our imagination, induce in us the flattering sensation that we are collaborating in the production of a work of art." (Bullet 794) Moments of being are the ones that let you know the characters' own thoughts, words and deeds but not outright by Woolf. She presents her characters in a whole, but without descriptions or comments, leaving a large space for readers' imagination and thinking. Moreover, moments of being, inserted in moments of non-being, are the ones that introduce you into the story context. Woolf's novels are not centralized in a conventional action plot, as it is not action which defined them. Moments of being takes you to be focused on a worldly pleasure, bound to thoughts and introspection. These moments entail to the character an intense and passionate feeling of being alive which is transmitted to readers.

Although it has been demonstrated that moments of being are significantly important to Woolf's work, it is suitable to reveal that she never evolved a proper theory about these moments. Therefore, a secondary intention of this work is to provide a more explicit and precise approach about Woolf's moments of being.

These moments are going to be studied beyond their existence. Although characters may seem to be immerse in moments of evocation without explanation, this thesis will propose that there is one. There seems to be an environment where moments of being are prone to occur. This environment would receive the name of transition. It refers to the passage from a state of consciousness to a state of unconsciousness and vice versa. Although transition may seem to be modified as each character experience it, the thesis statement suggest that they involve a pattern. Therefore each moment of being will be evaluated as placed into transition in order to detect a similar arrange. For instance: being introduced or concluded by stimuli or the characters immersion in a parallel inner reality which takes him/her to awareness. Moreover, while the character is experiencing transition, it seems to be immersed in a kind of trance, nevertheless Woolf never expressed anything

about it. Although Woolf never refers explicitly or indirectly to transition and to the stages that they seem to carry along, she seems to be aware of them.

Characters are able to experience transition throughout the novels and they become the novel grounding, as they give to readers in an indirect way the context of the story. My assumption is that transition and its narrative allows us to pursue both characters' and the story's flow. Transition immerses us in characters' thoughts and then it courses us seamlessly from one character's thoughts to another's without any perceptible disruption. This is meant to represent how in real life one is not necessarily aware of how their thought travels, but it is an unconscious, seamless process.

My thesis will be supported by Woolf's novel *Mrs. Dalloway*. I chose this novel because it is deeply related with my subject of research. As the novel illustrates the subjective experiences and memories of its central characters, these instances are prone to be lived through transition, where patterns may be found. Another reason is that Woolf's single-day story might be seen as a challenge when analyzing life fluidity. Nevertheless other novels such as *To the Lighthouse*, *The Waves* and *Jacob's Room* will be employed to provide examples and support. These works include a great content of characters' representation through thoughts and emotional reactions to external world. It is suitable to analyse moments of being, connecting Woolf's different novels, making a bond between different moments of being, analysing them both, by separately and, in association by comparison. However, each moment will be analyzed specifically, taking into account all the patterns that each moment of being furthermore transition, should accomplish, and then in a more general view, it would be compared to similar moments of transition in other novels. If a passage seem to be very different or do not coincide, this would be also analysed, reconsidering if it should be treated as a moment of being. If these moments of transition presuppose a pattern or if they do not would be examined and explained through suitable reasons. Moments of being would be analysed from a general point of view to a specific point of view, with the intention of comprising the phenomenon of transition in a complete way. It is relevant to notice that although transition may accomplish certain characteristics, moments of being are presented in each novel in distinct contexts and they are covered from different perspectives, therefore they can be analysed through different perspectives and conceptions.

Everything mentioned above, moreover, the analysis would be based on Psychoanalytic literary theories. Through Woolf's novels it can be appreciate her powerful sensitivity, which takes her to be interested in the unconscious and everything that is hidden and mysterious. Woolf's approaches seem to be directly related to Freud's Psychoanalytic literary theories. Although these theories were founded on relation to sexuality and repression, through time its field increased "it has moved through three main emphases in its pursuit of the literary 'unconscious'" (Selden 153). This theory explores the consciousness and the unconscious in literature including that of the author, reader, and characters in the text. "Freud further relates the uncanny, first to the survival in the unconscious of a 'primitive' and subsequently repressed animistic mythological and mystic view of the world" (Selden 155). Consequently, as both approaches are associated, it can be asserted that this thesis would be analysed from a psychoanalytic point of view.

Theoretical Framework

This Theoretical Framework will provide assistance and comprehension to the expressions and analysis subsequently exposed. The main concern of this thesis is moments of being, specifically the transition that is experienced when characters are introduced in this evocation. This work is going to be supported by:

Virginia Woolf, *A sketch of the Past*

Nicholas Marsh's "Virginia Woolf: The Novels"

Walter Benjamin's ideas from "Discursos Interrumpidos I"

Raman Selden et al. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*

The first work is probably the most important one, as the complete work is based on it. "A Sketch of the Past" illustrates Virginia Woolf's early days. She presents her life and the people and places that formed it. Mostly, she talks about her memoir and specific moments of her past, conceiving them as moments of being which are contrasted with "non-being". Although she never gives an explicit definition about moments of being, we are able to visualize it through her statements. Therefore the analysis will be made according to what was deduced and selected from her essays, approaches and novels. Woolf reflects that a great part of life is lived unconsciously "embedded in a kind of nondescript cotton wool" (Woolf, 'Sketch'72). As people are living in the wool, they are sometimes able to experience extraordinary moments which bring with them some kind of revelation. Woolf words may be more illuminating:

"I can reach a state where I seem to be watching things happen as if I were there. That is, I suppose, that my memory supplies what I had forgotten, so that it seems as if it were happening independently, though I am really making it happen. In certain favourable moods, memories- what one has forgotten- come to the top." ('Sketch'67) Woolf expresses that she thinks that it is her capacity of being a "container of the feeling of ecstasy" ('Sketch'67) what makes her a writer.

Evidently moments of being are significant for Woolf and also for this thesis. As the main concern of this work is transition, it is necessary to notice that moments of being are embedded into transition. It is also important to notice that Woolf doesn't make use of this term. Transition is a term discerned after studying and analyzing Woolf's conceptions. Transition refers to the phenomenon manifested between a moment of non-being and a moment of being, that is to say, the moment that foreshadows moments of being, the development of the evocation, the re-integration moment that supersedes a moment of being and everything it implies.

Nicholas Marsh refers to Woolf interest on experience and thoughts. "Modernist writers focused on psychology, introspection and individual consciousness" (Childs 26) He describes stream of consciousness, moreover moments of being as a "momentary flow of mental and emotional life". He also refers to the ability that moments of being has, absorbing characters from their quotidian reality and they "expel" thoughts. Marsh refers to moments of being as a "semi-conscious trance"(34) a space where characters lose their "awareness of the solid world around them"(8). Being unaware is a main characteristic of moments of being and trance is defined by the "American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language" as 1) A hypnotic, cataleptic, or ecstatic state. And 2) Detachment from one's physical surroundings, as in contemplation or daydreaming. Both definitions fit properly in relation to moments of being. Therefore it is this passage from "non-trance" to "trance" and vice versa the one that will be studied in the subsequent analysis.

Then, in Walter Benjamin's work " *Discursos Interrumpidos I*" he exposes quite relevant approaches. First, he provides the term "autenticidad"(20) asserting that the work's authenticity is based on its origin, which is directly related with Woolf's idea about memory and its origin. Also he presents the notion of "aura". According to him in the age of mechanical reproduction, when reproducing a work of art, the aura of this work was damaged. This notion agrees with Woolf's moments of being, as they lose reliability when being reproduced. Although Benjamin is talking about works of art and their mechanical reproduction, his thoughts are very similar to those given by Woolf in "A sketch of the past". Therefore these and related approaches are appropriate not only to explain and define

moments of being, but also to conceive further interpretations which finally conveys into transition enhancement.

Selden's work is a considered a guide for this thesis, as most of the theory revised will stem from Selden's "A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory". This work will be based on Psychoanalytic theory which is focused on subconsciousness. The terms "personal and collective unconscious" (165) are directly related with the main subject of this thesis. As it will be exposed, transition occurs in character's personal unconscious. In this work it can be also found ideas about memory and its reliability, which are similarly relevant when studying moments of being and transition.

The works previously presented will be backed up with the following five essays:

-Beyond The Fringe: William James on The Transitional Parts of The Stream Of Consciousness" by Andrew R. Bailey, Department of Philosophy, The University of Calgary.

-“Virginia Woolf” by Gerald Bullett from The English Journal (Dec., 1928),

-The Relationship Between Form and Content in Virginia Woolf's Novels By Bernadete Pasold.

-Virginia Woolf's Narrative Strategies: Negotiating between Public and Private Voices by Anna Snaith.

-“The Miracle of the Ordinary: Literary Epiphany in Virginia Woolf and Clarice Lispector” by Terry L. Palls.

The first essay “Beyond the Fringe: William James on The Transitional Parts of The Stream of Consciousness” by Andrew R. Bailey, gives information about William James ideas of consciousness. In the same way that Woolf, James distinguishes two types of consciousness: “substantive states and the transitive ones” (12), but he also focus his analysis on the “transitive ones” which intervene temporally between them. He talks about the transition that the consciousness experiences, “conscious activity that intervenes without break between one thought and the next.” Another idea that James share with Woolf is the idea that moments come and go without advice, they are independent and fluent. Nevertheless James is more specific and list five characteristics that “moments of

being” or as he named them “introspective discovery about consciousness” must accomplish:

- 1) “Every thought tends to be part of a personal consciousness”;
- 2) “Within each personal consciousness thought is always changing”;
- 3) “Within each personal consciousness thought is sensibly continuous”;
- 4) “It always appears to deal with objects independent of itself”;
- 5) “It is interested in some parts of these objects to the exclusion of others, and welcomes or rejects—*chooses* from among them, in a word—all the while.”

By these characteristics, moments and being can be defined and transition delimited. One idea that differ from those given by Woolf is the idea that “The changes from one moment to another in the quality [or, roughly, content] of the consciousness are never absolutely abrupt” and I disagree, because according to Woolf in *A sketch of the past*, moments of being arrive unexpectedly. Nevertheless, most of James thoughts, exposed by Andrew R. Bailey are helpful when defining Woolf’s notion of unconsciousness, and also providing an approach to be based on.

Other important ideas to present are those exposed by Gerald Bullett in “Virginia Woolf”. He analyzes her novels, essays and what is demanded from us as readers. How the story is constructed by ourselves, making us collaborators, because of the fact that she just give “hints”, idea that I had exposed in the sense that moments of being are the ones that take us to know the characters. Woolf “created a world” that would be moments of being “a world of luminous twilight; queer, vivid, remote yet real; beautiful and elusive as a floating bubble”. This essay also exposes that through Woolf’s novel moments of being are presented as fluency, a “stream of life, the undeviating tide of time, flowing luminously by”. The same idea that will be exposed about the lack of a central plot is presented as a “lack of external drama”. And the way in which Woolf narrates marked her method as “kaleidoscopic”, “a finger of light passing from point to significant point of the picture, the fluid, dissolving, perpetually disintegrating and reintegrating picture that consciousness makes of its contact with an infinitely diverse and unknowable reality.” Approaches that are helpful to understand the notion of transition and how it operates.

Similar ideas are proposed in “The Relationship between Form and Content in Virginia Woolf’s Novels” By Bernadete Pasold. She shares the fact that Woolf presents her fiction through a diverse omniscience, and also that the narrator is neutral and the story is presented through the mind of the characters, as will be exposed. Some ideas of the author can be related to Walter Benjamin’s work. Pasold suggests that this “didactic anonymous narrator” is a proof of Woolf’s characters rejection to tyranny and man’s wish to command, trying to achieve privacy, “the privacy of the soul”. It is in this way that privacy can be related to Walter Benjamin ideas of authenticity and originality which next are contrasted with the idea that “man are composed of several selves and is therefore unknown to himself and *even* more acutely to the others.” I think that this idea also differs from the one given by Woolf according to man’s mask in front of society, but their real knowledge on themselves in private, moreover in moments of being. Pasold refers to the “individuality of human being” contradicting herself when saying that this individuality is reinforced by omniscience, concluding with “People are different and they think differently!” I also disagree with another idea given by Pasold. She refers to moments of being as “epiphanies” or “moments of vision” and she exposes that these moments “occur generally once in a lifetime and to very special people”. Although Woolf never defines who are able to experience these moments, she is very inclusive, employing terms such as: we “we add to feelings much that makes them more complex” (‘Sketch’ 67), one “as one gets older” (‘Sketch’72) and specifically this extract: “that we- I mean all human beings- are connected with this” (‘Sketch’72) According to what is exposed by Woolf everyone is prone to live a moment of being, moreover she illustrates that plenty of these moments occurred to her, not just one. Also Pasold describes them as an “unsuccessful attempt to find a meaning of life” I deeply differ from using the word “attempt” since it implies effort¹ and as Woolf asserts moments of being “come to the surface unexpectedly”. All these ideas would be developed in the subsequent analysis respectively.

Another essay that makes reference to public in contrast to private would be analyzed. In “Virginia Woolf’s Narrative Strategies: Negotiating between Public and

¹ “An effort or a try” taken from The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language.

Private Voices” by Anna Snaith, the author distinguishes the public voice, which is the narrator voice from the private voice, this inner reality, where the characters present their thoughts and their introspection through the interior monologue. Snaith asserts that the public and the private voice are not in the text to be replaced by each other, but to be combined in their distinction. She also talks about the moment at which the shift from one voice to another is made, defining it as “surrounded by ambiguity” and that’s what I am going to try to elucidate in my work. As will be commented Woolf’s narrators never comment or describe characters, for this reason Snaith presents the narrators as “functionaries” because they appear in the text to talk about the characters’ thoughts and not about themselves. Although Snaith employs the terms to define narrative voices, I will dare to borrow Snaith’s words only because of the fact that I found that they were the most suitable to be associated with inner reality and material reality respectively. Therefore, private voice will be characters’ real identity, which emerges when they are detached from their social mask, so public voice will be the character’s social image that they keep and feed in society. Both ideas will be developed in the analysis in relation to transition.

Finally, Terry L. Palls in “The Miracle of the Ordinary: Literary Epiphany in Virginia Woolf and Clarice Lispector” distinguishes religious “epiphany” from “literary epiphany” and presents the term “moment of revelation” which confronts the individual with life and gives him/her knowledge. Also the term “essence of being” is presented, in relation to moments of being, they also evoke awareness. This essay is useful to define moments of being in comparison to epiphanies and also, to determine some of their characteristics.

The works and essays previously presented tend to share the same approaches, nevertheless through varied words. For instance Woolf’s “A sketch of the past” emphasized the notion of memory and unconsciousness based on the Psychoanalytic theory described by Selden. Unconsciousness also is William James concern, exposed by Andrew R. Bailey. Walter Benjamin’s approaches to reliability, strongly related to moments of being, which can be defined in a better way on account of Terry L. Palls, Gerald Bullett and Nicholas Marsh who also put forward the access to transition. Mainly the last one that provides the

expression “trance” which will be subsequent analyzed in terms of transition. All the authors are directly or indirectly related; therefore it can be asserted that studies about moments of being are on the right track. However it was difficult for me to find essays covering wider themes. For instance, after a severe searching I couldn’t find even one related to transition or approximate, that proves there is still a lot to do. Nevertheless it is relevant to declare that, although the ideas presented can be related and seen from different points of views, they must adjust to the characteristics attributed. For instance, that was what Pasold neglected. Finally, works and essays belong to different periods of time² which proves that, what has been early studied is maintain through times with minor changes or additions. This verifies Woolf’s enigmatic clarity when exposing a theme, in contrast with the belief in perceiving her as a difficult or complex writer.

Modernist background

Most of the modern theory revised will stem from Peter Childs “Modernism: The new Critical Idiom” This author will help to specify the theoretical framework of modernism and the corresponding theories I wish to explain below.

As a result of the modern fragmentation, in the early 20th century emerged the modernism. It brought a radical shift in aesthetic and cultural sensibilities in art and literature. Therefore the period was marked by noticeable breaks with Victorian traditional view of the world. In Childs’ words:

“Modernist art is, in most critical usage, reckoned to be the art of what Harold Rosenberg calls “the tradition of the new”. It is experimental, formally complex, elliptical, contains elements of decreation as well as creation, and tends to associate notions of the artist’s freedom from realism, materialism, traditional genre and form, with notions of cultural apocalypse and disaster.” (Childs 1)

Modernism is strongly related to art, hence to literature and also, it is connected to modernity through criticism and reformulation. It was in this way that modernist writers

² Some of the works and essays lack a date.

ventured themselves into experimentation and individualism, virtues that were discouraged in the past.

“One of the first aspects of Modernist writing to strike readers is the way in which such novels, stories, plays and poems immerse them in an unfamiliar world with little of the orienting preambles and descriptions provided by most realist writers” (Childs 4)

Familiarized with decay and alienation, modernist writers looked for individual progress and growth. “An artist's style is determined by the manner in which he or she uses the technical devices of the medium (Palls 63)”. It is in this way that modernist writers focus their works in the inner self and the consciousness.

Analysis

Modernist background in Woolf's narrative

As modernist writers were subsumed in a period of fragmentation and futility, they responded with a hard sense of criticism towards both, the freedom and the responsibilities of the artist in a new age. Radical experimentation in literary form and expression were developed through new insights provided by recently established disciplines such as psychology.

The psychologist William James employed the term "stream of consciousness" to describe the flux that the mind experiences. Some writers in the twentieth century ventured applying this mental flow in their narrative. The device was pioneered by Dorothy Richardson and James Joyce, and later developed by Virginia Woolf. “This is not a strange new narrative technique, but a classical technique. If Virginia Woolf's novels have a peculiar flavour, it is not because her narrative consists of odd or original elements” (Marsh 5). The stream of consciousness novel may not always appear to have a coherent structure. The plot and actions weave in and out of time, place, and character and the reader follows the character's subjective experience. “She has created a world; not a world of men and

women, but a world of luminous twilight; queer, vivid, remote yet real; beautiful and elusive as a floating bubble” (Bullet 794) It is in this sense that Modernist fiction was a movement of experiments and new techniques in writing characterized mainly by this device. It is in *Mrs. Dalloway* that Woolf discovered this new literary form and the novel is satisfied with it since the beginning:

But every one remembered; what she loved was this, here, now, in front of her; the fat lady in the cab. Did it matter then, she asked herself, walking towards Bond Street, did it matter that she must inevitably cease completely; all this must go on without her; did she resent it; or did it not become consoling to believe that death ended absolutely? but that somehow in the streets of London, on the ebb and flow of things, here, there, she survived, Peter survived, lived in each other, she being part, she was positive, of the trees at home; of the house there, ugly, rambling all to bits and pieces as it was; part of people she had never met; being laid out like a mist between the people she knew best, who lifted her on their branches as she had seen the trees lift the mist, but it spread ever so far, her life, herself. (7)

In this extract, consciousness is presented through the reported speech, presenting an impersonal non-intrusive narrator, as it never explains who Mrs. Dalloway is or why she needed to buy flowers. We are subsumed in a character’s on-going life and we are able to make inferences while we read the story.

Although Woolf’s narrators have access to the characters’ private thoughts, they do not reveal their own. Woolf’s narrators are public in their anonymity. This is not to say that they are characterless, but they are functionaries in that they are present in the text so as to relate the actions and thoughts of characters other than themselves. (Snaith 134)

By sharing William James’ ideas Woolf developed her narrative. Therefore, James’ notions about the states of consciousness and unconsciousness, in James’ words “states of

consciousness and transitive states”, would be Woolf’s moments of being and non being. According to James in Bailey’s essay:

Naming our thought by its own objects, we almost all of us assume that as the objects are, so the thought must be. ... As each object may come and go, be forgotten and then thought of again, it is held that the thought of it has precisely similar independence, self-identity, and mobility (2)

This idea is directly related with Woolf’s beliefs expressed in “A sketch of the Past” that, moments of being appear independently in life, and some thoughts that we may have forgotten come to the top without reason (67). Also she shares the notion that these moments are attached to movement and change and that they are never the same as they are not steady or permanent (79). Then, Bailey presents five facts that James distinguished when experiencing a transitive state:

- 1) “Every thought tends to be part of a personal consciousness”;
- 2) “Within each personal consciousness thought is always changing”;
- 3) “Within each personal consciousness thought is sensibly continuous”;
- 4) “It always appears to deal with objects independent of itself”;
- 5) “It is interested in some parts of these objects to the exclusion of others, and welcomes or rejects—*chooses* from among them, in a word—all the while.”(3)

As can be seen, some of these facts given by the psychologist are seem to be followed by Woolf in her novels. Specifically, moments of being are the ones that fulfill most of these facts. These moments, as expressed by Woolf, are personal or in James words “part of a personal consciousness”. It can be proved that the previous extract from *Mrs. Dalloway* is a personal one experienced by Clarissa, as she is referring to her maid’s first name with familiarity and the expression "cut out for her" is suitable for Mrs Dalloway's own style of speech. Also Woolf shares James’ ideas about change and continuity, as moments of being evoke a change although not resulting in a solution, but providing awareness and energy. Also they share the idea of consciousness chosen haphazardly and independently. Instances like this can be found through the whole novel.

Although James used the stream of consciousness in allusion to the psychological process, the modern writers used it to invade the characters' mind. In the same way that stream of consciousness revealed thoughts, feelings and actions, Woolf's characters are known. Both authors focus their views on a hidden subconscious, a subjective inner. Through a variation of this narrative device, the technique of the interior monologue, Woolf manages to explore the fragmentary self. Her concern is the "inner", the character's own mental language and how it can be expressed.

The inner

For Woolf, writers such as H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett and Galsworthy, who follow the Victorian tradition, are "materialists". Although they propound new ideas and open out new views to the human mind, she turned her back down on them because "they are concerned not with the spirit but with the body" (Woolf *The Common Reader* 185). She asserts that "they write of unimportant things; that they spend immense skill and immense industry making the trivial and the transitory appear the true and the enduring." (Woolf *The Common Reader* 187) Their writings lack of "life or spirit, truth or reality" (Woolf *The Common Reader* 188), which is for Woolf the most important. As I have previously said, Woolf is concerned with the "inner", the unconscious level of experience in her character and that's the reason why she distinguished James Joyce. It's him, together with several young writers that "attempt to come closer to life and to preserve more sincerely and exactly what interests and moves them, even if to do so they must discard most of the conventions which are commonly observed by the novelist." (Woolf *The Common Reader* 190)

She opposes not only to the linear texts and marked narrator's voice, used by her Victorian precursors, but also to their "materialism". Their traditionalist minds didn't allow them to trust upon life as Woolf did. We can see how in *Mrs. Dalloway* we get to know the story and the characters life by their own thoughts, their inner working and their exploration and sensory experience of the world surrounding them. "[Mrs. Dalloway] is not written in an unconventional way. We have no difficulty at all in following the story: the

author clearly states who speaks and who thinks.” (Marsh 5) But it is a fact that it has not a traditional form of narrated facts, as the story develops inside the characters.

In *Mrs. Dalloway* there are plenty of these instances, for example Woolf presents to us Septimus, whose life and development is surrounded by thoughts and feelings. When Septimus is introduced, readers get to know that the ‘sequela’ of the war still torture his spirit. During the war he learnt to repress his feeling, which is extremely contradictory with Woolf’s conception of inner exploration. Moreover he was unable to appreciate life and suffered from a mental disease. Septimus is an emotionally loaded character who lives in an internal world. Although he is removed from the physical world, therefore he doesn’t perform any relevant act while the story evolves; Woolf manages to transform him in an impressive character in the story whose forte is the inner.

Traditionally, characters developed their personality from what they said or did, what other characters said about them, and also because of the information provided by an omniscient author. Woolf’s ability is to create a work of fiction without a traditional central plot and developed by the own characters which, nevertheless, captivate the reader in a pleasant experience.

since life is a composite of experiences which often have significance only for the individual and which may appear trivial to others, trivialities acquire importance and the subjective, personal response to them becomes the potential source for instantaneous awareness of the "essence of being". The stress then falls on intuition and emotion rather than on reason or divine revelation as a source of knowledge (Palls 64).

As the previous quote expresses, Woolf appeals to these revolutionary techniques locating reality in the private and subjective conscious of the individual, not in the outer actions. The fact that the life of the mind is more significant than the movement of the body is reflected in the very texture of the narrative (Bullet 795) Woolf focuses on the inner working of the human mind and inner perception, mainly in those moments where the self is lost entirely and subsumed into a revelation. In this sense, we can say that the being is living its “material” life without awareness of this revelation, although sometimes it is

recalled on purpose “I often tell them over, or rather they come to the surface unexpectedly” (Woolf, ‘Sketch’ 71). When this revelation occurs, the being is abstracted to another reality and it stops to be a “material” being and passes to be an “inner” being.

Dissimilar to *Mrs. Dalloway*, “The Waves” is written mostly in the present tense, as opposed to being written using stream of consciousness technique, *The Waves* is consciousness. Each character is distinct, self-aware, and speaks boldly in the present tense as he or she unfolds the sights, sounds, and feelings they experience into thought. Together, the character’s thoughts compose a unified, whole silent central consciousness.

On not trusting memory

Another author that shares Woolf’s notion of inner is Walter Benjamin. In both cases their historical experience has more to do with the movement from the real world to the inner experience (and back) than with either the material world or human interiority independently. This outward-inward movement in Benjamin and Woolf may also help us to understand another characteristic that these two writers share: their continuous dissatisfaction with the proposed models of history. Although Benjamin is talking about art and Woolf, in “A sketch of the past”, is talking about memory and moments of being, their ideas are very similar. In the same way that for Benjamin’s work of art, is that, for Woolf’s moment of being, has “authenticity”. They share the common idea that a work of art and moments of being are born from originality, therefore they can’t be reproduced.

Although these moments are authentic, the skepticism that they entail is the result from Woolf’s inner work. As characters are the ones that create the story based on their thoughts and memories, it’s difficult to trust on them blindly and also it’s complicated to replicate them with reliability. This is directly related with Benjamin’s declaration:

“Incluso en la reproducción mejor acabada falta algo: el aquí y ahora de la obra de arte, su existencia irrepetible en el lugar en que se encuentra. En dicha existencia singular, y en ninguna otra cosa, se realizó la historia a la que ha estado sometida en el curso de su perduración. También cuentan las alteraciones que haya padecido en su estructura física a lo largo del tiempo, así como sus eventuales cambios de propietario”(20)

The impossibility of representing the complete sense of an individual is one of the major themes in *Jacob's Room*, and this is emphasized by the narrator as she considers particular representations of Jacob:

But how far was he a mere bumpkin? How far was Jacob Flanders at the age of twenty-six a stupid fellow? It is no use trying to sum people up. One must follow hints, not exactly what is said, nor yet entirely what is done. Some, it is true, take ineffaceable impressions of character at once. Others dally, loiter, and get blown this way and that. Kind old ladies assure us that cats are often the best judge of character. A cat will always go to a good man, they say; but then, Mrs. Whitehorn, Jacob's landlady, loathed cats. (110)

Jacob's integral characteristics couldn't be depicted undamaged, as memory is not stable its instability weakens a possible "true" representation. For Benjamin "El aquí y ahora del original constituye el concepto de su autenticidad"(20) and "Las circunstancias en que se ponga al producto de la reproducción de una obra de arte, quizás dejen intacta la consistencia de ésta, pero en cualquier caso deprecian su aquí y ahora."(21) Through *Jacob's Room* Woolf suggests that remembering, by the sharing of particular memories of Jacob, allows a dynamic representation of him to arise. In *Jacob's Room*, as in most of Woolf's work life, events are conveyed through moments of being, revealing some particular aspects, in this case, of Jacob's personal history. Nevertheless Woolf never provides a precise interpretation of the characters, reflecting her notion of memory and the unknowability of the other as she expresses in "A Sketch of the Past."

The only difference between Benjamin's ideas and Woolf's ideas about moments of being are that these moments can be reproduced. Nevertheless this reproduction is unreliable in relation with the original moment experienced, and that's what Woolf shares with Benjamin. His notion of "authenticity" would be Woolf's notion about memory and its reproduction. Woolf muses about creating a memoir as a writer, and lands upon one of the great many difficulties:

Here I come to one of the memoir writer's difficulties- one of the reasons why, though I read so many, so many are failures. They leave out the person to whom thing

happened. The reason is that it is so difficult to describe any human being (...) they do not say what the person was like to whom it happened. And the events mean very little unless we know first to whom they happened. (Sketch 65)

Although the evocation of a moment of being should be compared with Benjamin's aura, it is important to notice that moments of being are more unstable as they come from the mind and are built up from memories. Even Woolf can't give an accurate explanation of their existence:

I can reach a state where I seem to be watching things happen as if I were there. That is, I suppose, that my memory supplies what I had forgotten, so that it seemed as if it were happening, though I am really making it happen. In certain favorable mood, memories- what one has forgotten- come to the top. Now if this is so, is it not possible- I often wonder- that things we have felt with great intensity have an existence independent of our minds; are in fact still in existence? ('sketch' 67)

It is also important to notice that Woolf's "shocks", which triggers moments of being, would be for Benjamin, the photography. According to Benjamin:

(...)El espectador se siente irresistiblemente forzado a buscar en la fotografía la chispita minúscula de azar, de aquí y ahora, con que la realidad ha chamuscado por así decirlo su carácter de imagen, a encontrar el lugar inaparente en el cual, en una determinada manera de ser de ese minuto que pasó hace ya tiempo, anida hoy el futuro y tan elocuentemente que, mirando hacia atrás, podremos descubrirlo. (67)

In the same way that Woolf's "shocks" take us to moments of being is that photography takes us to instances in which the being is taken out of its quotidian life and without awareness is introduced in an "inner reality". But in order to fulfill the comparison made between photography and "shocks" unconsciousness must be present. It is in this way, that later on Benjamin asserts that photography takes the spectator from a place which has been used consciously to a different place, one which talks through the eyes and is developed unconsciously (68).

Moments of being simulate pictures in the mind, hence they are like photographs “«estar ante un aparato que en un tiempo brevísimo era capaz de producir una imagen del mundo entorno visible tan viva y veraz como la naturaleza misma».(68)”. Something similar occurs with Woolf’s moments of being which were like pictures that bring to mind movement, the idea that “nothing remained stable long” (Woolf *A sketch of the past*)

Moments of being in Mrs Dalloway

The most suitable method by which Woolf is able to expose the human psyche is moments of being, which are the main concern of this thesis and the ones that I will analyse afterwards. For this, I will centre my analysis in Woolf’s autobiographical essay “A sketch of the past” which has been detailed in the Theoretical Framework and these ideas will be captured in *Mrs. Dalloway*. In her essay, Woolf is determined to define moreover understand, her conception of memory. She starts to describe several good and bad moments of her childhood but mainly, the feelings that these moments entailed. Woolf defines herself as a “container of the feeling of ecstasy” (67), because she may not remember the physical context but the sensation, the satisfaction, the despair, the sadness or the happiness that she lived in that moment is alive and will stay with her forever, being impossible to forget it because since then, it is part of her life. She expresses that these moments are “shocks” that marked her for the rest of her life “Then, for no reason that I know about, there was a sudden violent shock; something happened so violently that I have remembered it all my life” (71)

For Woolf “moments of being” are the only moments in which one really lives “In those moments I find one of my greatest satisfactions, not that I am thinking of the past: but that it is then that I am living most fully in the present” (‘Sketch’98) These moments of “ectasy” are “embedded in a kind of nondescript cotton wool” (‘Sketch’70), forgotten in the everyday life were “a great part of every day is not lived consciously” (‘Sketch’70). These moments are called “moments of non-being”. Moments of being can be related to an literary epiphany, as they reveal something beneath the “cotton wool”; in other words they

are “individual, brief, sudden, intense moments which produce a new awareness which may be painful or exhilarating (...) worldly in origin and intensely personal since they produce a distinct awareness of the self, usually vis-à-vis life and the surrounding world.” (Palls 64)

As was explained in the Theoretical Framework, moments of being are a quite innovative phenomenon that can be related to Freud’s Psychoanalytic theory. Freud’s term “Nachträglichkeit” is directly associated with Woolf’s moments of being:

The implication is that an event has in effect two occurrences: an original happening and a later interpretative construction of it, or, in a still more radical gloss on this concept, the event is seen only to acquire significance in so far as it is remembered. (Selden 166)

Nachträglichkeit refers to the inner working of a character, and they have the same sense that Woolf’s moments of being have.

In order to what I have explained, Woolf differentiates moments of non-being from moments of being, noting that the revelation that occurs through moments of being, or what James Joyce terms “epiphanies”³, comes from a sudden unveiling that emerges out of the obfuscating cotton wool of daily experience (‘Sketch’ 72).

As Clarissa Dalloway expresses in her reflection about death, although the transient nature of the human experience dominates daily existence, for death will come and our life is brief, there is something more that persists beyond this brief flash of light; there is “the unseen part of us, which spreads wide, ... [which] might survive, be uncovered somehow attached to this person or that” (222).

Moments of non-being are made up of the common routine activities, events that are performed without awareness:

“Yesterday for example (...) it happened a good day (...) I walked over Mount Misery and along the river; and save that the tide was out, the country, which I

³ In his posthumously published autobiographical novel “Stephen Hero” Joyce explains through Stephen Dedalus ideas about moments of abstraction, which he defines as “epiphanies”. By an epiphany he [Stephen] meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself.

notice very closely always, was coloured and shaded as I like (...). [I]t was a good day” (Woolf ‘Sketch’ 70).

Those moments of non-being, then, are obscure, as the regular and habitual occur without impediment, and they drift along: “A great part of every day is not lived consciously” (Woolf ‘Sketch’ 70). The same idea of routine and regularity is expressed by the main character, Clarissa, in *Mrs Dalloway*:

All the same, that one day should follow another; Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday; that one should wake up in the morning; see the sky; walk in the park; meet Hugh Whitbread; then suddenly in came Peter; then these roses; it was enough. After that, how unbelievable death was!-that it must end; and no one in the whole world would know how she had loved it all; how, every instant (204)

But in the story Clarissa is dissatisfied by routine and habit. As her world is built on fashion, parties and high society, she hides herself behind a social mask, escaping reality. Fatigued of that kind of world she confines herself pursuing privacy and deeper meanings. Through introspection and moments of being she is able to encounter intense emotions. Moments of being take Clarissa out of her quotidian life and transfer her to the past, a parallel reality of pleasure, beneath the cotton wool. In Woolf’s words:

The past only comes back when the present runs so smoothly that it is like the sliding surface of a deep river. Then one sees through the surface to the depths. In those moments I find one of my greatest satisfactions, not that I am thinking of the past; but it is then that I am living most fully in the present (‘Sketch’ 98)

At the beginning of *Mrs. Dalloway* Woolf stimulates Clarissa, giving her the opportunity to buy the flowers herself (01). We know that usually Clarissa has tasks done for her, but that day was special. As Lucy is occupied supervising the removal of the winter doors, Clarissa has the opportunity to walk through London and enjoy her stroll. In her ecstasy moment, Clarissa is brought to a “moment of being” which reminds her of a similar June morning thirty years earlier, when she stood at the window at Bourton and felt something awful might happen (131). In this extract we can see how the squeak of the

hinges connects her with a distant reality hidden behind insignificant events, taking her out of her “materialism”.

Another character in *Mrs. Dalloway* that is constantly abstracted from his material reality is Septimus. Nevertheless his case is different to Clarissa's; he was injured in trench warfare and suffered from shell shock. He became unstable and saw everything he knew worthless, losing the desire to preserve either his society or himself. In his madness Septimus saw delusion in everything else and is constantly captured by his tortuous past.

For the truth is (let her ignore it) that human beings have neither kindness, nor faith, nor charity beyond what serves to increase the pleasure of the moment (...) In the street, vans roared past him; brutality blared out on placards; men were trapped in mines; women burnt alive; and once a maimed file of lunatics being exercised or displayed for the diversion of the populace (who laughed aloud), ambled and nodded and grinned past him, in the Tottenham Court Road, each half apologetically, yet triumphantly, inflicting his hopeless woe. And would *he* go mad? (223)

Moments of being can also be experienced in group. In “The Waves” characters’ voice are at first indistinguishable from one another: Bernard, Susan, Rhoda, Neville, Jinny, and Louis. However, just as they have individual consciousness, they experience moments of a collective consciousness. The character’s inner reality collects during “moments of being,” and falls as they become autonomous in their consciousness. Two important moments of being are when the characters collect in their youth before going on separate journeys, and when they meet again before facing the descent of their lives. Therefore, Woolf symbolizes individual consciousness through moments of beings in collective cyclical consciousness.

It is important to enhance that characters live through society. As they live a fragmented present, some characters tend to speculate. Because of the fact that individual memories are unstable, reliable remembering is weakened. Therefore they can never be entire or complete which bring the characters to struggle between their own identity and their own perception of their present. It is in this state of reflection that they are prone to experience moments of being.

Characters involuntarily recall the past through moments of being, as they remember their sense of communal belonging. It is important to notice the term involuntarily, as it strongly differs with Pasold notion that “moment of illumination seems to fit some characters' unsuccessful attempt to find a meaning for life. Instead, they find moments of meaning”(106). According to Woolf’s characters don’t attempt to find meanings, as attempt implies an effort⁴, which is not Woolf’s case. Transition emerges freely and without trying.

The transition between the two realities in a moment of being, is the one that stimulates the characters to find their identity. Nevertheless, Woolf “present a great number of characters in contact with each other so that there is an ironic contrast between the heroines' urge for privacy and their environment.” (Pasold 107) Transition is the one that allows us to see characters in their inner struggle, as it take characters away from their social mask and introduce them to an inner existence, the one that although is lived in unawareness is experienced vigorously.

Although Virginia Woolf doesn’t employ the term transition neither refers to the phenomenon, she does mark it when writing. This can be appreciated by voice variation, for instance, interior monologue and omniscient narrator.

Indirect interior monologue, which Woolf used in eight of her nine novels, occurs when a character's thoughts are presented in the third person by the narrator. The narrator enters the mind of the character and reports his or her thoughts verbatim, but the first- and second-person pronouns of direct interior monologue are absent (Snait 134)

To illustrate this, the early passage when Clarissa goes to buy the flowers will be analyzed:

Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself. For Lucy had her work cut out for her. The doors would be taken off their hinges; Rumpelmayer's men were coming. And then, thought Clarissa Dalloway, what a morning—fresh as if issued to children on a beach. What a lark! What a plunge! For so it had always seemed to her, when, with a little squeak of the hinges, which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the open air. How

⁴ Taken from The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language

fresh, how calm, stiller than this of course, the air was in the early morning; like the flap of a wave; the kiss of a wave; chill and sharp and yet (for a girl of eighteen as she then was) solemn, feeling as she did, standing there at the open window, that something awful was about to happen; looking at the flowers, at the trees with the smoke winding off them and the rooks rising, falling; standing and looking until Peter Walsh said, "Musing among the vegetables?"—was that it?—"I prefer men to cauliflowers"—was that it? He must have said it at breakfast one morning when she had gone out on to the terrace—Peter Walsh. He would be back from India one of these days, June or July, she forgot which, for his letters were awfully dull; it was his sayings one remembered; his eyes, his pocket-knife, his smile, his grumpiness and, when millions of things had utterly vanished—how strange it was!—a few sayings like this about cabbages. She stiffened a little on the kerb, waiting for Durtnall's van to pass. (129)

This extract begins with the narrator, providing information about Clarissa and her plans for that day. Then a direct speech is presented to introduce Clarissa's thought which conveyed in the beginning of the transition. For this, interior monologue is used and indirect speech remains until Peter Walsh's direct speech interception. Finally, narrator's voice finalizes the transition.

A similar extract is the scene when the car backfires, where transition is marked through text:

And there the motor car stood, with drawn blinds, and upon them a curious pattern like a tree, Septimus thought, and this gradual drawing together of everything to one centre before his eyes, as if some horror had come almost to the surface and was about to burst into flames, terrified him. The world wavered and quivered and threatened to burst into flames. It is I who am blocking the way, he thought. Was he not being looked at and pointed at; was he not weighted there, rooted to the pavement, for a purpose? But for what purpose?
 "Let us go on, Septimus," said his wife, (136)

First the narrator is presented and then direct speech, which introduces the transition. Through the transition indirect speech into interior monologue is presented. Then direct speech is alternate with indirect speech to finalize the transition with Rezia's direct speech.

By using this technique the narrative operates to bring the reader very close to the events or thoughts. This kind of focalization is internal. Then, there is a shift back to the point of view of the third person narrator. The link between the two focuses is made not indeed in actual words. Nevertheless to state whose words or thoughts are represented through the entire novel, is disturbing. "Since the technique is a conjunction of internal and external neither completely one nor the other, it is surrounded by ambiguity, which is intensified by the frequent difficulty in locating the exact moment at which shifts in point of view are made"(Snaith 135). Furthermore, narrative voice distinction might not have a criterion when introducing or ending a transition. Nevertheless it was proved that there is a degree of alternating speech towards indirect speech, in the climax of the transition, which is the moment of being per se. To analyze Woolf's usage of narrative voices may allow a wide discussion, however this would not be the occasion, as it is not the priority of the analysis.

Woolf applied an elegant and pleasant alternative to define transition, moving between and representing characters' speech and thoughts. Moreover, this procedure is helpful when distinguishing characters' inner working. Transition, has been analyzed through text in order to prove Woolf's awareness of it, and now it would be analyzed according to characters' social bonds with the same purpose. When Woolf presented her characters, she attempted to prove that some of them struggle with their social mask and their identity. Coincidentally with Woolf's thoughts, Anna Snaith proposed the terms private and public voices. Although she differentiates them in order to distinguish narrative voices, I will borrow the terms as they are suitable to explain the transition experienced between inner reality and social reality.

As was previously mentioned, Clarissa lives the day-to-day but we, as readers, notice that she is struggling with society, disguised:

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 anymore; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway. (133)

In these lines, Clarissa's thoughts allude to her private voice, while she is confronting it with the outside world, related to public voice. Clarissa feels that as she's aged, that she has become invisible. Youth is behind her and now she's known as the wife of Richard Dalloway and not as Clarissa.

Woolf's characters can be seen repressing their true feelings and hiding behind the "masks" of the approved social code. These hidden desires or concealed thoughts can be seen in Clarissa Dalloway and Peter Walsh, among other specific characters. For instance:

She [Clarissa] advanced, light, tall, very upright, to be greeted at once by buttonfaced Miss Pym, whose hands were always bright red, as if they had been stood in cold water with the flowers.

There were flowers: delphiniums, sweet peas, bunches of lilac; and carnations, masses of carnations. There were roses; there were irises. Ah yes—so she breathed in the earthy garden sweet smell as she stood talking to Miss Pym who owed her help, (...). And then, opening her eyes, how fresh like frilled linen clean from a laundry laid in wicker trays the roses looked; and dark and prim the red carnations, holding their heads up; and all the sweet peas spreading in their bowls, tinged violet, snow white, pale—as if it were the evening and girls in muslin frocks came out to pick sweet peas and roses after the superb summer's day, with its almost blue-black sky, its delphiniums, its carnations, its arum lilies was over; and it was the moment between six and seven when every flower—roses, carnations, irises, lilac—glows; white, violet, red, deep orange; every flower seems to burn by itself, softly, purely in the misty beds; and how she loved the grey-white moths spinning in and out, over the cherry pie, over the evening primroses!

And as she began to go with Miss Pym from jar to jar, choosing, nonsense, nonsense, she said to herself, more and more gently, as if this beauty, this scent, this colour, and Miss Pym liking her, trusting her, were a wave which she let flow over her and surmount that hatred, that monster, surmount it all; and it lifted her up and up when—oh! a pistol shot in the street outside!

"Dear, those motor cars," said Miss Pym, going to the window to look, and coming back and smiling apologetically with her hands full of sweet peas, as if those motor cars, those tyres of motor cars, were all *her* fault. (135)

In this moment of transition, it can be distinguished two moments that establish Clarissa's public voice. First of all, at the beginning of the extract, Clarissa enters to the flower shop and she makes her entrance graciously, as she is aware of her social status it is important to notice how she performed this action: "she advanced, light, tall, very upright, to be greeted at once by button-faced Miss Pym". Her image is walking tall, with confidence, nevertheless we, as readers know her struggle with her artificial social code. Then she is delighted by the smell of the flowers and transition begins to arise. Although this moment of being doesn't take her to a specific day in her life, it invoked the past and specific situations already experienced which, she is able to connect with the smell of the flowers. All these feelings took her to a moment of ecstasy which allowed her to express her private voice. As her mind drifted out, she was reaching the climax until the car backfired, and she is abruptly removed from her absorption. Simultaneously, she returned to her public voice restoring herself and probably smiling back to Miss Pym.

Characters' true feelings have been masked by the social approval of others. People are so caught up in trying to be something they are not, that they almost forget the importance of being an individual. So, they live on mundane activities, "embedded in a kind of nondescript cotton wool" (Woolf, 'Sketch'72) and when they try to look their own identity or, involuntarily they are taken out of the veil, they are bound to a passionate and intense feeling independence. These ideas are presented by Woolf through Peter Walsh in *Mrs Dalloway*:

For this is the truth about our soul, he thought, our self, who fish-like inhabits deep seas and plies among obscurities threading her way between the boles of giant weeds, over sun-flickered spaces and on and on into gloom, cold, deep, inscrutable; suddenly she shoots to the surface and sports on the wind-wrinkled waves; that is, has a positive need to brush, scrape, kindle herself, gossiping. (228)

Likewise, these ideas are also presented through Mrs. Ramsay in “To the Lighthouse”:

our apparitions, the things you know us by, are simply childish. Beneath it is all dark, it is all spreading, it is unfathomably deep; but now and again we rise to the surface and that is what you see us by. Her horizon seemed to her limitless. (296)

Characters are aware of their life in a mask, and that is the reason why they admire free characters. In the case of Clarissa she admires Sally and supporting this idea in another Woolf’s novel; in “To the lighthouse”, Mrs. Ramsay admires Lily Briscoe. In the case of Clarissa, when they were young, Sally was everything that she wasn’t; she was open-minded, rebellious, and uninhibited. “For in those days she was completely reckless; did the most idiotic things out of bravado; bicycled round the parapet on the terrace; smoked cigars. Absurd, she was—very absurd. (149) “And the same thoughts arrive to Mrs. Ramsay’s mind about Lily, nevertheless without leaving her social concerns “she would never marry; once could not take her painting seriously; she was an independent little creature, and Mrs. Ramsay liked her for it (267)” As was shown both women have the same feeling. The only difference is that Lily was free to do whatever she wanted whenever she wanted to, as she was the only one who didn’t get married and didn’t have children. Therefore Clarissa and Mrs. Ramsay⁵ are able to achieve their selfness when they are alone and untroubled about society and when children go to sleep and hostess duties are fulfilled, respectively. For now she need not think about anybody. She could be herself, by herself.

⁵ Sally later became Lady Rosseter and had five sons. But even as Lady Rosseter, Sally didn’t hide her feelings. Though by the time of the party Sally had become a member of the society she once wildly criticized, she still seemed to have her individuality. Nevertheless, she won’t be used as an example as there is no evidence provided.

And that was what now she often felt the need of—to think; well, not even to think. To be silent; to be alone. (296)

In *To the Lighthouse*, there is an adequate scene that proves that characters attempt to improve or maintain their social appearance. In the case of Mrs. Ramsay she did it, in order to satisfy the responsibilities of a hostess, making her guests comfortable and delighted:

"But how long do they leave men on a Lighthouse?" she asked. He told her. He was amazingly well informed. And as he was grateful, and as he liked her, and as he was beginning to enjoy himself, so now, Mrs. Ramsay thought, she could return to that dream land, that unreal but fascinating place, the Mannings' drawing-room at Marlow twenty years ago; where one moved about without haste or anxiety, for there was no future to worry about. She knew what had happened to them, what to her. It was like reading a good book again, for she knew the end of that story, since it had happened twenty years ago, and life, which shot down even from this dining-room table in cascades, heaven knows where, was sealed up there, and lay, like a lake, placidly between its banks. He said they had built a billiard room—was it possible? Would William go on talking about the Mannings? She wanted him to. But, no—for some reason he was no longer in the mood. She tried. He did not respond. She could not force him. She was disappointed. (315)

By means of the previous extract, it is possible to prove that not only characters are hidden behind a social mask. When they leave aside their public voice which restrains them, they are prone to be consumed by transition. As Mrs. Ramsay expresses, by her guests pleasure, she is allowed to return to her passionate thoughts and dreams that evoke the past, that is to say, to transition. "I often tell them [exceptional moments] over, or rather they come to the surface unexpectedly" (Woolf 'Sketch' 71) According to Woolf, moments of being might exist as characters are distracted from their social boundaries, prone to be absorbed by transition.

Transition: Is there a pattern?

To this extent, everything previously mentioned is directly or indirectly related to transition, the main objective of this thesis. Consequently, the definition given about transition in the Theoretical Framework would be reminded. Transition refers to the complete context in which a moment of being is inserted. In Bailey's words: "What makes consciousness akin to a stream is the embedding of these thoughts into transitional parts—conscious activity that intervenes without break between one thought and the next."(2) It has been analyzed that although Virginia Woolf doesn't verbalize the term transition, neither assigns a word to the phenomenon, she is aware of it, so she distinguishes it through unnoticed first sight signs.

To this extent, transition expression has been defined by its occurrence, but is there a pattern that transition should follow in a moment of being? And if there is, in which way does this phenomenon benefit us when reading *Mrs. Dalloway* or Woolf's works in general? The first question will be answered below, and if it is verified, the second one will be answered afterwards as a conclusion.

It is considerable to mention that, even though Virginia Woolf expressed the term pattern, she does not refer to the pattern that transition may have, but to the arrangement that is given to the past in a moment of being. "behind the cotton wool is hidden a pattern; that we- I mean all human beings- are connected with this; that the whole world is a work of art; that we are parts of the work of art." (Woolf 'Sketch' 72) That is to say, for Woolf, we are artists as we create a new reproduction of the past, which is directly related with Walter Benjamin's notion of authenticity earlier exposed. Although it is past which is evoked, therefore it is a derivation from the original moment, memory is unreliable and each moment is modified through a new evocation. Despite of the fact that this idea is related with the notion of transition, it doesn't make reference to the passage between material reality and inner reality experienced by characters.

In the first place, transition has been analyzed, in order to be defined through its occurrence, that is to say, according to narrative voice variation and secondly through character's private and public voice. Although it has been mentioned, it is important to clarify that both expressions are used to distinguish character's inner existence from character's social mask.

Furthermore, it doesn't mean that characters just experience moments of being in private, moments of being may occur in public events only if the characters' social role is neglected. Therefore, as they immerse in themselves, in their own identity, they are disposed to experience a moment of introspection.

This idea may be considered as the first characteristic of transition: characters should be in a state of unawareness. "The past only comes back when the present runs so smoothly that it is like the sliding surface of a deep river. Then one sees through the surface to the depths. (Woolf 'Sketch' 98) The expression unaware refers to the lack of "awareness of the solid world" around them (Marsh 158). Characters are lost in thought, which doesn't mean that characters are unaware of the process that they are experiencing or of the sensations awakened. This statement can be illustrated by means of Clarissa's moment of being:

All this was only a background for Sally. She stood by the fireplace talking, in that beautiful voice which made everything she said sound like a caress, to Papa, who had begun to be attracted rather against his will (he never got over lending her one of his books and finding it soaked on the terrace), when suddenly she said, "What a shame to sit indoors!" and they all went out on to the terrace and walked up and down. Peter Walsh and Joseph Breitkopf went on about Wagner. She and Sally fell a little behind. Then came the most exquisite moment of her whole life passing a stone urn with flowers in it. Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips. The whole world might have turned upside down! The others disappeared; there she was alone with Sally. And 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, wrapped up, which, as they walked (up and down, up and down), she uncovered, or

the radiance burnt through, the revelation, the religious feeling!—when old Joseph and Peter faced them:

"Star-gazing?" said Peter. (150)

Sally's kiss captivates Clarissa seducing her for the rest of her life. She presents it as one of the most pleasurable moments of her existence. Moreover she states it as a "revelation, a religious feeling" which takes us to relate it with moments of being and even more with epiphanies⁶. For Clarissa the kiss was like a treasure which was "wrapped up" in order to keep it for the rest of her life. The "present" was preserved in her memory; therefore she "kept it" aware of the sensation that it evoked, but didn't "look at" it in order to analyze it in the future in her private voice, consciously and in awareness.

When analyzing this moment of being according to its transition, it can be stated that it obeys the characteristic of being performed in a private voice situation. After arriving home, in the absence of her husband she proceeds to her room. She had come back from her stroll where she was in her social role, and now, at home, she knows that she is alone so she can be herself again. "She began to go slowly upstairs, with her hand on the bannisters, as if she had left a party, where now this friend now that had flashed back her face, her voice; had shut the door and gone out and stood alone, a single figure against the appalling night (145)" This opportunity, leads Clarissa to alienate herself to her inner reality. It was Richard's message about his absence to lunch which triggered transition. Then, as she is alone, in her room⁷, she is able to be abstracted of her daily material life. The interior monologue begins, while she evaluates her marriage. Her marriage takes her to examine love, and it is here when the moment of being emanates, as love transports her to Sally Seton. She remains there for a moment recalling Sally, her stories, her personality and her kiss. It was this last event, the most sparkling moment of her life; it was a revelation, which

⁶ Although in Footnote number 1 I explained that James Joyce used the term epiphany, I think here it is appropriate to specify, in correspondence with the context, that epiphanies have a religious origin. "Epiphany in the Western world has its origins in the Christian tradition: Paul's experience on the road to Damascus, the prophets' visions of God, the Spanish mystics' encounters with God, the numerous conversion experiences in history.(Palls 2)

⁷ In "A Room of One's Own", Virginia Woolf expresses the importance for a woman to have her own room. It is through independence that women gain autonomy. As women have freedom in their rooms, they are able to create, recovering their reality. It should not be considered a coincidence that Clarissa's most pleasant and revolutionary moment of being, arose in her room.

Peter Walsh interrupted, as thoughts of him interrupted Clarissa's enjoyable recollection of Sally. "Oh this horror!" she said to herself, as if she had known all along that something would interrupt, would embitter her moment of happiness. (150)

Although it is not possible to know how long Clarissa's transition last, it's possible to say that it is one of the most lasting moments, because of the amount of thoughts and evocations brought to her mind. Thoughts about Peter took Clarissa out of her moment of being; nevertheless she preceded thinking about Peter's thoughts about her physical appearance. These thoughts about her appearance reconnected Clarissa with her social image, leading her to public role concern, but not completely as she is still alone induced by her private vice: "seeing the delicate pink face of the woman who was that very night to give a party; of Clarissa Dalloway; of herself." (151) Now she, aware of the unfinished duties for her party is gradually reincorporated to her public voice. She goes downstairs and the transition is already finished.

Clarissa is able to experience this moment, as she is unaware of her public voice, but as was previously mentioned, the public voice is related with the social responsibilities that each character has. In the case of Mrs. Dalloway her main social responsibility is her aristocrat role as a hostess. But that is Clarissa's social role, Mrs. Ramsay's position is quite similar as she functions as a hostess too, nevertheless her role as a mother is more prominent. Therefore, it is appropriate to assert, that she is free to be herself when they are not around "and it was a relief when they [children] went to bed. For now she need not think about anybody. She could be herself, by herself. And that was what now she often felt the need of—to think; well, not even to think. To be silent; to be alone". (296). Through Mrs. Ramsay abstraction to her private voice she is able to experience a moment of introspection. As she is released from her public voice, she starts to feel confident and free, and transition begins. "They could not stop it, she thought, exulting. There was freedom, there was peace, there was, most welcome of all, a summoning together, a resting on a platform of stability." (296) She is aware that she is allowed to be herself, and to look for her identity "Losing personality, one lost the fret, the hurry, the stir; and there rose to her lips always some exclamation of triumph over life when things came together in this peace, this rest, this eternity" (296) It is subsumed in introspection that Mrs. Ramsay discerns the stroke of the lighthouse which triggered a moment of being, she remembers here

constantly there, sitting and looking, action which turns her into the things that she is staring, in this case, the light. In her absorption, she involuntarily declared “We are in the hands of the Lord”, words that surprised and annoyed her, taking her out of her moment of being. Trying to understand her unintentional words, she discerns the stroke of the lighthouse again, which reintroduces her to the moment of being. She thinks that the stroke is beautiful like her, and she remembers being alone and constantly favoring inanimate things. She stares at the light which consumed her, until the imminent question arrived to her mind: “What brought her to say that: “We are in the hands of the Lord?” (297), the question once again extracts her from her introspection, which by the light sight is restored again. She keeps on meditating as she sees the light; she is still alone in her private voice so transition leaves her gradually.

In relation to both passages previously explained another conclusion may come to light: transition involves stimulus. As transition refers to the context in which a moment of being is arisen, it must be taken into consideration that moments of being are triggered and extinguished by stimuli. Moreover transition itself may have a beginning and an end.

In Clarissa’s case, for instance, it is Richard’s message which caused transition to emerge, but it is her evaluation about love the one that triggers the moment of being “But this question of love (she thought, putting her coat away), this falling in love with women. Take Sally Seton”(148). This evocation was abruptly stolen by Peter Walsh interruption, but transition didn’t end till Clarissa remembered her party and her duties. “She would take her silks, her scissors, her—what was it?—her thimble, of course, down into the drawing-room, for she must also write, and see that things generally were more or less in order”(151). Mrs. Ramsay’s transition begins with her sensation of being calm and comfortable by herself. Then, the stroke of the lighthouse generated a moment of being. Although her words removed her from the revelation, the light abstracted her reiteratively. Once more, is not possible to know how long Mrs. Ramsay’s transition last, moreover it is not explicit where it ended. Nevertheless it is possible to assert that it is a long lasting moment, because Mrs. Ramsay is alone and unengaged to her public voice, as her children went to sleep. The last time we know about her she is struggling with her thoughts, may be in the transition borderline. In addition, her husband who was nearby didn’t interrupt her, so it is possible to assert that her transition is gradually smothered.

Another example of stimuli in transition and moments of being can be taken *Mrs Dalloway*. When Clarissa is in the flower shop and a car backfires. Clarissa and people surrounding turn and try to guess who the illustrious person passing in the car was. The car inspired them to look for a meaning in the situation, but Septimus didn't, he had lost his faith in sense. The loud noise evoked him despair:

Septimus Warren Smith, who found himself unable to pass, heard him. (...) The world wavered and quivered and threatened to burst into flames. It is I who am blocking the way, he thought. (...)

"Come on," said Lucrezia. But her husband, for they had been married four, five years now, jumped, started, and said, "All right!" angrily, as if she had interrupted him. (137)

Here the backfire can be considered to trigger both, transition and moment of being, as the novel doesn't give extra information about what was Septimus thinking before the noise. Moreover, Septimus is introduced to the readers through the backfire, by which we notice his trauma. This noise evokes Septimus another reality and a feeling previously experienced. He related the car's backfire with death and fire, which represent war and his mind enters to a state of confusion and isolation, which takes him to desperation. In Woolf words referring to the feelings given by a moment of being: "I only know that many of these exceptional moments brought with them a peculiar horror and a physical collapse; they seemed dominant; myself passive"(*Sketch*'72). In Septimus' event we can see how he is passive to this moment of shock, he feels that he is blocking the way but he doesn't do anything, because he can't. As he is collapsed only Rezia, as a stimulus, manages to take him back to his "material" life. "Come on," said Lucrezia. "All right!" angrily, as if she had interrupted him. (137) As Septimus is a character detached from his social role, he is constantly isolated in his own mind, thoughts and inner world.

When characters are immersed in their inner reality, they experience alienation. Transition captivates characters so intensely that they may forget their physical presence.

They are subsumed in a sort of trance⁸. In *Mrs. Dalloway* it can be reflected through the scene when Clarissa was at the flower shop she started to look and smell the flowers passionately, “turning her head from side to side (...) with her eyes half closed, snuffing in, after the street uproar, the delicious scent, the exquisite coolness.” (135) It is easy to imagine Clarissa’s reaction, similar to a child in a sweetshop: impatient, lively and emotional. By going from one flower to another she falls in a state of absorption. While transition arises and develops, she remains in her trance “from jar to jar, choosing, (...) as if this beauty, this scent, this colour, and Miss Pym liking her, trusting her⁹, were a wave which she let flow over her (...); and it lifted her up and up”. (135) Her cyclical movement is compared to a wave, which courses endlessly waiting a propitious moment to break, and then it spreads and fades; in the same way that thoughts are developed in the mind. Her isolation from her physical presence, allows her to be introduced in transition and then to experience a moment of being.

Trance can also be illustrated within “To the Lighthouse”. When Mrs. Ramsay is alone, as her children went to bed, we found her knitting. Although she was seated, she once in a while looked up to see the stroke of the lighthouse, without stopping from knitting. When someone is skillful at something, it can be said that they perform it without awareness, moreover if it involves a constant and uniform movement like knitting “she accomplished here something dexterous with her needles”. Through her continuous actions she is subsumed in a moment of alienation which can be verified by her assertion: “We are in the hands of the Lord” (297). Instantly she questions herself why did she say that, moreover “Who had said it?” In her detachment Mrs. Ramsay “had been trapped into saying something she did not mean”. Furthermore being absorbed is an encounter that she has experienced before “Often she found herself sitting and looking, sitting and looking, with her work in her hands until she became the thing she looked at—that light, for example.”(297) Similar to Clarissa’s comparison, Mrs. Ramsay trance is associated with

⁸ As was specified in the Theoretical Framework , the term trance would be used as it refers to: “Detachment from one's physical surroundings, as in contemplation or daydreaming” Taken from The American Heritage Dictionary)

⁹ It is important to declare that as Clarissa is in confidence with Miss Pym, she is able to be herself, experiencing transition in her private voice.

waves¹⁰ “and the blue went out of the sea and it rolled in waves of pure lemon which curved and swelled and broke upon the beach and the ecstasy burst in her eyes and waves of pure delight raced over the floor of her mind.” This established the cyclical movement that Mrs. Ramsay was experiencing, it can be said that she was in a physical and psychical trance.

When characters’ are removed from their trance either abruptly or gradually, they are also detached from their introspection. Although these moments are considered exceptional, it is relevant to evidence that when transition is concluded, characters are not provided by answer neither they solve dichotomies. Woolf expresses that, although one may be instantly tempted to explain a moment of revelation, “I hazard the explanation that a shock is at once in my case followed by the desire to explain it” (‘Sketch’ 72), this is not possible straightway; therefore moments of being are preserved in the mind. “I felt that I had put away in my mind something that I should go back [to], to turn over and explore” (‘Sketch’71). This notion can be illustrated by a similar event in *Mrs Dalloway* when Clarissa was kissed by Sally. She states that it is a moment of “revelation, a religious feeling”. As was previously explained characters are aware of their emotions, therefore they are able to retain them. The same idea of awareness is shared by a moment of pleasure that Woolf lived: “In the case of the flower I found a reason; and was thus able to deal with the sensation. I was not powerless. I was conscious – if only at a distance- that I should in time explain it” (Woolf ‘Sketch’67)

Sally’s kiss captivates Clarissa seducing her for the rest of her life in the same way that Woolf was delighted with the flowers’ event. For Clarissa the kiss was like a treasure which was “wrapped up” in order to keep it for the rest of her life. Clarissa also says that the kiss is a “present” to “keep” not to “looking at”; in the same way that Woolf keeps her moment to herself not to analyze it immediately, but in the future. Through this comparison it is proved that when transition is finished, characters are provided with awareness and

¹⁰ In “A sketch of the past” Woolf’s life stands upon this memory at Talland house, listening to the sound of the waves breaking on the shore. In Woolf’s works waves are constantly associated with meditation and serenity by means of their continuous rhythm.

energy. As time passes, characters are supposed to be more competent to think through these moments “as one gets older one has a greater power through reason to provide an explanation” (Woolf ‘Sketch’72), nevertheless that is not always the case. Some characters may revive these exceptional random moments without finding an explanation. Moreover, it must be remarked that getting an explanation doesn’t necessarily mean to obtain a solution.

Conclusions

In relation to what has been previously analyzed, transition was defined through: narrative voice variation and characters social bonds detachment. And according to what was exposed transition involved certain characteristics, for instance: characters should be in a state of unawareness; there should be a triggering impulse, then transition should be developed, which may evoke a moment of being and finally, it is extinguished by a banishing impulse. In addition, transition may leads to a trance either physical, psychical or both and ultimately, characters may have the intention to explain the process, particularly the moment of being. After an illustrative analysis, it can be concluded that transition does involve a kind of pattern established through the characteristics previously discussed.

It is transition together with other phenomenon, the ones that allow us to appreciate the story in flux. Woolf presents a story without any perceptible disruption. Woolf’s narrative can be illustrated by Bullet’s perception:

“a finger of light passing from point to significant point of the picture, the fluid, dissolving, perpetually disintegrating and reintegrating picture that consciousness makes of its contact with an infinitely diverse and unknowable reality. Her method is kaleidoscopic, though not so crudely pictorial as that description might seem to imply.” (797)

We are introduced and removed from characters’ thoughts, moreover there is not a traditional plot “The lack of didacticism is also evident in her preference for open plots, plots that convey no theses.” (Pasold 105) Although this lack of plot makes difficult to denote a specific point in the story, Woolf’s work is not defined through action. Therefore a complete story can be exposed with “no theses”.

Woolf presents an admirable narrative flow in its trueness to the working of the ordinary mind on ordinary days. According to Bullet's essay:

“We are moved (...) by that curious sensation which is the book's continuous effect—the sensation of seeing and feeling the very stream of life, the undeviating tide of time, flowing luminously by, with all the material phenomena, streets and stars, bicycles and human bodies, floating like straws upon its surface. (795)

For instance *Jacob's Room's* narrative flow retains the flux of the common life spirit:

“Then two thousand hearts in the semi-darkness remembered, anticipated, travelled dark labyrinths; and Clara Durrant said farewell to Jacob Flanders, and tasted the sweetness of death in effigy; and Mrs. Durrant, sitting behind in the dark of the box, sighed her sharp sigh;...and...and...In short, the observer is choked with observations.” 53

Throughout the novel, like in this scene, the narrator fills the role of an observer and the narration portrays the myriad of atoms falling upon the narrator's mind as she/he takes in the many impressions of Jacob, other characters, and scenes and is led in many incongruous directions of thought. The narrative of *Jacob's Room*, reflects the essential movement of the ordinary mind in that throughout it sustains a constant flow of a myriad of impressions, objects, characters, and scenes in connection with Jacob.

Moreover in *The Waves*, we are able to appreciate the individual flow development. As characters interact, they interrupt the flowing, stream of consciousness narrative, illustrating a moment that stands apart in time. A suitable instance to illustrate this is Susan's declaration: “I am rooted, but I flow” (Woolf, *Waves* 259). She is capable of being autonomous, and a part of a whole; she is rooted in her collective consciousness, but flows as an individual consciousness.

It is specifically, understanding Woolf's writings through transition and its pattern, which allows us to breed a new perspective in relation to Woolf's works, mainly, *Mrs Dalloway*.

This novel gives special attention to the mind, to the individual's psychology, to the subjective and internal experience of reality, all of them directly related with flow.

Although transition may not provide solutions to characters, it allows us, as readers, to perceive characters in flow. Woolf offers characters in flux, characters that reason and emote as they move through life. As characters are able to leave aside their social limitations, they are immersed in their private voice; consequently the character's mind is taken into an internal flow

This is shown in "To the Lighthouse" when Lucy questions herself

‘What is the meaning of life?’ ... The great revelation had never come. The great revelation perhaps never did come. Instead there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark; here was one. [...] In the midst of chaos there was shape; this eternal passing and flowing ... was struck into stability’ (Woolf *To the Lighthouse* 361)

As can be seen not only *Mrs Dalloway* but most of her works, are concerned with the subjective reality of its characters, and the nature of life as dynamic flux. In two of her works, "The Common reader" and "A Sketch of the Past" Woolf focuses on the coexistence of life in flux, and life accented by moments of being. For her life is a constant flow, not jointed. It is a disconnection, as the result of recording the atoms of life "The mind receives a myriad impressions — trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old; the moment of importance came not here but there"(Woolf *The Common Reader* 189). For Woolf, consciousness is fluid and ever changing, and should be expressed as such. Woolf's vision of life may explain her pursuit of representing the full spectrum of internal life experience through moments of being. In Woolf's "A Sketch of the Past", she depict life as having a "base that it stands upon," and on this base is "a bowl that one fills and fills and fills" (64), a basin whose contents are being continuously adjusted as the life it represents endlessly experiences and transforms. The image of a basin whose contents are constantly shifting demonstrates the fluidity experienced in the mind: the individual

identity is itself in constant motion, forming and reforming itself through the dialogue between what was and what is. All these ideas are reflected in her characters, which react to their surroundings in ways that mirrored actual human experience.

In the preceding analysis it was intended to prove that transition is founded by certain characteristics that eventually create a kind of pattern. Nevertheless it is appropriate to declare that neither characteristics nor the pattern are confined. There could be more or less characteristics in transition. Moreover, characteristics are not prearranged to occur, that is to say, not all of them need to be present in a transition situation, and they may vary according to the context and writer's intention. In associated eventual studies these characteristics may be considered a guide willing to reinforcement or changes. The characteristics specified and analyzed in this work are proper and relevant in relation to my thesis statement, which asserts that there is a veiled pattern behind moments of being's transition.

Mrs Dalloway is in many ways a formal experiment in how to shape inner experience, and focusing on certain structural aspects has been a tool for interpretation. Analyzing transition can generate an understanding of thematic content, such as finding stability in a chaotic, fluid world. Just as transition allows characters to experience moments of revelation, it allows us to understand the flow of their thoughts. Current thoughts tell us who they are, but their memories explain why the characters are as they are.

Whether as a phenomenon of the passage that characters experience, a pattern through which we are able to understand the flow of life or as a device that Woolf's provide to connect the story, the presence of transition, the mind pilgrimage, in *Mrs Dalloway* is felt and remembered by any reader.

Then, for that moment, she had seen an illumination; a match burning in a crocus; an inner meaning almost expressed. But the close withdrew; the hard softened. It was over—the moment. (Woolf 'Mrs Dalloway' 148)

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