MODERN FICTION AND ITS PHANTOMS

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Abstract

The fiction of the turn of the twentieth century is driven by the nonhuman. Characters and narrators alike are ousted by things, animals, environments, and all manner of inhuman otherness. *Modern Fiction and its Phantoms* reads the novels of Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Richardson alongside ghost stories by M. R. James, Vernon Lee, and others, in order to explore how this autonomous world creeps close to the self. We recall the kitchen table Lily fails to picture when she is "not there" in *To The Lighthouse*. Lily can only summon a table which is as much entangled with her imagination as with a pear tree. A beyond-human reality is imperceptible, un-writeable. Yet I wish to highlight a notable aspect of such characteristic modern apophasis: that radical alterity is frequently illegible not because it is inaccessible to signs as because it is in league with signs. Alterity dwells in, and usurps us through, the processes and structures of fiction. It is lively; coalescing in the voice, the momentum, the meaning-making devices of fiction. It arises, disconcertingly, out of all that seems most human about narrative.

The conspiratorial collusion between the nonhuman and the symbolic is something we should all recognise from the ghost story. Indeed, metaleptic horror stories about documents coming to life peaked as the nineteenth century edged into the twentieth. But that phantasmal relationship is also distinctly present in domestic, modernist novels. These are narratives in which signifiers share an eerie proximity with signifieds and symbolic worlds collapse into real worlds. On the one hand, this is a form of extreme mimeticism (the realist tradition is visible here, as it was inherited and distorted). But it can also be understood as a particular strain of modern abstraction, in which literary style is understood as a stronghold of otherness, and in
which the individual is not so much alienated by an inhospitable world but rather, through this aesthetic intimacy, brought into sudden contact with it. British fiction from the turn of the twentieth century is haunted by a relentless realism.
Introduction

"[T]o grasp the shadowy and fantasmal form of a book […] that is the effort of a critic of books, and it is perpetually defeated" (Percy Lubbock, *The Craft of Fiction* 1).

I. Spectres

As any reader of ghost stories will know, ghosts are not just hard to see but hard to understand. They are shadowy and bewildering not just physically but also intellectually.¹ Indeed, literary ghosts are often epistemologically disruptive to their narratives, and it is this association between the spectral and the abstruse that, in 1921, was used as an analogy by Percy Lubbock for literary criticism. Books, he says, are ghostly; literature, like a phantom, is difficult to see and difficult to know. Even favourite read-and-reread novels cannot be held in the mind in their entirety. They slip away, crumble, and all we are left with are fragments and gists. Narrative tumbles from our intellectual grasp. It is this suggestion—that fiction is in some ways alienating, or at least not completely available to us—that I follow in this project. The "shadowy and fantasmal" narratives from the late 19th and early 20th centuries considered here are stories that are self-aware of the strangeness of the structures and processes of fictional prose. These are

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¹ This is what Shane McCorristine describes as "[t]he metaphysics of the phantasmagoria which suggested that ghost-seeing experience could be both fallacious and veridical at the same time" (20).
tales that make clear narrative's affinity to, even complicity with, the alien. This is narrative that is "on the side of things."²

The works I read in this project all show particular attention to the nonhuman world: the various things and forces, both animate and inanimate, that are not part of the self. This is what Douglas Mao defines as "modernism's extraordinarily generative fascination with the object understood neither as commodity (Goods) nor as symbol (Gods), but as 'object,' where any or all of the resonances of this complexly polysemous word might apply" (4). Like Mao, I look to the modern interest in this multifaceted alterity. Unlike Mao, I use terms such as “nonhuman," "thing," "being," and "body" more often than "object," partly because the entities in my texts are not always inanimate (as "object" implies) and more particularly because my precise interest is those things and bodies that bear little resemblance to either the "object" of commodity culture or the "object" of psychoanalysis.

The "nonhuman," as we should expect from such a broad term, is defined differently by each narrative. My first chapter considers the turn-of-the-century ghost stories of M. R. James, Vernon Lee, and their contemporaries. In these tales, monsters and revenants described by dusty old manuscripts, forgotten oil paintings, or untranslatable foreign scripts cast off their documentation and turn physical to take their revenge on human protagonists. Here, the nonhuman world (taking the form of ghouls and ghosts) is equated with the non-symbolic world.

The nonhuman is that which cannot be successfully (or safely) represented. In the second chapter I read Virginia Woolf's To The Lighthouse, in which the nonhuman appears at first to be defined by Mr. Ramsay the philosopher as an object without a subject. An empty and disintegrating

² To borrow a phrase from Francis Ponge's Parti Pris des Choses, a 1942 collection of prose poems that plays with the sensory aspects of language as a way to write about objects. The title is also sometimes translated as "The Voice of Things." This connotative area (speaking up for/choosing the side of things) is one which I will explore in this project.
house acts as a synecdoche for this hypothetically subject-less world. But the prose style, as it
describes this unpopulated scene, doesn't simply illustrate the impossibility of isolating the
"object" side of that relational binary. Instead, it insists, through manipulations of metaphor, that
the nonhuman is not some absent interlocutor or oppositional elsewhere but that animals, things,
people, ideas, and forces are entangled, forming monstrous crowds or landscapes. In the third
and final chapter I focus on Dorothy Richardson's novel *Pilgrimage*, in which the protagonist
Miriam Henderson is aware that her life is in large part orchestrated by the domestic objects and
urban environments among which she dwells. She is frequently overwhelmed by her own sensual
experiences of the outside world. For Miriam, the nonhuman is not just her material, external
world; even her private sensory experiences are in large part alien to her. A certain self-sacrifice,
in which she takes on the role of "phantom," allows her to be identical to her own, personal,
cosmos.

As we can see, each narrative provides a different definition of "nonhuman," but all are
concerned with the inadequacy of an oppositional understanding of self and other. Each is also
marked by a particular self-aware interest in literary form. This project follows the attempts of
my authors to describe an intimate relationship between the human and the nonhuman through
their stylistics. Rather than understanding selfhood as constituted by and through the relational
terms of discourse (in which the subject, "I," finds its identity in opposition to the object, "you")
these works imagine the collapse of the semiotic structures that fix the individual in
interdependent but irreducible relation with the other. Instead they display a characteristic
modernist interest in thingly-signs and sign-like things, suggesting a closeness between selfhood

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3 Discussing Emile Benveniste, Kaja Silverman sums up the linguistically constituted self thus:
"subjectivity […] is grasped in the relational terms earlier used by Saussure to explain the
operations of language. Like the linguistic sign, the subject relies upon another term within the
same paradigm—here, the personal pronoun 'you'—for its meaning and value. And that
paradigm can only be activated through discourse" (45).
and the more-than-human world that might not be best understood through discursive terms.

The levelling of sign and referent is a particular form of modern abstraction in which the representation is not treated as though it is less real, or less self-sufficient, than the original. These authors have given themselves, of course, a difficult task by attempting to convey this idea through language. They not only write about the collapse of referential structures, but even imitate that collapse in their formal choices. This is an interesting stylistic dilemma, no doubt, but it also constitutes an interruption of, or challenge to, the notion of semioticized relationship between personhood and the impersonal that would define these states as "subjectivity" and "objectivity" and thereby leave both stranded in language. By drawing document and documented closer together, these works suggest an intimacy between the two that exceeds signification. Consequently, I am not pursuing a "vision of the modern age as one in which the particular, the concrete, and the auratic were threatened as never before by habits of generalization and abstraction" (Mao 6-7). In these stories abstraction is precisely where you will find the otherness of the nonhuman, although it may not necessarily be "particular … [or] concrete … [or] auratic." Mao's understanding of the nonhuman (as an independent, inaccessible, authenticity) is not ratified by Woolf, Richardson, James, et al. They none of them consider the real world to be self-contained, original, inexpressible, or uncopiable. Indeed, many of the techniques that are used to achieve their particular vision of the proximity between the symbolic and nonsymbolic are recognizable from nineteenth century fiction. So this project is, in part, a study of the phantasmagoria of realism—with its present-absent narrators, its real illusions, and the vulnerability it demands of its human subjects—as it was perpetuated in the late nineteenth

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4 Describing the Lacanian subject, Silverman writes: "since language speaks no more to the reality of objects than it does to that of subjects, it effects as complete a rupture with the phenomenal world" and that "[w]ith the subject's entry into the symbolic order it is reduced to the status of a signifier in the field of the Other" (166).
and early twentieth centuries to facilitate a less estranged relationship between human and nonhuman.

When we discuss modernist era fiction, we tend to think of it as primarily concerned with form, with language, with consciousness—concerned, that is, with intangible things. When we discuss the modern subject, it is usually as it relates to these symbolic frameworks: the modern individual is typically lost in discourse, or unable to participate fully in structures of meaning or flows of information. When we do discuss the tangible worlds and physical circumstances of modern fiction, it is most frequently in terms of the individual stranded in, or under siege from, an inaccessible or uncontrollable (usually urban) space. But I am trying to trace an alternative tradition, in which modern authors are not only distinctly interested in a world external to the self (meaning both the tangibility external to the individual as a body, as well as the nonsymbolic external to a linguistic consciousness), but who understand any alienation from that externality to be bound up with intimacy. As I will go on to argue, narrative form itself demands this ontology.

Far from narrative being less able than description, or poetry, or the visual arts to capture "thingness," each of my authors suggests that narrative form simply insists upon a different understanding of the nonhuman, and subsequently a differing relation to the human.

The search for the nonhuman in fiction can take many forms. Elaine Freedgood, in her compelling *The Ideas in Things*, proposes that we must abandon analogy if we are to catch the material objects that lurk in Victorian novels. Her method is "a moment of taking [things] literally, followed by a lengthy metonymic search beyond the covers of the text" (5). I suggest that, conversely, it is *in* analogy—and in other formal facets of realist novels—that we can find literary things "defetishized." It is there that the sketches and flashes of a world resistant to intelligibility are glimpsed in and amongst a genre that appears to take the knowability and
representability of the world as a given. I focus intently on style because I am aware that to base my criticism upon "search[ing] beyond the covers the the text" as Freedgood does would be to re-inscribe the dichotomy of word/world that my considered narratives are insistent upon dismantling. My approach therefore will be to follow the cue of these stories and attempt to locate the thing on the level of the sentence. I will follow the contours of these authors' impossible task and ask where typographically, formally, and stylistically (in the parts of the text that obfuscate between being iconic and arbitrary) the non-symbolic might be found entangled with the symbol, or the voiceless with the inscription, or the unseen with the focalisation, as well as considering the wider implications of, and contexts for, this desire to conflate narrative and world in modernist-era fiction.

In this introduction, I will spend some time unpacking the terms and contexts that will be important to the following chapters. Since this project is at heart focused on the medium of narrative, particularly the positions and powers of the narrator and the hierarchical structures of fiction, I begin with a discussion of the field of narratology, locating this project in relation to recent critical developments in the field. I move on to define what I mean by "realist" literature, and to identify the particular legacies of the Victorian novel that I see redeployed and exaggerated by my modern authors. One key facet of this, I will argue, is that literary realism declines to decide definitively on the epistemological status of the individual. I suggest that there was a similar tension about how and how much the individual knows of the world in the philosophical emergence of "New Realism" at the turn of the century in reaction to a longstanding tradition of idealism. These works are expressive of a similar tension. That they decline to choose a side indicates, I suggest, an undermining of the very epistemological terms of that debate (which is fundamentally about "access"). The works considered in this project
propose instead that contact with alterity is found through aesthetic intimacy. I finish with a consideration of how and why style can create closeness. I am curious to note that this modern desire to compound the aesthetic with the real, which appears to be an extension of the realist project that preceded it, is nevertheless often accompanied by supernaturalism. The identity of original and copy is depicted as fantastic or monstrous. In these "fantasmal" stories, the world (in both its symbolic and nonsymbolic attitudes) appears lively—and the individual is rendered notably passive.

II. Narratology

The passivity of the human may seem like an odd subject matter for the medium of narrative. Being able to forge a meaning and structure out of one's sequential set of experiences, many would argue, is central to what it means to be a person and to be an ethical being. For example, while coming to terms with (or sometimes protesting against) the recent "narrative turn" in the humanities, narratology has also undergone a sea-change of its own. Whereas classical narratology tended to foreground the causal nature of narrative's sequence of events, "experiential" narratology, laid out by Monika Fludernik in her seminal *Towards a "Natural" Narratology* (1996), suggests that it is the presence of a human or human-like experiencer of events, more than any meaningful connection between those events, which defines narrative: "in my model, there can therefore be narratives without plot, but there cannot be any narratives without a human (anthropomorphic) experiencer of some sort" (12-13). Likewise, cognitive narratological approaches propose that not only is narrative mimetic of the way in which the

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5 See Martin Kreiswirth's "Trusting the Tale: The Narrativist Turn in the Human Sciences."
mind works, but that consciousness might not even be possible without narrative. Galen Strawson, among others, pushes back against this anthropocentric understanding of narrative. He claims that some people identify as more episodic than diachronic, and that narrativity can therefore be no more connected to personhood than to ethics. In any case, the ongoing, unresolved, search for a definition of what makes a narrative a narrative, suggests that perhaps it is in its nature, however much it maps onto subjectivity, always somewhat to evade us.

Indeed, recent years have seen an increase of interest in unusual or alienating narratives. "Unnatural narratology," for example, studies narratives which "depict situations and events that move beyond, extend, challenge, or defy our knowledge of the world" (Richardson "Unnatural Stories" 2). One interesting tension in current postclassical narratological theories, therefore, exists between, on the one hand, the assertion that narrative is necessarily concerned with human or human-like experience and on the other hand, a pull towards addressing the anti-mimetic, inhuman, or fantastic in narrative. It is at this critical juncture that I position my project. Pekka Tammi's response to the "unnaturalists" is that literary critics also need to attend to the paradoxical or strange within realist or conventional fiction. I will follow Tammi's suggestion

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6 For a critical overview of various cognitive narratological theories, see Marie-Laure Ryan's "Narratology and Cognitive Science: A Problematic Relation."

7 Strawson argues against what he calls "the psychological Narrativity thesis" which "is often coupled with a normative thesis, which I'll call the ethical Narrativity thesis. This states that experiencing or conceiving one's life as a narrative is a good thing; a richly Narrative outlook is essential to a well-lived life, to true or full personhood" (428).

8 Acknowledging the mushrooming of critical approaches to narrative at the end of the twentieth century, David Herman in his 1999 study Narratologies, not only coined the term "postclassical narratology" but suggested that a plural understanding of the methodology was now needed. Postclassical narratology embraces deconstructive readings, as well as interpretative schemas that are socio-culturally and philosophically grounded such as feminist or psychoanalytical readings. Interdisciplinary and trans-medial studies of narrative have also proliferated in recent years, and the term "narrativity" has in some cases begun to replace "narratology" as theorists move to spend less time pinning down the frameworks of narrative and more to asking whether, and to what extent, any given text possesses "narrativity."

9 See the discussions in Narrative vol. 18 No. 5, and vol. 20 no. 3, and in StoryWorlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies, Vol. 5. See also A Poetics of Unnatural Narrative, 2013.
that we ask "whether it is not the capacity of literary fiction […] to deal specifically with the impossibilities, the paradoxes and problems, of our human efforts to order experience" (29). Further, I agree that

problematic, subversively strange, or indeterminate narrative […] does not concern just avant-garde, experimental literature. Possibly, such an impulse is always already there, as it were, underlying even seemingly realistic, straightforward, and linear fiction. (30)

The unnatural voices and the nonhuman capabilities of turn-of-the-century narratives, should not, I argue, simply be chalked up to the formal experimentation of the era, but are actually foundational to what we would think of as conventional realist narration; the "largely invisible unnatural elements cached within ostensibly mimetic works" (Richardson "Unnatural Stories" 3). As Fludernik reminds us, "[t]he natural […] is that which requires the most insistent signification by means of (artificial) signifiers—just as the supposedly mimetic representation of direct discourse is constituted by a maximum of artificial markers of alterity" (Towards 4).

Mimeticism is utterly dependent upon anti-mimeticism. It is precisely this issue, often conventionalized within practices of fictional stylistics, that is treated so interestingly by the moderns.

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10 Brian Richardson's closing words in his 2006 study Unnatural Voices: Extreme Narration in Modern and Contemporary Fiction, concur with this assessment, claiming as he does that "[n]arrative fiction['s] … nature is to seek out the unnatural."

11 Richardson, for example, may acknowledge that "a traditional, mimetic third-person fiction will typically follow the basic conventions of biography or the history of a family, with the exception that the narrator is able to know what goes on in the minds of one or more characters" (6). But he fails to follow up on this huge fantastical "exception" that dominates realist fiction, in order to chase more "outrageous" examples of postmodern fiction (140).
The history of narratology circles around the relationship of the telling versus the told, and the related mimesis/diegesis distinction. Due to its foundational oppositional and hierarchical categories, classical narratology is strongly tied to structuralist theory. In the early decades of the 20th century, Russian Formalists named the split between the raw material of the story and its constructed telling the fabula/sjuzhet distinction, which in structuralist terminology became Tzvetan Todorov's histoire/discours and Gérard Genette's histoire/récit. These binaries contain a spectre: the idea that behind the prose resides a "real," unmediated, sequence of events. Although the "histoire" is (re)constructed from its mediated telling it nevertheless appears to precede and produce it. The narratological divisions that appear to name a separation between telling and told actually name their indistinguishability.

Such indistinguishability leaves narrators occupying an odd space. To take an example contemporary to the works I will consider, Percy Lubbock's 1921 The Craft of Fiction, stressed the importance of an all-seeing omniscient narrator for fictional mimeticism, but did not interrogate the anti-mimetic requirements of that narrative position. Lubbock borrows Henry James's terms, "picture" and "drama" to differentiate between an overtly present narrator versus an impersonal narrative voice: "in one case [picture] the reader faces towards the story-teller and listens to him, in the other [drama] he turns towards the story and watches it" (111). Lubbock then advocates for "drama," claiming that "the art of fiction does not begin until the novelist thinks of his story as a matter to be shown, to be so exhibited that it will tell itself" (62). To create the illusion of a world beyond voice, the narrator's voice can have no independence from its world. The voice is all world, and therefore the world is not voiced.

The idea that narrative should "be so exhibited that it will tell itself," (62, my italics) is a
good example of how the "unnatural" permeates our attempts to describe how narrative works.\textsuperscript{12}

What does it mean, to say that the thing that exists only through being vocalized or written by someone (the story) is vocalizing or writing itself?\textsuperscript{13} Certainly this idea seems to force out the individual. Of course the only reasonable interpretation of Lubbock's phrasing, is that intrusive remarks by the teller would be likely to inhibit the illusion that the storyworld has some reality beyond the author's mind.\textsuperscript{14} However, that particular piece of phrasing—the story telling itself—is too suggestive to let go. It cracks open the uncanny nature of narrative, which, although told or written by someone, appears to exceed or precede both author and audience. Most strikingly in heterodiegetic and impersonal narration, narrative voice is a voice without a person. It does not belong to the author, and neither is it a character. Even in homodiegetic narration, a narrator is a somewhat otherworldly figure, simultaneously super- and sub-character.\textsuperscript{15} If narratology is, at heart, a study of "the relation between story events and their rearrangement" (Shen 139), then it is always a methodology that deals in simulacra, unpicking the "re"-arrangement of non-existent originals. Narrative worlds are the product of a spectral voice coming from no-one, discoursing upon nothing.

\textsuperscript{12} It is a phrase used frequently in narrative criticism, for example by Georg Lukács (who claims that it is in description that "the novel will write itself" [\textit{Writer} 120]), and by Emile Benveniste in \textit{Problems in General Linguistics} (208).

\textsuperscript{13} Hayden White asks, "[w]hy should not, in the domain of the imaginary, even the stones themselves speak—like Memnon's column when touched by the rays of the sun? But real events should not speak, should not tell themselves. Real events should simply be; they can perfectly well serve as the referents of a discourse, can be spoken about, but they should not pose as the tellers of a narrative." He goes on to claim that narrative—events telling themselves—"becomes a \textit{problem} only when we wish to give to real events the \textit{form} of story. It is because real events do not offer themselves as stories that their narrativization is so difficult" ("Value" 8).

\textsuperscript{14} Indeed, Lubbock will go on to claim that a narrative should be confined to a character's point-of-view to ensure that it is "shown" not "told" by the narrator: clearly, he by no means argues that escaping the narrator means abandoning subjectivity or point of view.

\textsuperscript{15} A good example is the narrator of Elizabeth Gaskell's \textit{Cranford}.
Therefore, if we are to look anywhere for the nonhuman in fiction I suggest we turn not to passages of description or to Barthesian reality effects. Instead, narrative voice seems to be the place to start. After all, to look for the nonhuman in moments of weak narrativity (like descriptive passages) is to suggest that it can only be located where prose is least plotted. It would be sidestepping the obvious question, were we to acknowledge that these stories are overtly concerned with the more-than-human world and then to expect to find that world only in the most diluted portions of the medium. I wish to ask where nonhumans are found, and what work they do, in narrative as narrative: in its telling, in its sequentiality, in its closure. I would like to draw together the recent suggestions from Tammi, Fludernik, Richardson, et al., that we attend to the strange and impossible in realist form, in tandem with this refrain that seems to haunt the history of narratology to let the story "tell itself." How is the collapse between the sign (the telling) and its object (the storyworld) imagined, and to what use is it put? What will be the fate of the individual? Stephen Dedalus has a hint: when the god-like narrator "remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible," he is "refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails" (Joyce Portrait 215). The authority of Dedalus's narrator is complete, his power over his handiwork is so all-encompassing that it is invisible. Yet this is also the means for his erasure. The aloof artist, like those half-animate half-vocal worlds he creates, is likewise half-alive and half-dead, both ephemerally non-existent and solidly and quotidianly trimming his fingernails.

Fiction, one could argue, is a means by which we daydream beyond the limits of experience and knowledge. At the very least, narratives mediate our linear temporal existence, offering the respite of the static in conjunction with the continuous and offering the comfort of determinism in conjunction with the freedom of contingency. It can even allow us to interlope in
other minds. Nineteenth century realism, with its sweeping historical and social scope, makes fiction's epistemological fantasies particularly clear. But I will attend to how this dream of knowing the world comprehensively is also shown in early-twentieth century fiction to be an exercise in writing its defeat: even as realist fiction gives us a world impossibly accessible, like memory and empathy super-charged, it also presents a world of strange otherness wherein our everyday experience of time, space, and others is always partially shouldered out. I use narratological terminology in this project in order to describe the frameworks and capabilities of narrative. But I want to remain alert to the fact that the organizational scaffolding of narratological theory is never stable, and indeed, that it is particularly suited to describing narrative as a spectral medium that proposes, but can never maintain, a binary relationship between word and world.

III. Realism

George Eliot famously wrote that "[i]f we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence" (Middlemarch 226). Eliot self-referentially cites the work of the realist novelist (who presents a vision "of all ordinary human life"), and then hints at the violence and threat of such an endeavour. Lining up the essential, inviolable privacy of the individual with the nonhuman world of grass and squirrels she places us—humans, squirrels, and all—on "the other side of silence." Perfectly achieved, omniscience would kill us, and though we might argue that realistic fiction facilitates empathy by allowing us
to step in and out of other minds, Eliot reminds us of just how inhuman(e) and untenable is that fantasy of complete knowledge.

The term "realism" is nothing if not fraught. It possesses a diverse and contradictory history that appears to justify Eliot's undercutting of its epistemological claims. Over the course of its philosophical career, for example, it has undergone a complete reversal of its terms. Originally, realism was synonymous with idealism. For Plato it was universals that constituted "reality" and material objects were nothing but imperfect copies of these ideal forms. Through the eighteenth century in Britain and into the Victorian era, conversely, an empirical understanding of reality was common. Observation-based scientific methods affirmed a secular, materialist understanding of the "real." Subsequently, "[t]he [Victorian] realist novel is invested, at the level of its most basic form, in the materiality of information" (Ward 280). Yet a tension between empiricism and rationalism (that is, to what extent sense experiences versus innate ideas allow us to access and understand the world) reverberates through the fiction of the Victorian era. 16 It is this problem, wherein our signs and sensations both allow access to and distort reality, which lies at the heart of nineteenth-century literary realism, a genre that far from naively acquiescing to a correspondence theory of truth actually thrives in its difficulties. To borrow Michael Taussig's phrase, Victorian literary mimeticism is a "silly, if not desperate place between the real and the really made-up" (xvii).

Robyn R. Warhol makes the pertinent observation that what a text finds to be unnarratable is a key generic marker (221). Realism's panoramic view, its attention to both the detail and the vista, its insistence on breaking its own frame and narrating both inside and outside

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16 As Ann Banfield characterizes this tension: "All we ever know immediately is not matter, but our own sensations. The object of science is beyond immediate knowledge. But sensation remains the evidence for it. 'The empirical basis for objective knowledge thus rests on subjective foundations'" (Phantom 6).
its storyworld, seem to establish it as a genre that finds nothing ontologically unnarratable 
(although, during different eras, it certainly finds many things politically or ethically 
unnarratable). Yet the fantasy of omniscient objectivity engaged in by realism (and shared by 
postmodern relativity) relies, Donna Haraway claims, on "the god-trick" of insisting upon the 
viability of "seeing everything from nowhere" (Simians 189). I suggest that the "god-trick" not 
only renders realism alienated from, even threatening to, its human subjects (a point I will pick 
up again later) but that this is just one of many examples of how as a genre it is founded upon 
unsustainable structures and impossible knowledge.

The novels and stories considered in this project range from the 1880s to the 1920s, a 
period when it began to seem as though the realist novels that had dominated the Victorian era 
were giving way to something altogether more modern. Virginia Woolf, M. R. James and his 
contemporaries, and Dorothy Richardson wrote, respectively, a novel of high modernism, 
collections of supernatural short stories, and an almost unreadably long autobiographical novel 
sequence. Each would seem variously to stand outside realist perimeters: they are supernatural 
rather than natural, or they focus on an individual subjectivity not a wider social scope, or they 
are ambiguous, drawing attention to their form, or they are fragmented and refuse the holist or 
democratic ends of realism. Yet they all develop ideas and anxieties which have been bequeathed
by realism: the hesitation around the division between illusion and reality; an awareness of the 
dangers and downfalls of omniscience and other power structures in fictional form; the tension 
between the significant and the insignificant. Given the common characterization of the 
chronology of the literary canon, in which the staid and bulky realist novel gives way to vibrant 
twentieth century experimentation, it seems pertinent to foreground the importance of the 
nineteenth-century realists' awareness of the limitations and tricks of their form.
Literary realism, Matthew Beaumont writes, is the ability,

through the act of representation, in one semiotic code or another, to provide cognitive as well as imaginative access to a material, historical reality that, though irreducibly mediated by human consciousness, and of course by language, is nonetheless independent of it. ("Reclaiming" 2)

In other words, realism is a deeply contradictory practice—one which has faith in both "access" to the world and is reconciled to "irreducible mediation"; one that proposes that "material, historical reality" is not incompatible with imagination, and that a world whose only presence is in the representation is "nonetheless independent of it." Such a mode, so riven with paradox, cannot help but be a rather strange chimera. The realists' fearless recognition of, and playfulness with, their strange form has on occasion been forgotten. Beaumont goes so far as to claim that,

[m]ilitant postmodernists […] have crudely caricatured realism, claiming that as an aesthetic it assumes a fundamentally unproblematic relationship between reality and its representations. They have themselves risked assimilating reality to its representations— the world to the word—almost completely. (2)

Literary realism is a genre which, at least as much as it is engaged in empiricism, knowledge, and representation, is also concerned with the unrepresented, the unresolved, the unknown. To reduce such a complex genre by equating it with an uncritical belief in the transparency between representation and referent is to categorically misunderstand it.
One factor of Victorian realism's project to create a world that appears "independent," is its "democratic impulse" (following Erich Auerbach's influential work in *Mimesis*), proof of which is found in its broad spectrum of characters pulled from across the social scope, and its depiction of a range of physical circumstances and material details. Realism's catholic view seems to uphold the genre's humanistic credentials. But alongside its attention to a diverse range of individuals, realism enacts various impositions upon and violations of its characters’ privacy and agency. The broad purview of the realist novel is always tempered by a search for some kind of synthesis—baggy or full of loose ends though it may be—and so its attention to insignificant detail is corralled by its attempts to hold it all in significant unity. The pursuit of the wide-angle view, a tactic that situates each person within a network of wider forces (or even, as Georg Lukács understood it, that allows the individual to become a "typical figure" in whom is distilled the socio-political currents of a whole era), results in what appears to be the opposite of the democratic impulse: the loss of the individual, who is stretched into a more-than-individually meaningful narrative. In the process of engaging in epistemological fantasies about drawing a sweeping socio-political swathe into a meaningful holism, literary realism also

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17 For example, it is "one of the ironies of English nineteenth-century realism that while money is essential for success, and therefore for the comic ending, the quest for money (beyond what is necessary for survival, and sometimes even then) is unequivocally a mark of shame, corruption, evil," and the question remains whether it is "possible for a protagonist to sustain the moral virtues that the culture admires and at the same time achieve success". The clash between economics and ethics, is resolved by the "passive hero," "who succeeds without succumbing to the evils of ambition" (Levine "Literary Realism" 25). But the passive hero, while he avoids greed endorses determinism. He can have moral fortitude only at the expense of his autonomy.  
18 As Simon Dentith notes, traces of the old idealist realism "persist in the belief that an authentic realism will be able to find ways of representing more profound or underlying forces at work in human social and individual life than mere attention to surface accuracy of detail permits" (36).  
19 "[A] central figure in whose life all the important extremes in the world of the novel converge and around whom a complete world with all its vital contradictions can be organized" (*Writer* 142). See also *The Historical Novel*.  

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conspires to erase the subject.\textsuperscript{20} Precisely by attempting to make the individual legible, it runs the risk of losing her.\textsuperscript{21}

Virginia Woolf claimed that the newly fragmented aesthetic of modern literature was not just a way to mirror the complexity and disorder of human thoughts and emotions, but was also the side-effect of authors on the search for new ways to tell the truth. "And so the smashing and the crashing began. Thus it is that we hear all round us, in poems and novels and biographies, even in newspaper articles and essays, the sound of breaking and falling, crashing and destruction" (\textit{Reader} 209). On the one hand, this new literary style mimicked the experience of consciousness in ways that traditionally realist novels failed to do.\textsuperscript{22} On the other hand, it was the result of an ongoing hunt for the elusive act of mimicking in the first place: "we must reconcile ourselves to a season of failures and fragments. We must reflect that where so much strength is spent on finding a way of telling the truth the truth itself is bound to reach us in rather an exhausted and chaotic condition" (211). Modernist "smashing and crashing" is, therefore, the natural heir to Victorian realism. It is both an attempt to mirror and to foreground the

\textsuperscript{20} Similarly, as Megan Ward identifies, it is in the novels' repetitions that are formed "the basis of [...] human-like qualities, the things that make [characters] seem worth our empathy, investment, and care—in short, the things that make them read as real" (284). Realism makes its characters legible, knowable, and real, it seems, via methods that simultaneously undermine the individuality and autonomy of the self.

\textsuperscript{21} This constant unresolved tension in literary realism between legibility and illegibility and how it affects the individual is definitional of the genre. It seems to become acute around the turn of the century, in both literary and sociological terms. As Georg Simmel wrote in 1903: "the deepest problems of modern life flow from the attempt of the individual to maintain the independence and individuality of his existence against the sovereign powers of society, against the weight of historical heritage and the external culture and technique of life." Further, "as a result of the agglomeration of so many persons with such differentiated interests, their relationships and activities intertwine with one another into a many-membered organism" ("Metropolis" 23).

\textsuperscript{22} It acknowledges that we, the readers, have "gone to bed at night bewildered by the complexity of [our] feelings. In one day thousands of ideas have coursed through your brains; thousands of emotions have met, collided, and disappeared in astonishing disorder" (\textit{Reader} 212). Modernist style performs this disorder.
impossibility of mirroring simultaneously. Woolf sums this up when she claims we must both "create" and "catch" Mrs. Brown—as though we are both Mrs. Brown's author and her equal.  

It is this confusion (inherited from realism) between where representation is occurring, and where it is being obstructed, that creates what I call the "abstraction" of the modern novel. But can narrative ever truly be abstract? A reasonable response to this question might be that narrative form will fail to remain recognizably narrative should it abstain from being representational. Paul John Eakin writes that "narrative is not merely an appropriate form for the expression of identity; it is an identity content" (100), whereas Hayden White finds narrative to be the imposition of moral authority upon sequences of events. If narrative is representative of a human(like) experience of, or cognitive or ethical utilization of, causally connected events through time it seems unlikely to survive as an anti-representational form. Even if the scenes and figures narrative described were somehow unrecognizable, narrative would remain at heart mimetic of some sentient experience (however alien) of some linear causality (however unusual). Otherwise, it would not be narrative.

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23 Simon Dentith writes that this is "one way of thinking of 'realism'—not that it can be defended in some tightly managed epistemological argument, or that it prescribes one kind of writing over another, but that it is a way of acknowledging the shared social space that writer and reader inhabit" (41).

24 Christine Brooke-Rose describes non-signifying art thus: "The difference between philosophical-systems and art-systems is that philosophical systems are wholly and avowed meaning-making machines, while the art-systems display a graduating scale from works that are avowed meaning-making machines or claim to be, and works that come as close as communication systems can to mere ontological existence ('pure' poetry, 'concrete' poetry, abstract art, music); but of course even these have at least the structural significance of similarity and difference, on which all communication systems (and ultimately all criticism) are based" (6). Narrative is tellingly absent from her list of communication systems that can come close to abstract "ontological existence."

25 Hayden White writes that narrative is not just events "registered within the chronological framework of their original occurrence" but "revealed as possessing a structure, an order of meaning, which they do not possess as mere sequence" (Content 5).
As Wyndham Lewis would reflect in 1934: "I do not myself believe that anything in the literary field can be done that will correspond with what has been called 'abstract design'" (Men 115). Nevertheless, narrative's ability to mirror human experience seems to come under suspicion in the early part of the century. As Peter Brooks writes, "[w]ith the advent of Modernism came an era of suspicion toward plot, engendered perhaps by an over-elaboration of and overdependence on plots in the 19th century" (7). These works certainly recognize that narrative is built through inhuman time scales, supernatural resurrections, and impossible stasis. Fiction's dangerous relationship to the human can be seen explicitly in many stories from the time. David Garnett's 1922 *Lady into Fox*, for example, tells the tale of a woman who is suddenly, and inexplicably, turned into a vixen at the start of the novella. At first she remains living in the house, even wearing human clothes, but gradually she turns wilder and less recognizable. As the plot progresses, what remaining human sensibility and character she had is further erased. The momentum of the narrative is also the momentum of her dehumanization.

Similarly, in Franz Kafka's 1919 "The Cares of a Family Man," Odradek, a little unidentifiable object akin to a spool of thread, lurks around the narrator's house. Odradek might not be seen for months, and then one day will be found in the stairwell, or on the floor by the banisters. The narrator wonders whether "he will always be rolling down the stairs, with ends of thread trailing after him, right before the feet of my children, and my children's children? He does no harm to anyone that one can see; but the idea that he is likely to survive me I find almost painful" (429). That the story ends on this particular sentence suggests that our narrator has, for all intents and purposes, "died" at the end of his narrating, but that Odradek, with his unintelligible experience of time is presumably still in existence somewhere—unchanged and
undefined by the momentum of linear time and thus finding narrative a more hospitable, or
certainly less fatal place than it was for our narrator.

The stories I have discussed in this project show a similar fascination with the nonhuman
that is visible in stories like *Lady into Fox* and "The Cares of a Family Man." But they are
distinct because rather than equating the progression of narrative with the progression towards
death or otherness—a kind of literary "death drive"—which still aligns narrative with human life,
they particularly suggest that the human is lost in narration, not in its cessation. This is in direct
contradistinction to Georg Lukács's argument that only narrative (as opposed to description) can
save the human character from being reduced to the level of an object (*Writer* 146-7). Lukács
championed narrative as a means by which we can understand the workings of our socio-political
system through mirroring its processes and actions (rather than reproducing its effects as a still
life or tableau). Yet ultimately in these works we can hear a call to abandon the conceptual
framework of reflection that structures our relationship with the world as one of accessibility,
and casts the artwork as a reaction to, rather than co-conspirator in, a more "real" world.  

IV. Pluralism

The realist novel is a hybrid that balances between philosophical realism (one of whose
central tenets is the separation of the knower from the known) and philosophical anti-realism (in

26 A call that Susan Stanford Friedman suggests should also determine our critical approach to
modernist studies: "Many regularly assume that modernism mirrors, reflects, reacts, or responds
to modernity—as if the historical condition of modernity precedes the aesthetic response to it, as
if modernism comes belatedly as the avant-garde of dissolving epistemological and political
hegemonies. I want to suggest however, a simultaneity of effects and practices. I think we should
stop positing modernism as modernity's self-reflexive other, its symptomatic reaction formation,
its oppositional consciousness" ("Planetarity" 475).
which, conversely, the mind affects what is known). The genre allows the rational individual no certain position. That same indecision between monism and the centrality of the self versus pluralism and the decentralization of the self was being played out in the intellectual climate of the turn of the century when "New Realism" began to rise, in reaction to, and displacing, a long-standing philosophical tradition of British Idealism. New Realism proposed a multifarious world, a pluralism of things, in opposition to idealism's monism. Fostered in the environment of Cambridge University, it would bequeath its own intellectual legacy to the twentieth century in the form of analytic philosophy. G. E. Moore's "The Refutation of Idealism" of 1903 is an example of how linguistic analytics is put to work in favor of affirming the non-linguistic world. Moore unpacks the idealist claim *esse est percipi* (to be is to be perceived) and takes the copula as indication that this phrase attempts to express an identity between the subject and the predicate of the sentence. "To be" means "to be perceived." As Moore puts it: "whatever *esse est percipi* may mean, it does at least assert that whatever is, is experienced" (28). For example, this means that "yellow" is not distinct from the "sensation of yellow." Yet,

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27 Lee Braver's *A Thing of this World* contains what he calls "matrices" of realism and anti-realism; sets of theses that attempt to define the two terms. The first two theses in the realism matrix are that the world is mind-independent and that truth involves correspondence between signs and external things. Conversely, in the antirealism matrix the first two theses are that the world is mind-dependent and that there can be no truth in correspondence (xix-xx). Working from Braver's definitions, I suggest that literary realism seems to place a foot in both matrices.

28 As Deborah Longworth describes, in the nineteenth century, "[k]ey principles of metaphysical Idealism, such as belief in an ultimate reality lying beyond that of material appearance, the intuitive capacity of the subjective mind, and the monistic concept of an ideal union of all things in an absolute truth, offered a welcome revival of the possibility of spiritual faith following both a scientific positivism that seemed to reduce existence to physical or chemical systems, and the gloomy implications of Darwinian evolutionism" (9).

29 This arose not from its "commonsense" defense of an external world, but rather from its methodology. Analytic philosophy avoids addressing or proposing grand statements but tackles narrowly defined philosophical problems, and proceeds with a focus on linguistic or logical analysis.
the proposition also implies that experience is, after all, something distinct from yellow—else there would be no reason for insisting that yellow is a sensation: and that the argument thus both affirms and denies that yellow and sensation of yellow are distinct, is what sufficiently refutes it. (32)

Moore's point, broadly, is that esse est percipi is not tautological; the very fact that the idealist is able to, and needs to, construct that phrase in the first place, undermines its meaning. Existence and perception must not be identical.  

Moore essentially argues that this idealist motto is a metaphor masquerading as a proposition, because in order to understand the identity of essence and perception we first have to grant their disparity. New Realism, in its support of a heterogeneous world, protested against idealism's doctrine of internal relations in which objects are defined by their relations to each other. Bertrand Russell claimed, for example, that idealism was undermined by its incompatibility with mathematics given that mathematics is reliant upon the kinds of asymmetrical relations denied by the doctrine of internal relations. One of Moore's extrapolations from his refutation is about the intimacy fostered by these asymmetrical relations. Moore claims that because we can rest assured that the thing we sense exists and continues to

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30 As Moore justifies the narrow focus of his analytic approach: "If I can refute a single proposition which is a necessary and essential step in all Idealistic arguments, then, no matter how good the rest of these arguments may be, I shall have proved that Idealists have no reason whatever for their conclusion" (25).

31 In other words, where idealism proposed that relations between two things would reveal themselves to be properties of a wider whole, Russell maintained that mathematics cannot exist within such monistic holism. He asks, as an example, that we consider two numbers, A and B, one of which comes earlier, and one later, in a sequence: "If you adopt the plan of regarding the relation as a property of the whole composed of A and B, you are in a still worse predicament, for in that whole A and B have no order and therefore you cannot distinguish between 'A is earlier than B' and 'B is earlier than A.' As asymmetrical relations are essential in most parts of mathematics, this doctrine was important" (Philosophical 55).
exist even when we are unaware of it, then the act of sensing it is already the act of colliding with the alien. As Moore writes:

Idealists admit that some things really exist of which they are not aware [...] they hold for instance that they are sometimes aware of other minds, which continue to exist even when they are not aware of them [...] Whenever I have a mere sensation or idea, the fact is that I am then aware of something which is equally and in the same sense not an inseparable aspect of my experience [...] "blue" is as much an object, and as little a mere content, of my experience, when I experience it, as the most exalted and independent real thing of which I am ever aware. There is, therefore, no question of how we are to "get outside the circle of our own ideas and sensations." Merely to have a sensation is already to be outside that circle. It is to know something which is as truly and really not a part of my experience, as anything which I can ever know. (41-2)

Moore suggests that it is precisely the division between perceiver and thing perceived that prevents there being a gulf between the two. It is incommensurability that allows for intimacy.32

The changing philosophical tides were not completely isolated within Cambridge's halls. As Deborah Longworth puts it, "[m]ale Bloomsbury was almost entirely Cambridge-educated" and,

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32 Or, as Bertrand Russell put it, in his 1914 "Our Knowledge of the External World," the question is: "'Can we know of the existence of any reality of which our Self is not part?' [...] however the Self may be defined, even when it is taken as the bare subject, it cannot be supposed to be part of the immediate object of sense; thus in this form of the question we must admit that we can know of the existence of realities independent of ourselves" (Knowledge 82).
[w]ith the shift from college rooms to London drawing rooms, the mood and values of Cambridge extended to the ideology of Bloomsbury modernism. Literature might mildly mock the form and terminology of philosophical debate, but it was similarly preoccupied with articulating and probing the Idealist/New Realist deadlock. (13)

Questions of perception and knowledge were producing aesthetic and artistic ripples. In novels and stories from the time we can locate a New Realist attitude: an interest in the diversity and independence of the world, and in how language might collide with that world. But most importantly, I suggest, for the narratives I will read, is the context of the debate itself. This new uncertainty regarding how much, and by what means, the subject can access the world is reproduced in this fiction but crucially remains unresolved, allowing these novels to decentralise knowledge in favour of other kinds of contact with the more-than-human world.

V. Nonhuman Style

It is more than commonplace to claim that the literature of turn of the 20th century reflects the ongoing repercussions for a self who has been riven by the nonhuman on all sides. Marxism proposed that the capitalist organization of society rendered the worker an object while commodities acted as agents. Darwinism claimed that man's animality was no longer a metaphor, and that our bodies were the fleshy instantiation of alterity; an intimacy with the animal other. Psychoanalysis ensured that even the rational human mind was no refuge from these infractions of the other, proposing that our very consciousness is built upon a hidden, uncontrollable,

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33 Ann Banfield's *The Phantom Table* comprehensively situates Virginia Woolf's writings within this context.
subconscious. The notion of an autonomous, rational, self-controlled individual—the Enlightenment ideal—appeared to be contested on all fronts. Following these incursions, the First World War maimed and killed in a manner which must have felt unprecedented. "Modern warfare may be said to represent the ultimate de-personalisation" (Das 23). The modern individual finds herself in a world that seems fractured, and in a self whose truth appears always on the brink of collapsing into fragments. We know these narratives well. We tend to file them all under alienation, and discuss exiled modern subjects adrift in a newly hostile world. But perhaps we should also discuss the increased hybridity of human and nonhuman realms at this time, when alterity seems to be setting up base within personhood and objects and animals are strangely mimicking and mirroring selfhood and sentience abroad in the world. There is a collusion and closeness between the two in turn of the century literature that deserves attention.

Spyros Papapetros pinpoints that new and overwhelming intimacy when he writes that "[o]ne could indeed describe the fin de siècle as the time when artifacts start having cataclysmic effects on people. Real and textual subjects collapse at the sight of these new mesmerizing objects" (vii). David Herman, in a similar vein, protests that "the upshot of modernist experimentation was not to plumb the depths of human psychology, but rather to spread the mind abroad—to suggest how minds have the profile they do because of the way intelligent behavior is interwoven with worldly circumstances" (553). When I look for the rise of the nonhuman in turn of the century fiction, I find a self who has been dethroned and chased out of its central position, but also who is also mirrored and usurped everywhere, by things, by commodities, by animals, by others. Modern narratives erect themselves in opposition to a mythical past when it might once have been possible to speak of a discrete person. That creature appears to be now decimated, and yet oddly more than ever multitudinous: both nowhere and everywhere. It is,
therefore, not enough to speak of a suddenly "hostile world" or of growing "alienation" when we characterize turn of the century literature, without recognising that in some instances a rhetoric of closeness rather than distance might better serve our claims about the repositioned human.

It is such a closeness between personhood and alterity that I see evident in the fictions I read in this project, and it is achieved through stylistics. These narratives all engage in what we now call the "formal" or "linguistic" turn of the early twentieth century, in which literary texts redirected attention to the stylistic and organisational aspects of the prose. Modern novels are often characterised as having an "impersonal style that […] resist[s] the subject altogether" (J. Brown 7). We tend to discuss this experimentation as breaking the conventional realist form that preceded it, or distancing us from the content of the story, or as impenetrable like a boundary, or as a form of artistic "narcissism" (Hutchinson 2). Breaking, obscuring, resisting, distancing or self-obsessing: modernist form, it is usual to imply, expresses knowledge somehow interrupted, failing, or mis-applied. Thus it is common to characterise literature from this era as "difficult."

The interruption of legibility, so the argument goes, reflects a subject exiled from an accessible world. The problem with this claim is that as we discuss the formal turn as impersonal or impenetrable, indicative of an alienated, decentralised, subject, we are nevertheless re-asserting the reader as a rational, knowing, self (whose vision is obscured, disrupted, resisted by the text) in order to do so.

For example, in her book *Stalking the Subject*, Carrie Rohman equates the formal turn of the early twentieth century with a previously repressed animality.

[T]he modernist eruption of literary convention parallels the perforation of the humanized subject by its evolutionary connection to animality. The breakdown of traditional literary
syntax, structure, and narration, the introduction of circuitous and unstable narrative devices, all these changes line up with the post-Darwinian eruption of "nonhuman" chaotic forces within humanism. (27)

Rohman claims that the instability of fictional style at this time mirrors (or in her words, "lines up with") the chaos of animality. Though in many ways convincing, the potential problem with this argument is not only that it casts "convention[al]" 19th century realist fiction as unquestionably legible and humanist, which is a rather simplistic generalization, but also that even as it claims that this style is illegible it is still proposing frameworks within which to read it. What seems to be key to remember is that if we discuss the "breakdown" of narrative style in terms of how it mirrors, parallels, or demonstrates something else (say, animality) we are simply looping illegibility back into paradigms of intelligibility and representation.

I suggest that just as we need an exploration of human closeness with, rather than simply exile from, the alien and incomprehensible world of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, so too should we reassess our rhetoric that casts modernist aesthetics as distancing and resistant. This project parts ways with Douglas Mao's claim that "what the object world represented for modernists above all was a realm beyond the reach of ideology but not secure against the material consequences of ideological conflicts" (9). Mao explores the modernist object as that which, although it is inaccessible to social structures of meaning (like morality or politics) can nevertheless be the victim of them. This conceptualisation defines the object in relation to our "access" to it (or failure thereof) and characterises it as fundamentally passive. I wish to trace a different tradition of modernist nonhumans, those that are not defined in terms of epistemological access, and which are instead strangely active and even aggressive (to the point
at which the human appears to be the victim). Such entities require different representational structures, and require from us different ways of reading. They are forged through what Michael Taussig calls the "magic" of mimeticism, in which, via mimetic relations, "the replication, the copy, acquires the power of the represented" (16).

The problem all these authors tackle, to put that another way, is discovering where realism tips over into abstraction. This is a dilemma they inherit from the realists. We may think for example of the character, Biffen, in George Gissing's *New Grub Street*, who wishes to write a novel entitled "Mr. Bailey, Grocer," in which there is no authorial input but only a minutely detailed record of the life of this everyday man. Where would a novel like "Mr. Bailey, Grocer" tip from representative to illegible? At what point would we have to stop saying "mimetic" and start saying "abstract"? The works I consider all circle around that issue. In particular they ask, if narrative can dwell in that tipping point between representative and not, what will be the fate of the human? Following Taussig, I suggest that mimeticism (at least as it was utilized by these authors) is an anti-representational act caused not by estrangement but by the closeness, or collusion, or collapse, between the symbol and the thing. Bill Brown calls the 1920s "the decade after objects and things are newly engaged by (or as) the work of art for Pound, Marcel Duchamp, Williams, Gertrude Stein" ("Secret" 3). It is that "as" upon which I will focus.

We may accept that modernism often promotes the "primacy of the signifier over the signified" (Hutchinson 5). Yet there is a tradition of modern abstraction that far from leaning towards the intangible and purely formal, instead forms worldly, sensual, and tangible signs.34

34 Indeed, even when attempting to describe conventional abstraction—the "primacy of the signifier over the signified"—in which the worldly content has apparently been expunged from the text, critics often actually end up describing something more akin to this tangible abstraction. For example, phrases like "style in modernist fiction tends to shake itself free from content" (McHale 149), imagines style as physical, or agential (here, with a body that it can shake). Gustave Flaubert's 1852 mission-statement (that reads like a miniature modernist manifesto)
As Brown writes: "This effort to fathom the concrete, and to imagine the work of art as a different mode of mimesis—not one that serves to represent a thing, but one that seeks to attain the status of a thing—is a fundamental strain of modernism" (Sense 3). But Brown approaches this from the perspective of the author, who "fathoms" or "imagines" literature as thing, and in order to do so must annul its representative function. The crucial reorientation I wish to highlight is that the relationship being interrogated by my considered authors is not between the human realm and the realm of objects and artifacts (as say, in production or consumption or artistic creation), but between the realm of artifacts and their referents. In other words: not that we might imagine literature as a thing by voiding or ignoring its representative function, but rather, literature becomes thing-like if the power of signification is located in the collusion between sign and world not in the relationship between human and sign. When literature is the very skin of its referent, the very power and presence of its object, then abstractions should not be read as places of alienation but of proximity.35

Accordingly, in this project I suggest that when we consider style, what we are actually tracing are physical intimacies: the places where one body, being, or thing touches, changes, pushes, inhabits, domineers, or becomes another. In the ghost stories I read, it is the aesthetic qualities, more than the semiotic abilities, of texts—the expressionistic style of paintings, the

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provides a particularly good example of this phenomena: "What I should like to write is a book about nothing, a book dependent on nothing external, which would be held together by the strength of its style, just as the earth, suspended in the void, depends on nothing external for its support" (154). Flaubert's so-called world-less novel is nevertheless (and within the space of a single sentence no less) imagined as the entire globe, whose tangibility and heft is particularly stressed by being placed in opposition to "the void." The content-less, un-referential, novel is surprisingly illustrated with an image of the whole, material, earth.

35 This is something we are used to discussing when considering the visual arts of the modernist era (Dadaism, futurism, surrealism, etc., which each in their own way collapse symbol and real) and in some types of poetry, like imagism ("no ideas but in things"). But we are not used to considering a collapse between fiction and the real, at least, not outside of complete subjectivism.
curves of handwriting, or the blots of ink on a document—in which the bodily and tangible and interpersonal lurks. In To The Lighthouse, the over-expressiveness of Woolf's prose ensures that sentence structure and the hierarchies of metaphor and narration generate flocks of bodies, tableaus of tangible things, and small self-contained worlds, which overshadow their role as formal vehicles of meaning-making. In Pilgrimage Miriam's impossible non-declarative language is what gives space not only for her intimate and physical relationships with other women but also is a dwelling place for a more-than-human reality. In all these narratives style is imagined as the place in which we might encounter alterity outside of structures of knowing, or of access, or of expression.

Broadly I situate this project at a historical and thematic crux between realism and surrealism—two points on a spectrum of the fantastically real. Each of my texts claims a location in this territory of the sur/real or the super/natural. My project lies in a space bounded, not just historically but more importantly thematically, by George Eliot's magical drop of ink, and André Breton's legitimate absurdity:

With a single drop of ink for a mirror, the Egyptian sorcerer undertakes to reveal to any chance comer far-reaching visions of the past. This is what I undertake to do for you, reader. With this drop of ink at the end of my pen, I will show you the roomy workshop of Mr. Jonathan Burge, carpenter and builder, in the village of Hayslope, as it appeared on the eighteenth of June, in the year of our Lord 1799. (Adam Bede [1859] 9)

To you who write, these elements are, on the surface, as strange to you as they are to anyone else, and naturally you are wary of them. Poetically speaking, what strikes you
about them above all is their extreme degree of immediate absurdity, the quality of this absurdity, upon closer scrutiny, being to give way to everything admissible, everything legitimate in the world. (Manifesto of Surrealism [1924] 24)

Separated by sixty-five years, one discussing realist fiction the other automatic writing, and ostensibly at odds with each other's projects, Eliot and Breton's statements are nevertheless surprisingly similar. A sense of words as something magical, something not entirely within the control of the author, is essential to both passages. And both authors insist that this sorcerous-absurdity is essential to "reveal[ing]… the roomy workshop," essential, that is, to "everything legitimate in the world." I read works that reside where realism seems to edge into surrealism. These are writings that, like Breton and Eliot, concede that absurdity is necessary for legitimacy, and that sorcery is fundamental to documentation. They understand mimeticism as a method that "in adhering to the skin of things through realist copying disconcerts and entrances by spinning off into fantastic formations" (Taussig 44).

As John Frow reminds us, to accept an external world that exceeds oneself is to accept the world as something self-sufficient and unfathomable, which is close enough to thinking of it in terms of a subject. To be "so purely a thing, so deeply withdrawn from capture by others, is to pass into that mode of irreducibility and unknowability that we call the subject […] This is the paradox of any fascination with the thingness of things: that things posited in themselves, in their distinctness from intention, representation, figuration, or relation, are thereby filled with an imputed interiority" (272). To relinquish the human thoroughly is to suddenly find oneself face-to-face with it again. This project follows the similarly spectral pathways by which realism emerges out of and U-turns back into anti-realism. It explores how writing about things is not
incompatible with a retreat into words. It asks how the transformation of a thing beyond consciousness into a thing with consciousness is not just a tumbling down into, but also a pathway out of, anthropomorphism. This project concerns itself with the ghostly manner in which modern fiction asserts itself as personal and impersonal, natural and supernatural, human and inhuman, in one breath.

Chapter Summaries

This project opens with a consideration of what I refer to as "haunted scholar" ghost stories from the turn of the century. These tales almost always take a student, teacher, or researcher as their protagonist and they almost always result in a death or near-death experience when a document (whether a piece of visual art, or a manuscript, or some other kind of record) fails to contain its referent. I see in these ghost stories an unlikely and supernatural parallel to the rising urge to abstraction of the early twentieth century. Drawing out all that is frightening about the modern desire to move away from the artifice of signifying structures, these stories imagine that non-representative texts might land us face-to-face with an inhuman world. Without the gulf between symbol and symbolized provided by representational binaries, the aesthetic, formal, qualities of a text become indistinguishable from physical, tangible, alterity. The dangerously lively and corporeal documents encountered by the scholars of such ghost stories are not normally novels or stories, they tend to be paintings, or photographs, old letters and diaries, or even maps. But as we will see, the self-referential treatment of narrators and characters in these tales ensures that their own form is not exempt from the ghostly occurrences of the content: it, too, is recognised as being at best inhospitable to, and at worst enacting violence’s upon, the
human figures and voices that populate it. As I move through my chapters, I will look to how that cliché of ghost stories, the painting-that-comes-to-life, is present, likewise, in non-supernatural narratives from the era.

The ghosts in haunted scholar tales can equally be considered the apex of realism or of abstraction. They assure us that the two are not polar opposites. This embodied sign, this corporeal text of realist-abstraction is particularly characteristic of modernist-era prose. Looking to contemporaneous novels that take as their subject matter domestic and familial life in the following chapters, we see the same ghostly collapse replayed when style, rather than semiotics, bears the burden of bringing material presence into narrative. In my second chapter I read Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse*, a novel that Woolf herself branded an exorcism but in which this phantasmal interruption of signification seems to be given full reign. In the novel's depiction of an empty house we find ourselves in an impossible circumstance: seeing an unseen world. The narrator's very subjective, almost hallucinatory, descriptions of this apparently objective, unpopulated place collapses any distinction we may have felt confident in drawing between what is real and what is not real, what is symbolic and what is actual. No surprise then, that this house feels haunted, as much by the unembodied narrator's voice as by the draughts that roam the rooms, by the visions of the now deceased Mrs. Ramsay, and even by the ghostly comings and goings of Mrs. Bast the cleaning lady. Woolf writes her prose in a way that resurrects insignificant corners of sentences, recycles and returns to past imagery, and routinely over-signifies. The analogies and figures evoked by the fantastical imaginings of the narrative voice turn out to be little worlds in themselves which quickly usurp it. As will become apparent in the other chapters too, this surge of the physical against the intelligible forms a resistance to male-dominated discourses. In this case, Mr. Ramsay's philosophizing, which he imagines as a
linear progression through the letters of the alphabet, is seized upon and manipulated by the wider novel, giving the final say to Lily's abstract yet mimetic painting.

I conclude with a reading of Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*. This thirteen-volume novel takes as its sole subject matter the consciousness of its protagonist, Miriam Henderson. Although the narrator switches between first- and third-person throughout the novel, no "objective" description of the outside world is ever given. There is nothing that is not filtered through Miriam's eyes. This is not to say that the nonhuman world is nonexistent, indeed, Miriam is deeply, even obsessively, concerned with the sensory world she finds herself in. So there is a distinct tension between Miriam's own interest in the external world and the narrative's ignoring of the same. When Miriam names herself a "phantom" it therefore sounds familiar: like the ghosts that populate haunted scholar tales, so Miriam too appears to be both document and world, both voiced and voiceless. In Richardson's novel this horror trope is given a particular political significance. Miriam is an outsider in many ways. She is an unmarried woman, who has romantic relationships with other women, living alone and earning a living in London at the turn of the century after the collapse of her family's fortune. Her precarious and marginalized existence is made evident from her self-aware inability to use language in the way that men do. She cannot be confident in her voice; she does not believe that the dominant discourse can accurately express her experience. Her conversations with other women, therefore, are often described as being quiet or even silent, as though they are somehow speaking without actually speaking. So as the novel makes various efforts to unwrite itself, to express this voiced silence in its style and in its form, it also does something quite radical: it allows Miriam's silence, her voiceless voice, to be not a response to, or inadequacy in the face of a dominant world, but to be a world of its own.
The non-representational artwork changes, as I move through these chapters, from a source of terror, to a potential space of empathetic connection, to a form of radical resistance. The trajectory of this project is broadly a hopeful one, moving from the ghost-hunter's violent deaths, to Lily's intimacy through (non)representational signs, to Miriam's self-sacrificial romantic oblivion which creates her personal cosmos. These novels and stories urge for a more decentralized and localized understanding of the human relationship to the more-than-human world. But the interpersonal and the aggressive are both present, in varying ratios, in each of these narratives. The argument made by this project is that in modern fiction various forms of intimacy (both violent and symbiotic) are produced not through likeness but through unlikeness. Strangeness and difference facilitates closeness, and divergent and different bodies can be drawn together not through knowledge but through aesthetics.
The Animus of Artifacts in Turn-of-the-Century Ghost Stories

[T]he animated artifacts of twentieth-century modernism appear fundamentally hostile
(Papapetros ix).

Introduction: Violent Texts

In M. R. James's ghost stories a pattern recurs: repeatedly, the overzealous academic is subjected to a monstrous encounter with some unearthly creature. As he (for James's researchers are always "he") dusts off an old library book or chases some antique treasure he puts himself at risk, in the best case scenario, of supernatural terror and, in the worst, of a fatal encounter. Sometimes, merely a mild curiosity rather than full-blown scholarship might land one in the perilous position of being suddenly face-to-face with a demon or ghost that should have remained confined to a text. Intellectual investigation, however grand or humble, is a dangerous activity, James seems to warn. As Gabriel Moshenska characterizes the typical arc of a James tale: "the artifact [acts] as bait in a supernatural trap that the antiquary unwittingly or incautiously springs, bringing a harsh judgment upon himself […] disturbances of various kinds—mostly based on intellectual curiosity—constitute a provocation that must be avenged" (1196). Yet James's monsters, springing as they do out of objects of knowledge and aesthetics

36 This is a strange theme, perhaps, for an author like James, ensconced in academia his entire life. But James did display on occasion what seems to be a not wholly ironic dislike of, or distrust of, thinking too deeply: "[Nathaniel Wedd] tells the story of two young men discussing some philosophical problem within Monty's hearing: 'He rapped sharply on the table with his pipe and called out: "No thinking, gentlemen, please…"'" (Cox 96-7).

37 For some context for the deeply gendered depiction of these antiquarian book-hunters and scholars, see Heidi Egginton's "Book-hunters and Book-huntresses: Gender and Cultures of Antiquarian Book Collecting in Britain, c. 1880–1900."
such as manuscripts and engravings, not only betray an anxiety about uncovering dangerous or infernal secrets but also about the processes of knowledge acquisition and meaning making in general.

It has been a critical commonplace to understand the Gothic ghost as symbolic of an irrationality which threatens, undermines, and reveals the limitations of the Enlightenment's rational subject. Jacques Derrida's concept of "hauntology," introduced in *Spectres of Marx* in 1993, further proposed that the ghost is a figure of deconstruction. The ghost stories of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which so often feature a haunted scholar, could be understood in this way: their narrative attests to the instability, and inescapability, of systems of semiotics. The stories of M. R. James and his contemporaries, indeed, propose that the threat to the knowing subject is not a Gothic, irrational other that lurks beyond reason's reach, but is the very structures and artifacts of academia. Our protagonists are not endangered by what they can't know but by the nature of research and documentation itself, which casts them adrift in signs and symbols that have no stable existence. The individual is in danger of being depersonalised by the same methods and productions of symbolic and creative thought that appear to define him.

However, haunted scholar stories do not enact a postmodern disillusionment with the metaphysics of presence. For all that representational artifacts and documents betray their students, they remain accurate, a point of access to their referents. Indeed, they are all too able to make contact with the world and make present that which should be spatially, temporally, or ontologically inaccessible. These stories make literal the idea that "the representation shares in or takes power from the represented" (Taussig 2). The iconicity of signs is taken to an extreme:

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38 This is, of course, a rather broad characterisation. For a nuanced explanation of how the Gothic also "partakes in the epistemological stakes of British empiricist philosophy," and reevaluates "what constitutes knowledge" (544), see Katherine Ding's "'Searching after the Splendid Nothing': Gothic Epistemology and the Rise of Fictionality."
these haunted artworks and manuscripts do not just resemble, nor are merely motivated by, their referents, but are in fact indistinguishable from them. The ghost, far from being a transcendent figure—proof of a higher or at least other world—is instead a being that collapses ontological planes into one another. Distinct from both Gothic and deconstructionist narratives of the phantasmal, then, I argue that these haunted scholar stories reveal not the horror of the failures of representation and documentation but the horrors of its successes.\(^39\) Fundamentally, what is frightening about such successful representation (that not only shows but \textit{becomes} the thing portrayed) is that it proposes that our records and symbols are not tools through which we actively reach out to the world, but actually through which the world seems to grasp out towards us.

My focus is the ghost story that is variously referred to as "conventional," "traditional," or part of, or reminiscent of, the "golden age"\(^40\) (1880-1920).\(^41\) Michael Cox describes what he calls "literary ghost stories" thus:

\begin{quote}
from the earliest stages of their evolution they reflected the ordinary landscapes and circumstances of contemporary life […] Where Gothic fiction had been romantically remote in its settings and often flamboyantly atemporal, ghost stories anchored
\end{quote}

\(^39\) Emma Liggans writes that the "[r]apid and unprecedented advances in urbanisation, scientific enquiry and technology might offer the illusion of a knowable and controllable modern world, but what lay beneath the surface of late-nineteenth-century rationality and progress remained a major concern for writers, scientists and social commentators alike" (39). She argues that the ghost story re-inscribes "semi-obscurity" into this newly rational world. Conversely, I am interested in the ghosts that arise from the "knowable" world, rather than in reaction to it. There is a distinct coterie of stories in which the ghosts are not a reification of obscurity but of clarity.

\(^40\) See Simon Hay, \textit{A History of the Modern British Ghost Story}.

\(^41\) Despite Olivia Howard Dunbar's strange claim in 1905 that "[f]or approximately a generation, the ghost has been missing from fiction" the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were a fruitful time for the ghost story (377).
themselves firmly in the contemporary, or near contemporary, here and now […] and this has continued to be a defining characteristic of the whole genre. (Victorian xi)

It is the anxiety of the traditional ghost story regarding proximity (both temporal and spatial) that explains its obsession with writing variations upon the painting-that-comes-to-life plot. Such stories ask not what an image or text means—its semiotic work—but what it is and what it does: its ontological or sociological existence. Gérard Genette defined metalepsis as "[t]hat deliberate transgression of the threshold of embedding […] when an author (or his reader) introduces himself into the fictive action of the narrative or when a character in that fiction intrudes into the extradiegetic existence of the author or reader" (Revisited 88). For Genette, a metaleptic transgression into or out of an artwork could only be achieved by a person—a narrator, character, or reader. These ghost stories suggest, conversely, that metalepsis is an activity undertaken by inhuman.

The metaleptic ghost story has a predilection for students and academics as its protagonists, no doubt because of their tendency to be found paying close attention to the embedded worlds of books, artworks, and documents. The "magic of mimesis" in these stories is precisely the opposite of the idea that "the making and existence of the artifact that portrays something gives one power over that which is portrayed" (Taussig 13). Michael Taussig, in his anthropological and ethnographic survey of mimeticism tends to find that the magically mimetic artifact (the copy that simultaneously is its referent) is actively pursued by the human. "I want to draw attention to the active-yielding of the perceiver in the perceived—the perceiver trying to enter into the picture and become one with it" (61). In ghost stories, however, this mimetic relationship is reversed, as the "picture" chases the "perceiver." The mimetic artifact gives that
which is portrayed power over you. The key thrill of such stories is, therefore, that it is not just fated academics within fictional worlds who have cause to be fearful about mimeticism. The "real" readers and scholars of these tales, like you and I, are prompted by such plots to feel unease about our place in the narrative hierarchy, too. Alfred Noyes's 1935 "The Midnight Express," for example, tells the story of a man who suddenly realizes he is standing in a scene from a book he read as a child. He is then presented with the exact copy of the same book he appears to be currently inside, which he begins to read, and so on. A tumbling rabbit-hole, narrative is cast as an inescapable *mise-en-abyme* for its reader.

In a similar vein, M. R. James once wrote that his intention in writing ghost stories was to make his readers feel as though they were at just as much risk as his characters. What he may or may not have realised, however, was how much danger he himself was in. Ghost story authors have a tendency to wind up in ghost stories themselves. M. R. James features in Penelope Fitzgerald's *The Gate of Angels*; E. F. Benson and Henry James, meanwhile, reside in Joan Aiken's *The Haunting of Lamb House*, to mention just two. The genre's enthusiasm for self-referentiality, its reliance on the blurring of biography and fiction that drives this assimilation of old authors into new stories, is indicative of how far-reaching is its metalepsis. There is no "outside" to the typical ghost story, no vantage point of detached observation or authority, not even for author or reader. Depicting the act of reading as a foolhardy undertaking of an unintentional ghost-hunter is certainly one way to worry your audience. As we read, we imitate our fictional counterparts within the story who are busy dusting off old tomes and cracking open

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42 Published in *Lost Souls: A Collection of English Ghost Stories* edited by Jack Sullivan.
43 "[. . .] the more ordinary and normal both settings and actors are, the more effective will be the entangling of them in a dreadful situation, and the more ready will he who follows their adventures be to shake his head and murmur those words which I have long since registered as the proper ones for the reader of ghost stories, to wit, 'If I'm not very careful, something like that may happen to me'" wrote James in 1930, commenting in *The Spectator* after judging a writing competition (*Ghosts and Scholars* 142).
forgotten library books, and if they are not able to escape the spectres of their texts are we to fare any better?

Haunted scholar stories, in other words, worry at the division between the mimetic (the shown) and the diegetic (the told). The question is whether we can maintain our position in the safe and lofty peaks of author, narrator, reader, and critic, without slipping into the text. Diegetic levels—levels of "telling"—usually maintain this hierarchy for us: we perch on the tip of a stack of embedded worlds that are divided from us by virtue of their constructed, "told," nature. But metalepsis, which is the transgression and collapsing of those levels, occurs in these stories through the description, mapping, or picturing of something monstrous. Never are our protagonists fooled by verisimilitude into thinking they are looking at the real thing. Always, they are aware that they are encountering a told—a constructed, created—text. Yet the transgression happens regardless. Ghost fiction therefore presents an active query to Gérard Genette's claim in *Narrative Discourse* that words are only mimetic of other words (for example, reported speech) and that everything else is diegesis. It is the fact that representations of all kinds (words, images, symbols) are able in these stories to quite literally show, rather than just tell about bodies, by making them concretely manifest in the observer's world, which causes the problem. Recent developments in narratology such as Laura Karttunen's "Events Can Be Quoted," have continued to protest Genette's verbal bias, arguing that a "mimetic, reproductive relationship" might be present "between a non-verbal event and words" (59). Ghost fiction has long occupied the same critical position, finding that diegetic "telling" about a ghost—whether a painting, a diary, or even a map—is no guarantee that the closeness of mimetic "showing" and its fearful end-point, metalepsis, has been sidestepped.
The ghost dwells in the intimacy between a symbol and its object, making it a figure of exaggerated literary realism. Metaleptic ghost stories do not reiterate the oversimplified and often derogatory claims made against realism—that it is both naively and deceitfully trying to be the world it represents—rather, they reference the very strangeness of that realist representative act: the cognitive dissonance in which we can accept a text as both document and referent at once. Ghost stories remind us that violence resides in that precarious and ubiquitous confusion between document and world. They argue that scholarly work is a social, political act, with ethical and concrete consequences affecting people, bodies, and worlds, even as it seems to be merely the dry and dusty inscription and interpretation of symbols on pieces of paper.

In *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction* (1917), Dorothy Scarborough writes that "[t]he ghost is the most enduring figure in supernatural fiction […] He glides from the freshly-cut pages of magazines and books bearing the date of the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and seventeen as from the parchment rolls of ancient manuscripts" (81). So integral does the device of metalepsis appear to be to the genre that critics often use it (perhaps unwittingly) in their analyses. Just as Scarborough's generic ghost glides out of books and magazines, so Glen Cavaliero writes that "James victimizes his characters with tight-lipped aplomb" (54). As Cavaliero's remark suggests, by casting M. R. James as a taciturn masochist, metalepsis is often bound up with violence. Debra Malina clarifies, "[i]f I emphasize a violent streak underlying this persistent breaching of constitutive boundaries, it is because I detect, even in the metaleptic joke or game, a certain aggression towards the subject, whether internal or external to the text" (3). Ghost fiction makes explicit this aggression inherent to descriptive structures. Representative media are orifices by which we are liable to touch and be touched by others.
This "aggression towards the subject" is also evident in the lack of psychological depth typically given to protagonists in these haunted scholar stories; an absence that seems anachronistic. The Society for Psychical Research published a lengthy report, *Phantasms of the Living*, in 1886 which detailed its thorough investigations into, and documentation of, various psychic phenomena—most particularly telepathy or thought-transference. Chasing hard proof of the occult and spiritualism, the findings from its experiments suggested not evidence of an afterlife but rather that we all are haunted by the strange depths and unexpected powers of our own unconscious.44 Two decades later in 1917 and Dorothy Scarborough was still declaring that "[m]odern spectres have a more complex power than the old. They are more awful in their import, for they haunt not merely the body but the soul" (108). Indeed, it has been well-established that with the rise of psychoanalysis the ghost story as a genre takes a turn away from being concerned with material monstrosity and, around the turn of the century, becomes entrenched in internal, or mental, hauntings.45 Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), is a key example. Yet, as I will argue, not all ghost stories made that turn.

In the canon of Anglo-American modernism many authors have written ghost stories. W. B. Yeats was most famously fascinated by the occult, but both James Joyce's *Ulysses* and T. S. Eliot's *The Wasteland* are in their own ways also horror stories that draw deeply on the fantastic and the morbid. We may also recall Edith Wharton's ghost stories, Virginia Woolf's often spectral fiction ("A Street Haunting" and "A Haunted House" in particular); Joseph Conrad's "The Idiots"; and E. M. Forster's "The Story of a Panic" and "The Story of a Siren." Many more

44 Indeed, the word "haunted" is used throughout to describe not ghosts but disturbing dreams or persistent thoughts.
45 "A discernable shift between the 'traditional' and the experimental uncanny tale occurred when the Victorian fascination with the occult gave way in the early twentieth century to an interest in the newly-developing science of psychoanalysis: a palpable influence on the work of both Sinclair and Woolf" (Drewery *Modernist* 67).
could be added to the list.\textsuperscript{46} Ghost stories in the hands of the modernists tend to be focused on the mental more than the physical. Woolf wrote in "The Supernatural in Fiction" (1918) that to make our skin creep "the author […] must seek to terrify us not by the ghosts of the dead, but by those ghosts which are living within ourselves. The great increase of the psychical ghost story […] testifies to the fact that our sense of our own ghostliness has much quickened" (\textit{Essays} Vol. 1 295).

I part ways here with Woolf's insistence that the ghosts of our minds are the most terrifying, following instead her hint in "Henry James's Ghost Stories" (1921) that ghosts "are present whenever the significant overflows our powers of expressing it" (\textit{Essays} Vol. I 324). Haunted scholar stories, although they do not engage in the appetite of the time for "psychical" ghosts, do represent this fear about signification and expression: that there is something both tangible (as Woolf's use of the word "overflow" implies) and beyond our control lurking in our referential expressions. As H. P. Lovecraft characterised M. R. James's fiction:

where the older stock of ghosts were pale and stately, and apprehended chiefly through the sense of sight, the average James ghost is lean, dwarfish, and hairy—a sluggish, hellish, night-abomination midway between beast and man—and usually \textit{touched} before it is \textit{seen}. (102)

Jamesian stories may not have made the psychoanalytic turn, and may indeed appear rather conservative and backward-looking compared to "modern spectres" and "psychical ghost[s]." But they are simply doing different work. These stories hint that just as our symbolic

\textsuperscript{46} Although, as Jack Sullivan points out in \textit{Elegant Nightmares}, "[t]he contributions of major writers to the ghost story constitute only a small part of a remarkable eruption of ghostly tales which began in the later nineteenth century and continued unabated through World War I" (2).
mediations of the world must walk a difficult tightrope between the real and the unreal, so similar ontological instability may be required of its viewers and creators. Thus their protagonists can seem strangely hollow or undeveloped; half-dead themselves. Lovecraft may have aligned "sight" with the Gothic ghost, rightly emphasizing the much more tangible nature of Jamesian ghosts. But haunted scholar stories do not abandon the visible; they remain invested in the etymological connotations of the spectre: the spectacle and the spectator. Derrida's deconstructing spectre "is of the visible, but of the invisible visible, it is the visibility of a body which is not present in flesh and blood" ("Spectrographies" 38). Jamesian stories, in contrast, consider the intersection of the visible with "flesh and blood." Deeply concerned with depicting an implicated kind of vision bound up with the material, any objectivity that would facilitate an identity between a document and its subject is fatal to the intellectual attempting it. The violence implicit in that act of presumed control and imposition is revisited upon its actor—upon his body. The impossibility of an unbiased document is reified in the ghost or monster it produces.

In James's "The Mezzotint," for example, what at first appears to be a placid print of a country house doesn't remain passive for long. It starts to change: each time it is observed anew an abominable figure on the front lawn has crept a little closer to the house. The print plays out, before the eyes of a group of scholars, a historical abduction of a child in a kind of time-lapse fashion. Every time the academics return to view the print, the kidnapper who mysteriously appeared in the corner of the frame has moved a little further across the lawn, eventually disappearing inside the house through an open window. The mezzotint may seem to be the impossible apex of historical documentation, regurgitating traumatic past events in present-time and making visible previously secret knowledge. Yet this apparently omniscient knowledge also reduces its scholarly observers not only to powerlessness, but also to ridicule by their peers. It
insists upon their very contingent, local, viewpoint and their complete lack of authoritative overview by only changing when they are not observing it.

The accuracy of the mezzotint, with its gods-eye, atemporal, viewpoint paradoxically demands an acceptance of partial, contingent, sight on the part of the scholars. Donna Haraway, in "Situated Knowledges," understood that historically "[t]he eyes have been used to signify a perverse capacity—honed to perfection in the history of science tied to militarism, capitalism, colonialism, and male supremacy—to distance the knowing subject from everybody and everything in the interests of unfettered power" (Simians 188). The scholarly ghost story although anticipating by a century or more this call for a feminist realism that arose in the 1990s, is very much akin to it. It stages observation not as the means of distancing and power, but rather of tangibility and intimacy. Broadly, as a genre, scholarly ghost stories seem to call for a recognition, to use Haraway's terms, of the "situated" and "embodied" position of the student.\footnote{Minsoo Kang writes of the changing attitudes towards creator and created during the late 19th and early 20th centuries: "For a classical technophile [...] the rational human self was an unproblematic being, as his role was that of the ultimate master-controller of the obedient machine-servants that were used to maintain the status quo of industrial society. In the age of irrational machines, however, when those very machines seemed to take on lives of their own and threatened to overwhelm their creators, modernists like Marinetti thought that humanity must also change radically in order to not only survive but also thrive. Marinetti envisioned this change in terms of the fusion of man and machine, resulting in the creation of a new irrational man-machine" (Visions 13-4). Many twentieth century ghost stories utilize lively machines like telephones and cars, but even those which are "antiquarian" in nature still express this modernist fear of the overwhelmed creator. The rational man of Enlightenment thinking is, in both modernist literary fiction and contemporaneous ghost stories, no longer in control of his creations, or even his systems of knowledge.} The protagonist's attempt to master his text, to impose distance and power, is refuted by a swift lesson in his own vulnerability.
I begin this chapter with a consideration of two M. R. James stories. In the opening section, I read "Mr. Humphreys and his Inheritance," and explore how the supernatural perils Mr. Humphreys endures are attributable to the blurring of his "real" world with the frameworks of significance imposed by the narrator's stylistic and structural choices. There is a danger, we learn, in being a literary character. In section II, I read "Canon Alberic's Scrapbook," in which a demon escapes from a drawing in an old scrapbook. In particular, this story raises questions concerning where that closeness between body and text is created. Neither the drawing's accuracy nor its auratic originality fully explains its intimacy with its referent. The suggestion from "Canon Alberic" is that it is not the quality of the copy (its verisimilitude, or its authenticity) that is important, but that the very act of representation is always idolatry. In section III, I consider how James's stories, with their common theme of the bodily powers and real-world effects of aesthetic and representative objects, can be considered an extension of the nineteenth century literary realist project. In section IV, I note that the artifacts which populate these haunted scholar tales gain their power not through the illusion of likeness, but by suggesting that the noticeable style and construction of a text is no anathema to its affective abilities. I therefore suggest expressionism as a visual context for the powerful artifacts of these stories, just as literary realism is the precedent for their formal techniques.

Both realism and expressionism work through the belief that a document is more like a thing, or a being, or a world, than like a sign. In section V, I explore how Vernon Lee's "Amore Dure" utilizes the conceit that visual and written documents are bodily and emotional extensions of individuals. In "Amore Dure," document and person are startlingly easy to confuse. In section VI, I read Bram Stoker's "The Judge's House," in which this intimacy between body and document takes on an unsettling turn as characters unwittingly perform narrator-like powers.
Their figures of speech have—unbeknownst to them—an authorial accuracy, describing real horrors and real dangers. If James's tales tend to focus on the idea that the document is reality (and what it means to be stuck within, or in proximity to, one of these "real" fictions), then Lee and Stoker's tales evoke the idea that personhood is no discrete entity but works through or sits on a spectrum with documentation (in particular narrative). That fear, that the individual is trapped within and manipulated by the world of signs and symbols, finds its pinnacle in May Sinclair's "Where Their Fire is not Quenched," in which the protagonist, Harriott, finds herself in a personal hellish afterlife that is constructed like a piece of fiction. In some ways, Sinclair's story returns us full-circle to Mr. Humphreys, whose vulnerability as a character is evident as the supernatural seeps into his world through the narrative's formal frameworks. But Harriott, rather than being just an imperiled character, also inhabits the positions of reader and narrator of her infernal fiction. In conclusion, I argue that the haunted scholar story is at heart concerned with not just the ways artifacts and signs perform social (emotional and physical) work alongside their semiotic meanings, but also that artworks (in particular narrative and the act of narrating) renders the human vulnerable. The metaleptic ghost story is a genre in which expression can easily turn renegade. Voice is that which constructs a discrete self, but also that which violates it.

I. Formal Peril

In M. R. James's story "Mr. Humphreys and his Inheritance," the titular Mr. Humphreys inherits a house and estate, and discovers upon his arrival that the large gardens contain a mysterious maze that his predecessor kept locked at all times. Exploring this overgrown maze in order to draw a map of it, he finds at its centre a globe engraved with heathen and hellish figures.
After some time spent getting lost in the maze, reading a threatening Latin inscription at its entrance, discovering a parable in an old library book about another infernal labyrinth, and then failing to notice the progression of a threatening shadow creeping towards the house, James eventually permits Mr. Humphreys to sit down to draw his intended map. As he does so, Humphreys notices what appears to be an ink blot in the centre of his paper. Looking more closely, he sees that in the center of the map (where, in the real maze, the hellish globe would be located) is in fact not an ink blot, but a hole. As he peeks into this hole, he sees that it goes not just through the paper but through his desk, down even through the floor, and on through the earth apparently without end. And gradually, horrifically, as he peers into this impossible tunnel in his desk, he sees something wriggling up through the hole, "with the odious writhings of a wasp creeping out of a rotten apple," and as it gets closer and closer, he sees that it has a "human face—a burnt human face" (196).

Having read this story, we may conclude that the centre of the maze was some kind of gateway to hell, and the corpse-like figure wriggling up through it was one of its escaped inhabitants—no doubt the deceased forebear of Mr. Humphreys, whose ashes, it turns out, were enclosed in that central globe. But what is fascinating is that this gateway opens not in the real maze, but in its map. A corpse crawling grub-like up through the wood of one's desk is a fairly legible metaphor for the potential stultification of scholarship. More particularly, James implies as this zombie-like ghoul emerges through a map, documentation and representation are de-humanising.

48 Of the surprisingly physicality of inkblots, see also a joke James made in a letter to the young Sibyl Cropper (18th Jan, 1903): "P.S. The blot on Page 3 may be omitted in reading the letter. It forms no part of it and I only let it in because it had not enough money to pay even a third class fare to Burneside. What its business may be there I have no notion" ("Letters to a Child").
49 The identity of map with territory in this tale has much in common with Jorge Luis Borges's "On Exactitude in Science."
Ambiguities between what is record and what is real are scattered throughout the tale, particularly when it concerns what belongs to Humphreys' world and what belongs to the narrator's world. For example, when we hear that "it made [Humphreys] rather sad that he could not be sorry—dolebat se dolere non posse—for the man who [...] had contributed so much to his well-being" (181), it is impossible to tell in whose voice the Latin quotation is spoken. Our inability to ascertain whether this is a transcription of Humphreys' thoughts (part of the diegetic world) or a narrator's intervention (part of an external world, not part of Humphreys' reality) means that we do not know where we are located in the narrative structure. Are we still inside Humphreys' mind, having moved from free indirect discourse to verbatim transcription, or are we perhaps listening to our narrator, solely? It is impossible to tell. There is an anxiety woven throughout the tale, accentuated by such moments, about becoming an object of study not a studier: a fear, in other words, of being a character. From Humphreys "perspiring quietly in the consciousness that stock was being taken of him" (177) or "run[ning] the gauntlet" of the "careful contemplation" of the villagers (179), to Lady Wardrop feeling as she walks through the maze that "a watch is being kept on us, and that if we overstepped the mark in any way there would be a—well, a pounce'" (194), there are varying levels of anxiety expressed about being the object of observation. In the parable of the labyrinth (a metadiegetic story discovered in an old book in the library) a man who ventures into a hellish maze finds "some Creature" to be "peering and looking upon him" (187). Observation, we are left in no doubt, is very likely to be malignant.

To be the subject of a text, and to be bound by its representational conventions, this is the nature of Mr. Humphreys' entanglement with the infernal. Take for example the manner in which Mr. Humphreys almost comically resembles the house he has inherited. Although the description

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50 In a very similar vein, the protagonist of Muriel Spark's *The Comforters* hears the sounds of a typewriter that appears to be writing her life. She has to try to wrest control from her narrator.
of his body and that of the house come several pages apart, they are strikingly similar. Mr. Humphreys is described as being "a rather tall and reasonably good-looking young man" (176). The house meanwhile is "deserv[ing] the epithet" of "handsome […] on the whole, but it was oddly proportioned, a very tall red-brick house" (180). (In other words, it is "rather tall and reasonably good-looking.") Mr. Humphreys, further, is a man whose "employment in a Government office for the last four or five years had not gone far to fit him for the life of a country gentleman" (177), and likewise, the house, "gave the impression of a town house set down in the country" (180). This humourous similarity seems at first to be a playful exaggeration of the Victorian realist convention of finding easy translatability between the physical and the spiritual, or the human and the nonhuman. A rugged face might indicate a rugged personality, for example, or, in this case, Mr. Humphreys' similarity to his house seems to affirm the appropriateness of his inheritance. As Alex Clunas puts it, the realist author can frequently be found "presuming or constructing an isomorphism of inner and outer, linking representational confidence to social, political, psychological, and moral order" (176).

Many ghost stories, however, use such "representational confidence" to give a sense of fearful disorder instead. The "isomorphism" between Humphreys and his inheritance not only suggests moral, economic, and social order, but also the possibility for something secretive and infernal. After all, we later discover that there is a Latin inscription above the entrance to the maze—*Secretum meum mihi et filiis domus meae*—which translates to mean "my secret is for me

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Mary Elizabeth Braddon takes it to much more explicit extremes than James: "… it would not have been difficult to have traced a certain affinity between the dull grey building and the man who lived in it. Both seemed alike, remote from the common cares and interests of humanity; both had an air of settled melancholy, engendered by perpetual solitude; both had the same faded complexion, the same look of slow decay" (49). See also C. D. Heriot's 1936 "The Trapdoor": "[…] with a slight shock John was aware of a resemblance between the house and its mistress, Mrs. Palethorpe. Both had that blankly disinterested expression and that power of altering their appearance according to their mood" (*Great Ghost Stories* 260).
and for the sons of my house" (182). Suddenly, Mr. Humphreys' familial resemblance to the house takes on a rather sinister feel. He is undeniably a "son of the house" both figuratively (a son of the family, the true heir) and more literally (he bodily resembles the building itself). The formal playfulness that appeared to have no greater import than to naturalise the ideology of family legacy, now locks Humphreys into this threatening Latin prophecy on every side. It is evident that he will not be able to escape the household secret, because he is the household. Too much "likeness" ensures there is no distance or difference—and there can be no escape.

Certainly being a character is a dangerous business. As Northrop Frye wrote in 1963, 

"[t]he realistic writer soon finds that the requirements of literary form and plausible content always fight against each other" (36). Mr. Humphreys is caught in the middle of that fight. A hint that linguistic structures might take on physical consequences was given at the start of the tale, when Mr. Humphreys, considering the awkwardness of the social pleasantries he was attempting, felt that "the words were not fitting themselves together in the happiest way" (176). The manner in which words do, or do not, "fit together" becomes much more serious later on. For example, locked out of the maze when he first attempts to enter it, Humphreys wonders, "could the padlock—a very old one—be forced? No, apparently not: and yet, as he gave a final irritated kick at the gate, something gave way, and the lock fell at his feet" (182-3). This is a fascinatingly ambiguous sentence, which proposes both convenient narrative coincidence (necessary, for the progression of the plot) and sinister object agency, at once. The slip into free indirect discourse ("could the padlock […] be forced? No apparently not") momentarily blinds the birds-eye view of the narrative, and whatever action Mr. Humphreys tried in order to "force" the lock is lost in the silence between "forced" and "no." Because one action follows the other, we might assume a causal relationship between the attempt at force and the broken lock (the lack of clarification
encourages the fallacy of *post hoc ergo propter hoc*). Yet the diction, and even the punctuation of the sentence, simultaneously tells a different story.

The colon, which links "no, apparently not" with "and yet, as he gave a final irritated kick," hints at a strange connection between the two. The colon suggests an elaboration. Yet it makes no physical sense for the dropping away of the lock to be a logical consequence of its inability to be forced open. The colon must then indicate some causality that is far stranger. Indeed, the use of "something" in the phrase "something gave way, and the lock fell at his feet" seems to confirm this indication. What is the "something" above and beyond the lock that is "giving way"? The punctuation, ambiguous word choices, and free indirect discourse, all belong to the tale's "literary form" not its "plausible content." But the formal choices also appear to be where the supernatural lurks. To be a character, then, is to live in a "plausible content" that is nevertheless manipulated by an invisible, formal, mesh of horror. Abominations, James hints, thrive in webs of meaning. They dwell in grammar, in typography, in style. We recall that Mr. Humphreys first gets the notion to make a map of his maze after seeing an old painting of the man who had originally constructed the maze, and in this painting the blueprints are visible, held in the figure’s hand. Mr. Humphreys is not so much making a copy of a maze, then, as making a copy of a copy of a plan for a maze. The documents appear to be in infernal communication with one another, and as blueprint spawns map it is as though the physical maze is the abstraction, and these copies are the reality. Indeed, the documents, as much as Mr. Humphreys, are engaged in the transmission of their own inheritance.

II. Idols

As the spiritualism of the nineteenth century progressed, it seemed as though it were no
longer enough to simply have photographic evidence of the spirit realm. As Courtney Raia-Grean describes, "[f]ull-blown, walking, talking apparitions soon escaped the photographic plane and began to make the rounds of the séance circles" (56-7). Raia-Grean's use of the word "escape" in her description of this phenomenon frames the progression of more and more daring spiritualist hoaxes as though they were themselves a kind of ghost story—one more tale of a picture-coming-to-life. As her choice of phrase suggests, it is easy to think of the image as a prison. The boundary between real and unreal can, without difficulty, be understood as a structure of oppression, as any reader of Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess" can attest. As Alice Bell and Jan Alber write, regarding the intrusion of characters into the world of their authors in Flann O'Brien's deeply metaleptic 1939 novel *At Swim-Two-Birds*, "[o]ne way of interpreting the ascending metaleptic jumps would be to argue that the novel is primarily interested in deconstructing hierarchies and power structures" (178).

In M. R. James's "Canon Alberic's Scrapbook," a demon certainly does "escape" its image. But the power-structures of representation are contested elsewhere, too. In the first sentence James uses the familiar realist convention of laying out precisely where the story is set, with an emphasis on place names and history. It reads more like a textbook or guidebook than a fiction. "St. Bertrand de Comminges is a decayed town on the spurs of the Pyrenees, not far from Toulouse, and still nearer to Bagnères-de-Luchon. It was the site of a bishopric until the Revolution, and has a cathedral which is visited by a certain number of tourists" (1). A little later in the narrative we discover that the protagonist, Dennistoun, is a scholar in St. Bertrand de Comminges to document the church. There is a strange collapse between the activity of the

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52 Raia-Grean discusses Katie King, who, it was claimed, was a fully embodied spirit.
53 We recall that chilling phrase: "There she stands / As if alive."
narrator and the activity of the character: both are in the business of documenting and describing the town.

The entanglement of the teller and the told is a kind of "strange loop," a movement through a hierarchy which results in finding yourself in the place you started from (a visual example would be M. C. Escher's "Drawing Hands"): "despite one's sense of departing ever further from one's origin, one winds up, to one's shock, exactly where one had started out. In short, a strange loop is a paradoxical level-crossing feedback loop" (Hofstadter 101-2).

Interestingly, quickly after the factual beginning that entangles the narrator's identity with his character's, our narrator's concern with accuracy and thoroughness abruptly falls away. Only a paragraph later, correct names and nouns seem suddenly unimportant. Of the protagonist the narrator remarks "(let us call him Dennistoun)" and introduces the verger as "the verger or sacristan" noting "(I prefer the latter appellation, inaccurate though it may be)" (1). As we will see, despite its many trespasses between representation and reality, the dismantling of descriptive hierarchies in "Canon Alberic" is not always facilitated by the accuracy of the description.

An intellectual, Dennistoun examines all manner of curious things in the church, an "ivory crozier," a "dusty stuffed crocodile" hanging over the font, a "dilapidated organ" (2). But he is most greedily thrilled by his acquisition from the local verger of a scrapbook of plundered ancient texts. Most striking is the page on which a hirsute ghoul has been drawn. At the climax

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54 A. S. G. Edwards has noted, "Dennistoun" is far from an insignificant name. "The name can scarcely have been randomly chosen. For James Dennistoun (1803-55) was the compiler of a famous nineteenth-century album or scrapbook of medieval manuscript fragments that survived largely intact until 1984 when, as part of the estate of the late Kenneth Clark, Lord Clark of Saltwood it was sold at Sotheby's and broken up [...] It seems likely that James's awareness of James Dennistoun's album suggested the name for his character" (104-5).

55 "The Diary of Mr. Poynter" is the apex of James's recurring concern about hair. "Mr. Poynter" centers around a fabric design patterned to resemble long tresses of hair. This print later transmutes into, or spawns, a hair-covered monster. "Mr. Poynter" is reminiscent of those modernist texts that conflate domestic surfaces and bodies, such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman's
of the plot this repulsively hairy demon first audibly haunts and eventually physically appears in front of Dennistoun. The haunting is transmitted secretly and gratuitously, like a hidden legacy, to whoever owns the scrapbook. Indeed, the verger is so keen to sell the book because he himself has been tormented by this demon for years. The demon remains in excess of the economies of pilfering or purchasing, seeming to be inherited rather than bought or stolen. It is an unwanted, unasked for, and indisposable possession, asserting itself in a space outside of financial and academic value judgments. One way of reading this demon therefore, is to consider it a protest against the acquisitive and possessive nature of academic study.

When the demon finally appears in Dennistoun's bedroom only its hand, at first, is visible in the dim room:

His attention was caught by an object lying on the red cloth just by his left elbow. Two or three ideas of what it might be flitted through his brain with their own incalculable quickness.

"A penwiper? No, no such thing in the house. A rat? No, too black. A large spider? I trust to goodness not—no. Good God! A hand like the hand in that picture!" (8-9)

The picture referred to is apparently affecting enough that it appears to have been "drawn from the life":

The Yellow Wallpaper, or Virginia Woolf's "The Mark on the Wall." Yet rather than acting like a focus of fascination and absorption for a subject, as the marked or patterned wall does in the above texts, "Mr. Poynter" shows a body emerging out from, rather than being dragged into, the pattern or markings of a domestic surface.

The valuable artifact that is suspiciously sold well underprice is a common trope in the antiquarian story. A friend of M. R. James, Shane Leslie, in his "As in a Glass Dimly," for example, features a traveller who gives away an Egyptian coffin-board covered in hieroglyphics for free and "with a sigh of relief" (Ghosts and Scholars 159).
At first you saw only a mass of coarse, matted black hair; presently it was seen that this covered a body of fearful thinness, almost a skeleton, but with the muscles standing out like wires. The hands were of a dusk pallor, covered, like the body, with long, coarse hairs, and hideously taloned. The eyes, touched in with a burning yellow, had intensely black pupils and were fixed upon the throned King with a look of beast-like hate. Imagine one of the awful bird-catching spiders of South America translated into human form, and endowed with intelligence just less than human, and you will have some faint conception of the terror inspired by this appalling effigy. (7)

The physical demon—whose hand Dennistoun thinks is a pen wiper, a rat, and a spider before he recognises it—seems, like its image, to defy easy definition or description. Although the narrator catalogues the image for us (hair, muscles, skin, and eyes) the most vivid picture is the least easy to imagine: a spider translated into a man. The affective power of a representation is not dependent upon its accuracy; it has an efficacy not facilitated through detail or verisimilitude. This is not the only image with such power, either. Early in the story, while gazing at a painting of Saint Bertrand, our Presbyterian protagonist Dennistoun remains baffled that "a daub of this kind [should] affect anyone so strongly" (3). But the verger with him is clearly invested in the power of the artwork, no matter how crude Dennistoun might believe it to be, looking upon the painting "with the eye of a supplicant in agony, his hands tightly clasped, and a rain of tears on his cheek" (2).\(^57\) The verger’s emotional response cannot be coming from the painting’s realism, because "[t]he composition of the picture is well-nigh indecipherable" (2).

\(^{57}\) Alfred Gell, in *Art and Agency*, which I will consider at more length below, proposes that artworks can be considered "person-like," simply because they exist within a network of social
Writing in *The Egoist* in 1915 about imagist poetry, May Sinclair claimed that, "[t]he Victorian Poets are Protestant. For them the bread and wine are symbols of reality, the body and the blood […] The Imagists are Catholic; they believe in Transubstantiation. For them the bread and wine are the body and the blood" (*Two Notes* 88). Metaleptic ghost stories are, in Sinclair's terms, "Catholic" or "Imagist." The image of the demon is the real demon just as the image of the saint is the real saint. The very physical description of the verger's devotion to the "dark … indecipherable" saint's painting (his pain, his tears, his clasped hands) makes legible that for him the painting is not an image but a body like his. If this identity is not created through verisimilitude, another theory is that such transubstantiation exists between these symbols and their (demonic or saintly) bodies, because the artwork, in both cases, is original. The demon can be read as the "aura" of its drawing. In Walter Benjamin's words: "Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be. This unique existence of the work of art determined the history to which it was subject […] This includes the changes which it may have suffered in physical condition […] as well as the various changes in its ownership" (*Illuminations* 220). The demon seems to follow its scrapbook, acting as a very physical amplification of its particular location in time and space, and, as I noted above, perhaps protesting its plundering—its "changes in ownership." Yet, when the narrator informs us at the end of the story that he still owns a

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58 It exemplifies the "[e]xperience of the aura" that Benjamin identifies as "the transposition of a response common in human relationships to the relationship between the inanimate or natural object and man […] To perceive the aura of an object we look at means to invest it with the ability to look at us in return" (*Illuminations* 188).
photograph of the drawing of the demon, despite the original having been destroyed, we are meant to feel a little uneasy. After all, throughout the tale James drops hints that it is not just the aura of original artworks but the power of representations in general of which we should be afraid.

In this story about religious icons and academic accuracy, both originality and realism are suggested as causes of transubstantiation. But neither are allowed by James to fully explain the identity of the demon and the drawing. Rather than being reliant upon a particular relationship between image and referent, "Canon Alberic" suggests instead that we should be looking for the antagonism between artwork and personhood. A hint about this is given early on, when Dennistoun first meets the haunted verger and considers him "an unexpectedly interesting object of study" (1). It is his "furtive, or rather, hunted and oppressed, air" that makes him this "object of study," this text. The auratic artifact might be that "with the ability to look at us in return" (*Illuminations* 188), but in these tales mirroring does not interpolate or create a self, but rather dismantles it. We recall that the demon is described as a bird-eating spider "translated" into human form. There are other instances, too, of bodies translating other bodies, and of reflection being that which deforms the human. At the beginning of the tale, while documenting the church, Dennistoun unintentionally mimics the haunted tics of the verger—the demon's current victim. The verger's nervous "half-glancing" is echoed by Dennistoun's "occasional glance". Where the verger is "hunched" anxiously, Dennistoun is similarly "deep in his notebook". Where the verger is "perpetually" furtive and nervous, Dennistoun is perpetually "too busy" and eventually becomes "fidgety" (1-2). The men enact similar poses, and similar physical movements, despite one being engaged in terror and the other in study. Academic attention is not shown to be the active pursuit by the scholar of his subject, but is compared to the fleeing of prey from a
predator. As Dennistoun documents the church in writing, his body documents his persecution in posture. This mirroring upon mirroring, in which the likeness drawn between the bodily poses of note-taking reflects the bodily poses of a man in need of exorcism implies that to document or describe is a passive, not an active, act. To copy something is to be changed oneself.

An "uncanny effect" which Sigmund Freud felt deserves "special mention" in his essay "The Uncanny" is this process of

effacing the distinction between imagination and reality, such as when something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality, or when a symbol takes over the full functions and significance of the thing it symbolizes, and so on […] The infantile element in this, which also holds sway in the minds of neurotics, is the over-accentuation of psychical reality in comparison with physical reality—a feature closely allied to the belief in the omnipotence of thoughts. (398)

It is tempting to understand James's repeated equation between documentation and thing-documented as a kind of neurosis. Similarly, as we remember the self-referential nature of ghost fiction and consider how our protagonists' perils could be a warning against the absorbing nature of narrative worlds, it is easy to come to the same conclusion about the "over-accentuation" of the "psychical reality" of imagination. Kendall L. Walton's 1978 exposition of the act of "Fearing Fictions" lead to the same point:

On my theory we accomplish the "decrease of distance" not by promoting fictions to our level but by descending to theirs […] Makebelievably we do believe, we know, that Huck
Finn floated down the Mississippi. And make-believedly we have various feelings and attitudes about him and his adventures. Rather than somehow fooling ourselves into thinking fictions are real, we become fictional. (23)

Walton argues that we cannot have real psychological attitudes or feelings towards fictional objects, only "make-believe" ones. We become make-believe in our interactions with fiction. In his more recent exploration of the psychological experience of narratives, Richard Gerrig similarly seeks to understand why "readers are often described as being transported by a narrative by virtue of performing that narrative" (2). It is common to suggest, in both psychological and narratological frameworks, that when we engage with fiction, everything, including ourselves—our very feelings and experiences—becomes less real.

Yet what is surely fascinating about haunted scholar stories, as opposed to the psychological ghost story, is that they resist the assumption that collapse between the symbol and the "the full functions and significance of the thing it symbolizes" comes from any over-reach (neurotic or not) of imagination. In such stories, we are crowded in by the symbolic or imaginative world instead. We do not descend to it, are not transported to it. Dennistoun and the verger, we must recall, are both mirrors of each other: they are simultaneously each other's fictions. But they do not become less physical, less present, quite the opposite: there is something deeply visceral and uncomfortably intimate about their mimeticism of each other. Their bodies are entangled (and almost identical) even as their minds are taking divergent paths.

Representations and translations and descriptions are not some strange—perhaps immaterial or unreal—elsewhere. They are a fabric of very tangible intimacy. The rhetoric of "decreas[ing] distance" and other spatial metaphors to describe the subject's experience of fiction fails as a
framework for James's stories precisely because his work critiques the authority needed to pronounce real and unreal. In James's stories protagonists neither become fictional nor are transported away when they interact with fantastic images. The symbolic is how the real gets close to you. To engage with a description, or a copy, is to be changed yourself.

III. The Vulnerability of Realism

The haunted scholar story often couches itself in the style, if not always the historical setting, of Victorian realist fiction even when written long after the fact. We should understand that metaleptic ghost stories are always a distillation of the concerns and tactics of the realist novel. Nineteenth-century realism was far from unaware of the absurdity of its difficult project. One need only look to William Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, whose narrator slides disconcertingly between omniscience and actually meeting his characters, or George Eliot's authorial intrusion to describe her theory of literary representation in *Adam Bede*; to realise that metalepsis was always present in the realist novel's understanding of itself. The metaleptic ghost story can be viewed as the legacy of the project of nineteenth century realism.

59 "[M]y strongest effort is to avoid any [...] arbitrary picture, and to give a faithful account of men and things as they have mirrored themselves in my mind. The mirror is doubtless defective; the outlines will sometimes be disturbed, the reflection faint or confused; but I feel as much bound to tell you as precisely as I can what that reflection is, as if I were in the witness-box narrating my experience on oath" (194).

60 As Lilian R. Furst writes: "To unmask realism as an illusion or deception [...] does not detract from [...] its capacity to haunt readers through its strange power of making absent objects not only present but credible" (viii). Furst claims that taking into account "this paradox between the sonorous proclamation 'All is true' and the hushed admission that it is an illusion suggests a new approach to realist fiction: that its strength lies precisely in its readiness to use contradiction as its pivot instead of denying and bypassing it, as critics have tended to do" (2).

61 As Rachel Bowlby writes, it is too easy to understand the relation of the modernist period to Victorianism as internal versus external "realisms": "the overarching outside-to-inside story of the movement, if not progress, of realist representation is itself another of those straightforward
In Mary Webb's "Mr. Tallent's Ghost" (1927), the narrator claims to be "as wary of manuscripts as a hare is of greyhounds". This is because, he clarifies, as a former literary critic he is "always liable to receive parcels of these for advice" (Virago 92). This joke turns into an actual haunting later in the story, when he is tormented by a collection of manuscripts he has promised to publish. These badly written books appear to have preserved the voice of their insufferable author beyond the grave, as well as usurping personhood more fully by snatching from his needy relatives any inheritance to which they are entitled in publishing costs. The manuscripts both displace, and drive mad, their human community. As this story exemplifies, the genre typically exaggerates the Victorian novel's careful implementation of the authorial invasion (which already renders the boundary between person and text suspicious) until the violent underpinnings of such tropes are revealed.

Tzvetan Todorov's theory that "[t]he supernatural often appears because we take a figurative sense literally" (Fantastic 76-7) is built upon by Fanfan Chen who considers metalepsis to be the "realisation" of the figure of hypotyposis (a description that is particularly vivid and palpable). For haunted scholar stories, however, the documents that come to life do not necessarily have to be extraordinarily vivid or lively in order to do so. Maps, texts in unreadable foreign languages, or crumbling images are just as capable of producing their monsters as precise descriptions. In these stories what is being taken literally is not the vividness of a representation, but the realist equation of the constructed (and not necessarily hypotypotic) text with the physical world. Todorov's much-cited definition of the "fantastic" is that it is a "hesitation" between classifying an event as an illusion or conceding it to be "an integral part of reality" (25). This might just as easily be a definition of the 19th century novel. It is perhaps no surprise, then, that narratives of the type derided by realism-simplifiers; behind it (or before it) lies a much more complex history of the relations between subjectivity and realism" (xix).
ghost stories need look no further than to exaggerate the ploys of realism for their horror; realism is fundamentally a supernatural genre, and the manner in which it easily and amiably dismisses the division between real and unreal is uniquely chilling.

In the ghost story, the "hesitation" between the constructed artwork and its real referent (a kind of Schrödinger's realism) is always explicitly shown to be an active threat towards the person nearby—usually a student, teacher, or other scholar. Naturalist texts, it could be argued, have always been covertly murderous: attempting, as they do, to kill-off their creators and to erase any trace of their construction. As Roland Barthes wrote of authorship more generally: "The writer is always on the blind spot of systems, adrift; he is the joker in the pack, a mana, a zero degree, the dummy in the bridge game: necessary to the meaning (the battle), but himself deprived of fixed meaning" (Pleasure 35). We can understand the metaleptic ghost story, then, as exposing the threat that texts, especially realist texts, pose to their authors as well as the story's inability to control, or mask, the world they describe. Haunted scholar stories fall into Bell and Alber's fifth thematic use of ontological metalepsis, "Metalepsis as a Challenge to the Creator—A Loss of Control over the Creation" (176). As George Levine claims, "English realism is always an act of 'containment,' of 'naturalizing'; it is not a disinterested rendering of things as they are but a strategy to keep under control their disruptive possibilities" ("Literary Realism" 13-4). But this obfuscating strategy of "containment" (where the real is constrained by, because indistinguishable from, the fictional—it is "naturalized") is also its undoing. As the haunted scholar tales remind us, the act of conflating epistemological structures with "things as they are"

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62 The erasure of the narrator is what Glen Cavaliero sees as the naturalistic writer's ideal: "while novelists should portray in faithful detail the observable facts of physical reality, their own artistry should be invisible, so that no gap would intervene between their subject and its rendering […] the aim of fiction was to convince the reader of its self-sufficient truthfulness" (8).
leaves no boundary between the human and the other. Nothing is left but those palpable, touchable, Jamesian ghosts.

It is clear from the prevalence of this trope in the ghost stories of the 19th and 20th centuries that metalepsis is not solely, or even mainly, a postmodern device. I am commenting not just on the historical moment of these stories, but also suggesting that haunted scholar stories utilise metalepsis in a manner which differs from how critics like Brian McHale have understood postmodern metalepsis. The ghost story works to assure us of the inescapable proximity of the material, nonhuman world; the world which realist literature teaches us is always frightfully simmering underneath the novel's formal confines. In contrast, postmodern uses of the device appear—to speak broadly—to set forth the view that reality is nothing but text, that it is text that is always threateningly simmering underneath what we think of as reality. In the ghost story, rather than the transgressions between diegetic levels suggesting that there is nothing beyond representation, no "reality" no matter how many levels you leapfrog, there turns out to be, conversely, no reliable representation, no text that can be trusted to confine matter.

IV. Portrait of the Monster

The interest these ghost story authors show in realism appears less to do with any

63 McHale claims that in the "television-oriented culture" of the late twentieth century, "the movies and television appear in postmodernist writing as an ontological level […] often one in competition with the primary diegetic world" (128). This results, he claims, in a sense that we readers, too, might not just be at the movies but in the movies (130). But that is not what is happening in the ghost stories I have presented. These tales do not express an anxiety that the whole world might be one big ancient manuscript, or an endless oil painting. They don't communicate a fear, that is, that representation is all there is.

64 Furthermore, this ghost metalepsis differs from what Levenson identifies as the realist-impressionism which also enacts collapses: "objectivity collapses into subjectivity, reality into personality. Realism and egoism thus converge" (Genealogy 116). The collapse of truth and its expression in works by Ford Maddox Ford and other modernists, settles in the realm of the subject, whereas the ghostly metalepsis I am identifying, which similarly conflates the real and its rendering, notably leaves the human at risk.
confidence in its verisimilitude and more a fascination with the way its formal constraints both contain and release the nonhuman world. Likewise, the artifacts that come to life in these stories are typically not photographs or other highly lifelike representations, but drawings, paintings and prints that retain a sense of being realistic without complete accuracy. In "Realism in Art" Roman Jakobson suggests that in some versions of realism, "in order to show an object, it is necessary to deform the shape it used to have" (44). Supernaturalist literature frequently explores this relationship between deformity and realism. In "Count Magnus," for example, M. R. James's protagonist finds an image of a man being pursued by a monster, and wonders whether the picture of the monster is just a very inept attempt on the part of the artist to depict another human being. Surely this is just a poor rendition of a man being chased by another man? The horrific revelation that what appears to be unskillful verisimilitude is in fact not unskillful at all (the drawing of the monster is, of course, deeply accurate) is indicative of the way the ghost story understands both literary and visual realism: as that which both does and does not deform its subject matter.65 The heart of the fear is that even a vague, crude, damaged or ornamented artwork is no way significantly distinct from its monstrous subject matter. Indeed, the very inaccuracy of the artwork—where its deformity lies—assures its identity with its deformed and terrible referent.

If realism forms a literary precedent, then expressionism gives a visual context for understanding these stories. As a movement, expressionism was well-suited to depictions of horror. Edvard Munch's "The Scream" (1893) is perhaps the most famous example. A decade

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65 See also "The Ghost" by Catherine Wells (published posthumously by H. G. Wells in 1928) in which a bedridden young girl is expecting someone dressed as a ghost to come into her bedroom to entertain her. What enters is a "little cloaked figure, no higher than the table… [with] a dead white face […] hunched between its shoulders" (Virago 118). This ghoulish dwarf is not brilliantly realistic acting and costume as the child at first thinks, which becomes evident when the real actor knocks on her door and asks to come in.
later, the members of Die Brücke (1905-1913), the group commonly cited as founding German Expressionism, would continue to distort the human form—the newly-grasped freedom evident in their artworks nevertheless accompanied by rough undertones. Yet, for all its explicit and implicit horrors, expressionism has at its heart the subjective and the emotive, which situates it at almost polar opposites from the rather detached tone and realist aesthetic of British and Irish ghost stories from the same era. Indeed, the Brücke manifesto, published in 1906 in the form of a woodcut, runs thus:

Believing as we do in growth, and in a new generation, both of those who create and those who enjoy, we call all young people together, and as young people, who carry the future with us, we want to wrest freedom for our actions and our lives from the older, more comfortably established forces. We claim as our own everyone who reproduces directly, and without falsification, whatever it is that drives him to create. (Dempsey 74)

Apart from the hint that creativity is a kind of compulsion not a freedom, the optimism and progressive sentiments of this manifesto may seem to be worlds apart from the antiquarian and fearful world of the ghost story. It would also evidently be inaccurate to say that the prose of haunted scholar stories is expressionistic. But "expressionistic" is a term that can help us understand the palpable, deformed-looking, fear-inducing visual artifacts that ghost story protagonists unluckily encounter.

Illustrated ghost stories remained common in journals and magazines in the early twentieth century. Like the Victorian penny dreadfuls that came before them, and anticipating the rise of the pulps, turn of the century periodicals such as The Strand and The Harmsworth
Monthly Pictorial continued the tradition of offering short stories—often with supernatural elements—complete with pictures. But arguably the first ever true horror magazine as we know it was published in Germany between 1919 and 1921. Der Orchideengarten predates Weird Tales, the most significant American pulp fantasy-horror magazine, by four years. Orchideengarten is notable for featuring alongside its short stories a diverse range of artwork. A reader will encounter medieval woodcuts and reprints of Gustave Doré for example, but also, and most prominently, its illustrations consist of expressionist prints and drawings from contemporary artists and illustrators. Its brightly colored covers stand in contrast to its internal illustrations: images reminiscent of Francisco Goya's Los Disparates series, or Henri Fuseli's The Nightmare: bold, often dark, sketchy pictures of mutated forms and hallucinogenic encounters. See fig. 2 by E. Plainchinger-Coltelli, in which two stretched and haunted figures slink past in the lower corner, while behind them the veering shadows and leering houses create monstrous shapes. Another artwork contributor, Alfred Kubin, an Austrian printmaker and illustrator, drew similarly dramatic, symbolist images (fig. 1). Kubin, as well as illustrating works by authors such as Edgar Allen Poe and Fyodor Dostoyevsky, was also himself a writer of anguished horror fiction. His novel Die Andere Seite (The Other Side) from 1909, although more of an early Kafka-esque piece than a ghost story, shares the preoccupation with anti-economies that we have seen was also common in British ghost stories from the same era.

The dystopian kingdom of Kubin's novel, for example, will only allow the import of second-hand items. The Master of the country sends agents out into the wider world to find these used objects for him, which include the valuable ("a crate of good Dutch paintings, including two Rembrandts" [23-4]) but also the worthless. As one agent of the kingdom explains:
Valuable articles and what is clearly trash are both demanded with the same insistence. How often have I visited people, from respectable city-dwellers to peasants living in remote mountain areas, and had to rummage through their cellars and lofts looking for some old piece of rubbish. The people themselves often have no idea that they possess the thing, a broken chair, an old cigar-lighter, a pipe-rack, an egg-timer, or whatever. (24)

Kubin's at first simply unsettling dystopian society gradually turns nightmarish, resembling much more closely his expressionist artwork. The broken, valueless, or hidden object that dominated the opening of the novel evolves into the shapeless, illegible, broken body of the end. Take for example, the following fight scene:

Patera and the American grappled each other, forming a shapeless hulk, the American completely fused with Patera. A monstrous body, too huge to distinguish its various parts, rolled and writhed all over the earth, the shapeless being taking on protean characteristics. Millions of tiny, ever-changing faces formed on the surface, all prattling, singing, shouting at the same time, until they were sucked back in again. (235)

The visual documents of haunted scholar stories describe similarly deformed and protean bodies, and are also found in "cellars and lofts," seeming to be both "valuable artifacts" and "old piece[s] of rubbish." Revisiting the passage that describes the image of Dennistoun's demon in "Canon Alberic" we find it categorizes the monster's various parts piece by piece, but that this thoroughness is undermined by fanciful descriptors:
At first you saw only a mass of coarse, matted black hair; presently it was seen that this covered a body of fearful thinness, almost a skeleton, but with the muscles standing out like wires. The hands were of a dusk pallor, covered, like the body, with long, coarse hairs, and hideously taloned. The eyes, touched in with a burning yellow, had intensely black pupils and were fixed upon the throned King with a look of beast-like hate. (7)

At first, the image appears to be just an unsettling mass of hair. As the body resolves into clarity, the narrator then metaphorically evokes melodramatic (but not actually present) features like a "skeleton" and "dusk." With the word "hideously" the narrator's emotions about this drawing (which have already been implicitly saturating the description) come fully into the open, and, when we read about the "burning" yellow, it is as though the drawing is capable of inflicting even bodily pain. This reads more like an expressionist or symbolist supernatural scene than anything apparently "drawn from the life," no matter what the narrator claims.

Earlier we heard that May Sinclair considered the Imagists "Catholic" because of their faith in the transubstantiation between word and thing. Haunted scholar tales from the same period were, likewise, depicting transubstantiation in writing. But the language of their ekphrastic descriptions of the metamorphosing artifacts of their stories is a far remove from the precision of the Imagist poets. In A. C. Benson's "The Slype House," Anthony, an inventor and scholar, driven to recklessness with boredom and loneliness, returns to his youthful studies of the occult. On his ritualistic altar is an "old and dark picture" which "represented a man fleeing in a kind of furious haste from a wood, his hands spread wide, and his eyes staring out of the picture […] and out of the wood leaned a strange pale horned thing, very dim" (Ghosts and Scholars 40). Far from a verisimilar image, the protagonist faces a dark, vague picture that seems to
capture movement and emotion rather than detail or clarity. Dismembered features like eyes and hands are noticeable and expressive, while the monstrous figure at large seems odd, deformed, and difficult to grasp. For all that the haunted scholar genre lacks psychological depth and focuses on the threat posed by the external world not the threat posed by the internal psyche, the relationship between protagonist and transubstantiating artifact is nevertheless emotional rather than intellectual—affecting rather than accurate.

I want to dwell on this notion of the copy, in magical practice, affecting the original to such a degree that the representation shares in or acquires the properties of the represented. To me this is a disturbing notion ... not because it so flagrantly contradicts the world around me but rather that once posited, I suspect if not its presence, then intimations thereof in the strangely familiar commonplace and unconscious habits of representation in the world around me (Taussig 47-8).

V. Love

Vernon Lee's *Hauntings* (1890), although undeniably a collection of metaleptic ghost

66 "[I]t is not so much a 'faithful' likeness that is captured, nor is it a 'faithful' likeness that is doing the capturing. What is faithfully captured is a *power*" (Taussig 62).
stories that engage in the "haunted scholar" trope, nevertheless put forward their threat to selfhood in a different manner to M. R. James. His tales, as we have seen, expose the formal and structural devices of literary realism and other descriptive media as at best neurotic about the uprising of an autonomous world, and at worst, as active strategies for dehumanisation. Lee, in contrast, is centrally focused on the potential confusion between the artistic representation of a person and a real person. In her stories, loss of self comes not from the violence enacted upon a person by a text, or the inability of a text to cover and constrain the nonhuman, so much as from an ambiguity about the difference between human and description of human in the first place. Lee's tales are fundamentally about the physical and emotional feelings we harbor towards representations.

In the preface to *Hauntings* Lee asserts her belief that "genuine ghosts," those that have "stumbled and fumbled about […] among the armchairs and […] sofas of reality" are of no interest to her (ix). Indeed, Lee keeps company with the purveyors of the psychological ghost story, claiming as she does that the real ghost is the one "born of ourselves, of the weird places we have seen, the strange stories we have heard" (x). But, despite her Gothic tendencies, and her insistence on "certain brains" as the psychic home of the ghost rather than the wider world, Lee and James nevertheless converge in their shared horror of successful, but not necessarily verisimilar, reproductions. In "Amore Dure," Lee tells the tale of a scholar who falls in love with a historical woman through the archival stories and images he discovers of her. Many other men had fallen for this woman, Medea, while she was alive, and all of her lovers perished in service of her ambition and power-lust. Medea's ability to step forth from historical documents and portraits into the world of her admiring historian is just one more instance of her sexual power over men; her desire to dominate apparently neither quelled by death nor abstraction.

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67 Lee's real name was Violet Paget.
The tale is told through passages from the diary of doomed Polish historian, Spiridion Trepka. Arriving in Italy, Spiridion neglects to write the "atrocious book of erudition and art-criticism" (3) that his travel scholarship requires, following instead a growing passionate obsession with Medea da Carpi. He later uncovers paintings of this woman, and even letters in the archive written in her original hand. As his obsession with Medea reaches its peak, she manifests physically, leaving him roses and letters and enlisting him in a scheme to revenge herself upon the soul of the one man who not only escaped her clutches in life, but ordered her death. Spiridion has learned his lesson from history, he is not a neglectful student—he knows that to become complicit with Medea will lead to his death like the deaths of all of her previous lovers. Yet, so enamoured is he, that he does so willingly.

Spiridion's distaste for writing erudite books of art-criticism is not evidence of a distaste for art or for scholarship. He remains pompously snobbish about, yet often deeply affected by, aesthetics and art-objects throughout the narrative, and his persistence in digging through the archives for mention of Medea reveals that his scholarly skills and studiousness are both admirable and undiminished by any ambivalence he may feel for academia in general. Spiridion's passionate research into the historical figure of Medea suggests that the rigorous, and supposedly disinterested, work of the academic is emotional at heart. The metalepsis that occurs when Medea trespasses out of paintings and manuscripts into Spiridion's world, is, after all, only a making literal of the mistake he has already made much earlier in the story: confusing the records of a person with the person themselves.

Those students and scholars who have felt their breath quicken when they first come across images of, or, better, handwritten manuscripts by, the historical or cultural figure they
study will most likely have some sympathy for Spiridion's encounter with Medea's letters in the archive:

Yes, Medea's own handwriting—a round, scholarly character, full of abbreviations, with a Greek look about it, as befits a learned princess, who could read Plato as well as Petrarch. The letters are of little importance, mere drafts of business letters […] But they are her letters, and I can imagine almost that there hangs about these mouldering pieces of paper a scent as of a woman's hair. (26)

Roland Barthes said of the form of the sentence: "we are playing with an exceptional object […] immutably structured and yet infinitely renewable: something like chess." But he concludes, deadpan, "[u]nless for some perverts the sentence is a body?" (Pleasure 51). Spiridion is undoubtedly that pervert. For Spiridion, Medea's letters are like relics. It matters little what they say, and the "mouldering pieces of paper" are unimportant in themselves. He treats the letters, instead, like body-parts. The fantasy that he might be able to smell Medea's scent from her letters renders them far more akin, in his mind, to a lock of her hair than a stack of paperwork. He is unable to draw a distinction between these rather dry business correspondences, and the woman herself, although materially the distinction would seem to be quite clear. In her essay Music and its Lovers (1932), Lee wrote that "active attention is the most altruistic of all things, and […] egoism begins with our incapacity for keeping it up" (Music 111). To study in a committed fashion is always, Lee proposes, to put selfhood at risk because the ego must be cast aside in
order to give undivided attention to the object of study.\textsuperscript{68} Spiridion is attending to his study so actively, so altruistically that he excavates his ego, reinstalling it in the documents by mistaking the records that are left of a person for the person herself. Spiridion's archival work is a kind of love; it is also a threat to his selfhood. Lee, a great scholar herself, seems to be playfully reminding us how often erudite study is just a façade for something that it might be more accurate to call a crush. How difficult it is, the story seems to say, to appreciate or critique a person's creations and the records by which history remembers their existence, without mistaking those documents for a self.

But of course, if it is so easy to mistake an image or text for a person, surely there is also the danger that we might mistake a person for an image or a text? Quite so. This is something Medea herself encounters repeatedly. Famed for her beauty, and the daughter of a family of importance, Medea is at grave risk of becoming nothing more than a valuable object. The murders of her various lovers and husbands, vicious though they are, nevertheless remain a means by which Medea may fight against being reduced to an art object and assert herself as a person with intention and ambition. Her emergence as a real person unconfined to records and paintings even centuries after her death is nothing more than a continuation of the battle she fought in life against the men who mistake their admiration of her "marvellous beauty" (10) for love.

Tom Hood's "The Shadow of a Shade" (1869), a mid-Victorian painting-that-comes-to-life story, has his artist respond to the (surprising, one would imagine) news that his portrait's face has turned into a skull in a very self-composed manner:

\textsuperscript{68} She writes of the "paradoxical" fact that in active attention that activity is "not perceived as going on in ourselves" but is "merged into what we are attending to, i.e. become the character, the quiddity" of the thing we are concentrating on (111).
"The skull's there—just as in every good figure-subject the nude is there under the costumes. You fancy that is a mere coat of paint. Nothing of the kind! Art lives, sir! That is just as much a real head as yours is with all the muscles and bones, just the same. That's what makes the difference between art and rubbish." (Great Ghost Stories 285)

Harry, the painter, doesn't take seriously the spooky suggestion that his portrait could have changed into a skeleton, and instead uses the moment as an excuse to promote the skill of his work. A "good" (by which he means verisimilar) painting should capture not just surfaces but the fullness of the subject. On the one hand, he means a sense of the bone structure under the face, a sense of the nude body under the clothes, and so on. Yet the playful rhetoric about art "living" and being "just the same" as a real person, suggests that for Harry a realistic painting which captures physiological structures captures at the same time something more essential: life and reality. There are presentiments here, in the claim "art lives," of later theories of realism in art that move beyond its verisimilitude. For example, Kasimir Malevich would write in 1915 that "paint and colour […] will not be repetitions of living things in life but will themselves be a living thing. A painted surface is a real, living form" (130).

Lee's "Amore Dure" has at its heart this ambiguity between person and rendition, taking as its subject matter both the treatment of media as though they were "real, living" selves, and also the treatment of selves as though they were media. Medea certainly understands the efficacy by which an artwork can stand in for a person, sending an image of herself to do her seduction work when she cannot appear in person. Similarly, her executor, through some ritual or magic,

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69 Malevich, unlike the painter from Hood's story, is however speaking of what he called a "nonobjective," or abstract realism. He wanted not a "realism of objects" but "of painterly, colored units" (133) and made claims such as "[a]ny painterly surface is more alive than any face from which a pair of eyes and a smile protrude" (134), and "[t]he square is a living, regal infant" (133).
ties his soul to a small figurine in order to avoid meeting Medea in the afterlife. Both know, and use to their advantage, the identity that can be forged between person and representation. It is useful here to turn to Alfred Gell, who, in *Art and Agency* lays out an "anthropological theory" of art, moving away from a semiotic approach (which asks what an artwork means or symbolizes) and towards a focus on the artwork's role in social relations. This is a central issue for "Amore Dure," in which both Medea and Spiridion find themselves endangered by the ability of an image to become a social agent and vice versa.

Gell considers the various ways in which power, and social interaction, flow through and via art objects. Most useful for "Amore Dure" is his exploration of the power exerted by the real life subject of an artwork (the "prototype"), through that artwork (the "index"). Gell postulates that "the ideas of 'representing' (like a picture) and 'representing' (like an ambassador) are distinct, but none the less linked" (98). A picture, can, like an ambassador, act both as a synecdoche of, and an appendage of, the thing it represents. An artistic copy might usefully be considered part of the extended body of the original, in that, like an ambassador, it is a conduit for its affective ability. This is like Spiridion's understanding of Medea's letters as more relic than semiotic. Gell also considers "exuviae sorcery" as a paradigm through which to understand the relationship between image and referent. Unlike "sympathetic magic" wherein the copy becomes identical with the original via likeness, exuviae sorcery works by taking advantage of detached parts of someone's "distributed personhood," such as fingernails or hair. "The interest of exuviae sorcery, from our point of view, is that it forges a direct link between the index as an image of the prototype, and the index as a detached *part* of the prototype. We are not accustomed
to think of images (such as portraits, etc.) as parts of persons, limbs, as it were" (104), Gell writes.\textsuperscript{70}

Lee forges a ghost story precisely out of how unaccustomed we are to thinking of images and texts as parts of persons. Yet, even as that confusion creates her horror, Lee shows just how much we are used to a social rather than semiotic understanding of symbols. From the scholar falling in love with his object of study, to the young woman forced to violently oppose her aestheticization in social encounters, Lee remind us not only how strange it is, but also how readily we accept the document's usurpation of the person.\textsuperscript{71} In her essay "The Blame of Portraits" Lee claims that the "human craving for literal preservation of that which should not, cannot, be preserved" in portraiture is "lamentable and dreadful" (\textit{Hortus} 144). She reminds us to remember that portraits contain no essence of the person they depict, and that we must be aware of the all-too-common "mistake of thinking that the life of our dear ones is in an image, instead of in the heart-beats which the image—like a name, a place, any associated thing—can produce in ourselves" (145). Yet even as she attests to the distinction between image and person, she evokes their conflation:

\textsuperscript{70} Gell goes on to cite the Epicurean theory of "flying simulacra" espoused by Lucretius. "Lucretius attributes the flying simulacra of things to a kind of internal jostling within objects, which causes the minute bodies 'in the front rank' to be discharged from the surface and to fly outwards. The simulacra are physical things though, and we see objects because the simulacra enter our eyes and we can \textit{feel} them" (105).

\textsuperscript{71} Nicole Fluhr reads Lee's ghost stories through Lee's theory of empathy, a term which she is credited with introducing to English readers in the 1913 work \textit{The Beautiful: An Introduction to Psychological Aesthetics}. Fluhr finds that "Lee's stories emphasize the cataclysmic consequences for subjectivity that ensue when one person seeks to know another," (287) those consequences being an invasion of one personality by another, which "springs from the imagination of the person whom it invades" (293). In other words, Spiridion is "effectively creat[ing]" rather than knowing Medea.
we must beware lest [the portrait] take, in our memory, the place of the original […] One feels aghast sometimes, on meeting some dear friend after an interval of absence, to find that those real features, that real expression, are not the familiar ones. It is the portrait, the envious counterfeit presentment, which (knowing its poor brief reign) has played us and our friend that mean trick. (146)

The deceitful portrait may not be the person it references, but it is a person with emotions and intention who seems to intentionally manipulate us rather than, as Lee earlier claimed, being simply a feeling produced by ourselves. This conflict, played out in "The Blame of Portraits," is also played out in "Amore Dure": a resistance to, yet simultaneous acceptance of, the "dreadful" human tendency to accept the identity of person and image.

Indeed, in some senses the story as a whole is a reminder to the reader that Spiridion's mistake is one in which we share. His diary is apparently reproduced for us verbatim, with a note at the beginning introducing the document, and dates heading each new entry. Yet it is surprising how easy it is to forget, like Spiridion did, that as readers of a diary we, too, have been placed in the role of archival student not intimate friend. Indeed, Lee's story "works" because for all his dislikeablility, Spiridion's eventual death is affecting. Encouraged by the first-person voice and the immediacy of sequential entries, it is all too easy to forget that the diary is not the person. The note at the end of the story, "[h]ere ends the diary of Spiridion Trepka" (58), reminds us that what appeared to be the climactic moment of Spiridion's death was actually the climactic end of Spiridion's diary, an entirely different thing, but startlingly easy to confuse.
"[D]eadness is the first condition of art. A hippopotamus' armoured hide, a turtle's shell, feathers or machinery … No restless, quick flame-like ego is imagined for the inside of [a statue]. It has no inside … Instead, then, of being something impelled like an independent machine by a little egoistic fire inside, it lives soullessly and deadly by its frontal lines and masses" (Wyndham Lewis, *Tarr* 265).

VI. Accuracy

Bram Stoker's ghost story, "The Judge's House," published a year later than "Amore Dure" in 1891, similarly follows a scholar's unfortunate demise at the hands of a dead person's portrait, in this case a particularly malevolent judge. As in Lee's work, the painting does not have a semiotic function so much as a social one: the image does not reference the man so much as it performs his actions. The protagonist, Malcolmson, fool-hardily leases a house known by the locals to be haunted in which to study for an exam. Malcolmson is very much a man of the mind. When told about the "somethings" which inhabit this seemingly empty house, he retorts that "[a] man who is reading for the Mathematical Tripos has too much to think of to be disturbed by any of these mysterious 'somethings,' and his work is of too exact and prosaic a kind to allow of his having any corner in his mind for mysteries of any kind" (34). His comeuppance for this disbelief occurs when the abnormally large rat that has been appearing in his room at night is revealed to be a manifestation of the evil judge who once owned the house, and whose portrait
hangs on the wall. This long-dead judge doesn't only find physical embodiment in a monstrous rat, however: at the apex of the story he disappears from his portrait and materialises in the room, eventually cornering Malcolmson and hanging him.

What is interesting about this story is not just how neatly it expresses the violence of the metaleptic trope, but that Malcolmson's unfortunate end has, throughout the narrative, been unknowingly prophesied. Not only does the representation cede to the physical in the coming-to-life of the portrait, but language turns renegade throughout the tale: disconcertingly cool and clinical literalism replaces the flourishes and hypotheses of human voices. We can see how dangerous Malcolmson's claim about the "exact" nature of his studies is, when, throughout the narrative, he and his companions find their figurative phrases reverting back to a more "exact" interpretation. Accuracy, Stoker suggests, is not something to boast about, it is something to fear. It is not the arbitrary or slippery nature of the symbolic we should be worried about, but its efficacy.

Skeptical Mrs. Dempster, Malcolmson's charwoman, claims a "superior manner" when it comes to the supernatural:

"I'll tell you what it is, sir," she said; "bogies is all kinds and sorts of things—except bogies! Rats and mice, and beetles; and creaky doors, and loose slates, and broken panes, and stiff drawer handles, that stay out when you pull them and then fall down in the middle of the night. Look at the wainscot of the room! It is old—hundreds of years old! Do you think there's no rats and beetles in there! And do you imagine, sir, that you won't see none of them! Rats is bogies, I tell you, and don't you get to think of anything else!" (34)
The wisdom in Mrs. Dempster's words lies not in her skepticism (which turns out to be misplaced—there definitely are "bogies" in the house) but rather in the manner in which she takes an indirect, abstract, concept (the "somethings" that the locals are afraid of) and relocates it in the physical world. Unfortunately, it is not so much that the word "something" abstractly stands in for real-world mice and beetles (as she is claiming), but rather that the symbolic "something" is the painting that is in actuality a real-world monster: a murderous, long-dead, villain.

In Stoker's tale, ghosts seem to lurk in excess. Malcolmson may boast that there is "no room" for them in his mind, but bogies dwell in hidden spaces like the cracks between loose slates or the holes in the wainscot, as well, as Mrs. Dempster says, in the vermin of the house. Mrs. Dempster is certainly right that monsters are to be found in the unconsidered, secretive, lives of a household. The dead judge, we know, at first manifests as a rat after all. She doesn't realise, however, that the same is true of language. The exact, literal meaning, of her phrase "rats is bogies" is hidden under the intended figurative sense, which can be paraphrased as "there are no such things as bogies, only rats." It is in the obscured, insignificant layer of literal meaning that we find not only the exactitude upon which Malcolmson prided himself, but also the monsters which he (mistakenly) placed in opposition to such clear and precise meaning. The monsters live in literal meaning. Instead of being a comforting metaphor, "rats is bogies" turns out to be horrifically true. The large rat that has been watching Malcolmson is a rat and a bogie.

Malcolmson, too, makes an unwittingly accurate statement about the rat. He says, "There was one wicked looking old devil that sat up on my own chair by the fire, and wouldn't go till I took the poker to him" (37). The superstitious Mrs. Witham immediately interprets his words
literally: "an old devil, and sitting on a chair by the fireside! Take care, sir! Take care! There's many a true word spoken in jest" (37). It is Mrs. Witham, the woman who prioritises the literal over the symbolic, who turns out to be correct. The rat really is some kind of infernal being. This is perhaps why the villagers, who maintain their distance, will only say that there is something about or in this house. Used variously as an adjective or an indefinite pronoun, sometimes singular and sometimes plural, something is about as imprecise and multitasking a word as possible. It gestures at the monstrosity, without endangering itself with anything close to accuracy. It should alert us to the potential danger of specificity in this tale.

Whenever the narrator ventriloquises Malcolmson's train of thought, we can see that Malcolmson is constantly concerned with precision. But his searches for the correct word or category for the things he observes tend to escalate quickly from the pleasant to the unnerving. Describing the judge's house he wishes to rent, he notes that "in fact, quiet was not the proper word to apply to it—desolation was the only term conveying any suitable idea of its isolation" (32). A little later: "[i]Indeed, on examination, it looked more like a fortified house than an ordinary dwelling" (32). Malcolmson's search for exactitude leads him away from quiet houses to desolate fortifications. This testimony to his powers of observation and description is also a warning that precision may not be the means for banishing monsters, it may be exactly where they dwell. The "sense of security" (36) which Malcolmson's exacting intellectual work provides him appears to be misplaced.

In a similar vein, throughout the narration, the conditional or hypothetical transforms from imprecise possibility to precise reality. So, when Mrs. Witham, commenting on Malcolmson's choice to live in the haunted house, claims she "would die myself if I were to be so shut in with all kinds of—of 'things'" (34), she is stating a truth more than a fantasy.
Malcolmson, the one who is "shut in" the house with the demonic "things," does die. Likewise, when Malcolmson handles the bell-rope and hypothesizes that one "could hang a man with it" (39), it is as though he has prophesied rather than speculated—that very rope will, indeed, hang him in the end. We can understand these statements as a kind of anterior narration: that which is written in the present or past tense, but refers to future events. A vision or prophesy, for example, may seem to tell a narrative-within-a-narrative, in past or present tense, but its events are revealed over the course of time to belong to the same diegetic world as their speaker, just in his future. In "The Judge's House," the conditional mood makes statements about hanging a man or dying inside the house appear, at first, as fantasies, stories within the story—vignettes simply imagined by the characters. But the conditional mood turns out to be the future tense in disguise, and the death and hanging come to pass eventually.

Stoker hands to the characters the privileged position of omniscience, with access to both the contingent progression and the determined end of the narrative.72 Even if the characters' unintentional and unknowing fortune-telling were harmless—not constantly predicting death and demons—their transgressive possession of narrative powers would remain deadening. As Malcolmson and others truthfully pronounce futures and realities inaccessible to their knowledge, they demonstrate that as characters they are incapable of being willful subjects and are condemned instead to be objects of knowledge, confined to a predetermined fate. This platitude about fiction, albeit one we tend to ignore in our suspension of disbelief, is rather unsettlingly brought to our attention because it emerges as the characters exercise that power which seems so central to subject-hood: speech. It is their speech that not only reveals, but

72 In his *A Genealogy of Modernism*, Michael Levenson identifies a modern rejection of the Victorian convention of narrative omniscience, which resulted in "the creation of characters who can assume the traditional functions of the omniscient narrator (though, of course, on a more modest scale): to direct attention, to interpret incidents, to evaluate behaviour" (9).
constitutes, their lack of autonomy. Characters, through the act of narration, lose rather than exercise their agency, and voice suddenly seems a dangerous, even dehumanising, thing.

Throughout the story, we see that Malcolmson's original claim that his fidelity to the precise nature of the abstract symbol of mathematics renders him immune to any haunting was deeply mistaken. It seems to be the precision, the exactitude, of symbols, whether speech, gesture, or image, that present the danger. The rat's eyes are exactly the same eyes as those in the judge's portrait, for example. It is telling that this monstrous rat that haunts Malcolmson's room is undeterred by feints and pretenses, "steadily glaring at him" despite Malcolmson making "a motion as though to hunt it away" or a "motion of throwing something" (36). The spectral is unfazed by the illusory or the vague, it lives in precision.

But this remains a strange kind of accuracy. Mrs. Dempster's statement "rats is bogies" is, after all, misinterpreted by the rest of the text. If it is accuracy, it is also error. Haunted scholar stories always present some fear about finding and transmitting knowledge. In Stoker's tale, it is a fear of lack of control. Mrs. Dempster and company appear to have an unprecedented amount of control, pronouncing future-events as though they were actually narrators and not mere characters. Yet the efficacy of their language is predicated upon misinterpretation: it is what they say or imagine but do not actually mean which comes to pass. They lack of control over the meaning of their words. The vulnerability this entails is made clear by the fatal consequences to Malcolmson. His fate at the hands of the painted judge consolidates his inability to exert power over the symbolic. Indeed, it is significant that Malcolmson is killed by a judge, a figure whose very role it is to distinguish between fact and fiction. Malcolmson is, in effect, murdered by what could convincingly be called either misinterpretation or exactitude: this relentless literalness.

Perhaps it is the repetitive exactitude of his full name—Malcolm Malcolmson—that makes our protagonist such a target.
VII. Hell

In May Sinclair's "Where Their Fire is Not Quenched" this identity between reality and fiction turns out to be what constitutes the afterlife. Particularly, the inhuman temporality of the novel form provides the framework for an infernal damnation. Sinclair's story begins thus:

There was nobody in the orchard. Harriott Leigh went out, carefully, through the iron gate into the field. She had made the latch slip into its notch without a sound. (3)

In only the third sentence we come across a strange anomaly in the prose's temporality. In the phrase "had made" the tense shifts suddenly to past perfect. It appears that almost immediately we have been abandoned by our narrator and are now focalised through someone reminiscing. This suspicion is confirmed two sentences later, when a much older Harriott thinks back to her youth: "Years afterwards, when she thought of George Waring she smelt the sweet, hot, wine-scent of the elder flowers" (3). But this strange shift of tense is doing more work than simply indicating memory: by its abrupt appearance in the third sentence of the story (which moves us into memory before we have even been introduced to the reminiscer) it foreshadows that Harriott's memories are going to be something she loses control over. As the story continues, it becomes clear that the conventions of realist narrative, and their reliance upon inhuman temporal experience, are the source of the horror.

The tale follows Harriott's life: her interactions with the men she loved, but for various reasons, never married; her relationship with another, Oscar, with whom she had an affair but

74 Indeed, the title refers to Isaiah 66:24.
never particularly liked; and her descent into old age and death. The story also continues after
Harriott's death, and follows her into the afterlife. Hell, she discovers, consists of her inability to
escape Oscar. Harriott's damnation sees her travelling backwards through her own life, and
meeting Oscar everywhere. Even when she arrives at places and times in her early youth, before
her affair with Oscar had taken place, she nevertheless finds him there waiting for her. There are
many explanations for why this happens to Harriott. Perhaps this endless repetition of her affair
is punishment for her constant reminiscing. Perhaps, contrarily, it is a punishment for the fact
that she tries, in old age, to pretend to other people that the affair with Oscar never happened.
(Both of these explanations cast Harriott as usurping the narrator's position, trying to rewrite or
erase events of her life. This is a hell reserved for a character attempting to author.) Perhaps, as
the Reverend tells her, the afterlife "will depend very much on what we are thinking of at our last
hour." And of course, as she is dying, Harriott's "mind went back over her past and found Oscar
Wade there" (22). In addition to these explanations of Harriott's personal hell, her afterlife is also
a literalisation of narratorial conventions. In particular, it is formed from two major conventions
of realist narration: firstly, the use of the simple past tense and secondly, repeated imagery or
recurring events. These conventions, so common in what we consider nineteenth century
"realist" novels as to have become virtually invisible, are nevertheless scrutinized by Sinclair.
Harriott's stifling afterlife draws a comparison between the lack of freedoms or opportunities
afforded to the ordinary women of her time, and the depersonalisation central to realist narrative.75

Third person past tense narration renders all events simulacra: copies of things without
originals. Unlike the perfect past, which makes clear that the speaker is positioned at some time

75 Claire Drewery suggests that, "[i]n a psychological reading, the 'death' of Harriott may be
interpreted as a metaphorical event, the result of the potentially stultifying effects of socially
constructed roles and conventions on an ordinary female subject who is tormented by guilt over
her one act of rebellion" (Modernist 79).
in the future of the events described, the simple past gives the impression of being akin to the present tense. For example, in the sentence, "Harriott Leigh went out, carefully, through the iron gate into the field," the speaker and listener follow events as though in "real time" with no particular emphasis placed on the fact that this is a historical occurrence. Harriott's hell is a reification of this: she relives her own personal history both with an understanding that it is her past and, simultaneously, that she is experiencing it in the present moment. The scenes from her earlier life that she is forced to relive after death are both copies and originals, both lived and living—a horrifying embodiment of the paradoxical temporality and ontology of traditional realist narrative. Alison Byerly writes that "Victorian novelists [...] position the reader or viewer as a kind of traveller" (2). Indeed, the transformation of time into space which Harriott experiences after death also references the very form of the physical book: when Harriott navigates events from her past not in time but "by the place they occupied, and measured their duration by the space she went through" (32), she may as well be describing the act of reading a novel.

Sinclair's depiction of Harriott's life before her death uses another familiar novelistic device: that of repeating imagery. For example, there is the repetitious elderflower, which is present in the scene with her first lover, George, before his death, and her second hope, Stephen, as he tells her he intends to marry someone else. The recurring tree is symbolic, during her lived-life, of doomed love. However in Harriott's afterlife repetition, far from being symbolic and peripheral, becomes embodied and central. No longer the rather superfluous presence of poignant elderflowers, Harriott is now eternally presented with repeated, intimate, bodily encounters with the repulsive Oscar Wade: "We shall lie here together, for ever and ever, joined so fast that even God can't put us asunder. We shall be one flesh and spirit, one sin repeated for ever, and ever;
spirit loathing flesh, flesh loathing spirit; you and I loathing each other” (46). Sinclair has crafted for Harriott a hellscape in which the seemingly innocuous formal perimeters of her fiction-lived life have become the tortuous cages of her afterlife. Unlike typical haunted scholar tales, Harriott has no perilous encounters with dusty documents. But the wider document—the storytelling—that gives her life and world as a character will not let her die, pursuing her into an afterlife and forcing the infinite continuation of its inhumane structures.

Conclusion

Haunted scholar stories show how epistemological and aesthetic artifacts endanger as much as define the notion of the autonomous, rational, human subject. They remain deeply suspicious of the act of copying and documenting, suggesting that for all that it appears to be a definitional act of personhood, that there is also something antithetical to the human about it. Ghost stories are usually wrapped in several layers of telling: a story heard from a distant cousin or old friend is re-told, or various kinds of "found" documentation such as diaries or manuscripts are transcribed, or the narrative proceeds via an epistolary sequence. Yet the more securely the story is held within these frames of "telling" the less "told" it appears to be. These nested frames of diegesis suggest, actually, that there is some untold kernel of truth at the heart. Telling, rather than affirming the individual teller, seems to affirm the objective world. Representation is often shown to be a deeply alienating practice for both its consumer and creator.

For example, narrators of ghost stories often address their readers directly. Yet this speech becomes a danger to them and to others around them. We may think of the final paragraph of E. Nesbit's "In the Dark" (1910), in which a man, after having murdered his friend
and disposed of the body, discovers that corpses, as cold and as heavy as statues dressed in suits, appear in his room when he makes the mistake of sleeping or even turning his back. The narrator concludes by speaking to the reader: "[e]xplain it as you like. I offered you, if you remember, a choice of explanations before I began the story" (Oxford 11). Or, similarly, we recall the final line of Oliver Onions's "Rooum" (1910), in which a man, as he goes about his daily life, often hears ghostly steps running up behind him. These footsteps, as they catch up with him, are followed by a ghostly figure passing right through his body. Each time the figure passes through him it feels thicker, more tangible, and the experience becomes more grinding and painful—as though atoms are being forced through his atoms. "What do you make of it?" the narrator demands of us, at the end (Oxford 24). In both stories, deeply concerned with the fleshy presence of bodies, the homodiegetic narrators address the reader for the first and only time at their very conclusion, and the final shock of the tale is our interpellation into the world of the story. In such moments silence is woven inextricably into the prose, unable as we are to answer our interrogators. The horror of physical presence in these tales about bodies is accompanied by loss of voice.

Haunted scholar tales exceed "possible worlds theory" which claims that a world referred to by a narrative is created by being referred to (Cohn 13). There is a closer than referential relationship between words and worlds described here. Earlier I proposed that much ghost fiction is in agreement with the recent critical claims that words are not only mimetic of other words. Events, too, can be "quoted." One characteristic of quotation, according to Laura Karttunen, is its facilitation of "the impression of contemporaneous happening as opposed to retrospective reporting" (59). We have seen how in metaleptic ghost stories, documents "reproduce"—frighteningly "contemporaneously"—their referents, and in so doing imagine the kind of radical
mimesis between words and events (a mimesis founded upon difference) implied above. This mimesis of dissimilarity disrupts notions of "before" and "after." It is interruptive to linear temporality. No wonder it is a feature of the ghost story. The ghost, after all, is that which both brings the emergence of the past into the present (someone long dead reappears) and the future into the present (someone from the hereafter, the future that awaits us all, returns).

What is so fascinating about these tales is that the temporality of this dissimilar mimeticism is deeply alienating, and even endangering, to the self. Frequently, this is expressed in the manner in which the act of telling a story threatens the autonomy of the teller. In Mary Cholmondeley's "Let Loose" (1890), the character who tells the ghostly tale to our narrator at first seems to find existential validation in the act of storytelling (indeed, he is nameless until he introduces himself to another character within his own story). Yet, when he finds himself alone in a silent crypt, narration turns against him. He thinks that,

All was silent as the grave. This was the grave. Those who had come here had indeed gone down into silence. I repeated the words to myself, or rather they repeated themselves to me.

Gone down into silence. (Meddling 60)

Mr. Blake's own words are spoken to him not by him. This happens just as he realizes that he is copying the fate of the (now dead) men that had gone before him. Mr. Blake seems to exist in all roles in relation to his narrative speech: he is the teller, he is the audience, and he is the described men who had "come here" before and died. But this mirroring of himself across all layers of the diegesis, and all their various temporal locations, is actually what sends him into oblivion. The
fact that what his disassociated voice speaks is the ominous phrase, "gone down into silence," only exacerbates this worrying loss of self in encounters with stories.

A similar example is found in E. Nesbit's "The Ebony Frame" (1893), yet another version of the portrait-coming-to-life trope. Half-way through the narration, the protagonist curiously states, "[a]nd there, one might suppose, the matter of the portraits ended. One might suppose it, that is, if there were not evidently a good deal more written here about it" (par. 21). The narrator sees the remainder of his own story stretching out before him on the page as an indication of what his past self has yet to live through. But his prose appears unfamiliar to him. The narrator, who must exist beyond the end of the text (given that he is the one that wrote it) nevertheless speaks to the reader here as though he, like us, is still in the midst of it, looking ahead over the upcoming sentences and paragraphs as though they were an alien and threatening landscape. This odd narrative viewpoint refuses the "retrospect reporting" fundamental to narration, insisting impossibly that, even to the narrator, it is "contemporaneous happening." Yet this is also what renders it deeply dangerous.

Ann Banfield notably claimed that free indirect discourse is an "unspeakable" kind of narration, because it can never be voiced.\textsuperscript{76} It is a discourse which appears to be both entirely literary (it cannot exist in the "real world") and entirely objective (it cannot come from a subject). Free indirect discourse is a central stylistic feature of literary modernism, which allows for the eavesdropping on the peregrinations of consciousness. Looking to contemporary ghost stories from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there is evidently a similar interest in unspeakable language or unwriteable prose.\textsuperscript{77} But what the ghost stories foreground is that it is

\textsuperscript{76} See \textit{Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and Representation in the Language of Fiction.}

\textsuperscript{77} Brooke-Rose identifies in the twentieth century author a tendency towards mimeticism of speech, both though the directly reported discourse of the internal monologue, or through free indirect discourse. This turn towards the discourse of the subject is simultaneously an erasure of
detrimental to teller and character. Christine Brooke-Rose may define free indirect discourse as the act in which "the narrator takes over the character's speech or thought and assimilates it into his own" (322), but I argue that it is at least as much the act of the character usurping the narrator's position. The violation runs in two directions.

The terrors of unspeakable discourse are the heart of the turn of the century ghost story. In F. Marion Crawford's tale "The Upper Berth" (1886), a man, Brisbane, tells a story to his companions. At first, during the group's normal conversation, Brisbane's speech is indicated by speech marks. But as soon as he begins his tale properly those speech marks disappear. So completely has he usurped the narrator's position, in fact, that we never return to the original frame, but end within his story-within-a-story. He has become the sole narrator. His query at the end of his narrative, "Well, do you want to hear any more?" (Meddling 54) is therefore directed towards the reader rather than his fellow characters, who appear to have utterly disappeared. Brisbane has been promoted up a narrative level, and consequently moved from the past of the storyworld to the present of the narrator. Yet this is at the expense of his world, his community, his body, and his voice—it was in the small, typographical notations of the speech marks that all of those things could have been preserved, but were not. Brisbane's is a violent story, featuring a corpse-like figure that drives people to their suicides. But on a formal level the organisation of the prose also erases (effectively kills off) characters, and does violence to Brisbane himself by turning his speech wholly into narration. In such tales, "[w]hat is being interrogated […] is precisely the broad and facile, if well-intentioned, notion of narrative as a way of triumphing over the discontinuity and indeterminacy of life through the simple feat of constructing linear, causally coherent sequences—narrative as therapy or cure, or narrative as a moral lesson" (Tammi 28-9). As their narrators find their storytelling fatal, these tales suggest that what the discourse of the narrator: a move from diegeticism to mimeticism.
narrative "triumphs" over is ourselves. It is difficult to tell to what extent the story imitates the human experience, and to what extent it distorts it. Are stories like us, or have stories re-made us like them?

Haunted scholar narratives are essentially concerned with alienation. The scholars and researchers of these stories, cloistered in libraries and dusty old buildings, seem to epitomise and parody the figure of the elite, aloof, endangered modern individual unable to secure selfhood through informational structures. These academics are forced into confrontations with bodies instead of symbols, and violences instead of formal structures. The artifacts within these stories engage in a mimesis of dissimilarity (documents are identical with bodies) which, by chopping up time and erasing distance in their disruption of copy and original, produces a variety of modern "shock." Walter Benjamin understands shock as over-stimulation (in psychoanalytical terms), and claims that the modern individual, in contact with urbanization and increased technological advances, is repeatedly shielding himself from these incursions (like the factory worker of Marxism who must adapt his bodily movements to the repetitious machinery). The haunted scholar likewise parries attacks, although he is hardly ever a city walker, or a character of psychological depth, and never a labourer.78 His particular incursions, unlike the ones Benjamin identifies, are to do with knowledge (and the failure thereof). Descriptive artifacts mount an attack. Language, and culture, and symbols of all kinds, far from providing access to some outside world must be fended off as they try to invade the individual. The shock caused by this dissimilar menticism suggests that the modern subject is alienated, not from being removed from a knowable world, but by being forced into intimacy with an animated, unknowable one. These ghost stories propose a way of reading the besieged individuals of their more canonical modernist counterparts: not with a rhetoric of distance and displacement but with an

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78 See "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" in *Illuminations*. 
understanding that modern alienation is produced by the inescapable closeness of the nonhuman world.
"Freakish and Fantastic": The Monstrosity of the Nonhuman in Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* and "Solid Objects"

"On top there was a woman's head like Queen Alexandra, with a fuzz of little curls; then a bird's neck; the body of a tiger; and stout elephant's legs dressed in child's drawers completed the picture" (*The Years* 274).

"[B]ut if you looked at him closely you noticed that one of his ears was pointed; and the other round; you also noticed that though he had the curls of a God and the ears of a faun he had unmistakably the eyes of a pig. So strange a compound can seldom have existed […] God, faun and pig were all in all alive, all in opposition" (*Moments of Being* 166).

Introduction: Monsters

The prose of Virginia Woolf is bristling with a menagerie of unusual creatures. It is not surprising to read a Woolfian sentence and find yourself face to face with "a tawny monster
roaring with hot breath" (A Room 39), or some "sea pieces with little faces laughing out of what might perhaps be waves" (Mrs. Dalloway 125), or a child who claims "my hair is made of leaves" (The Waves 9). These fantastic figures appear in Woolf's fiction and non-fiction alike. Although they can be found living on the literal surface of her prose, they also dwell in her writing's dim interiors: weird bodies are covertly implied by an unusual sequence of words or the shadowy connotation of a phrase. A reader might be prompted to attend to the usually-ignored chimerical fusion of tenor and vehicle that underlies a metaphor. Or ambiguous and ambivalent sentence structures may manufacture strange, uneasy bedfellows. Woolf understands that significance and meaning are wrought from uncanny physicalities. Fictional prose is an arrangement of bodies to create ideas and affects. Woolf asks her readers to notice the wild, confounding corners of the novel—those beings and objects that are not fully sublimated into coherence, and the strange communities that are formed by stylistic choices. The hybrid creatures and objects that populate her prose, far from being simply fantastical or decorative, instead are the foundations of Woolf's realism, which insists upon a rejection of hierarchies of being. Her monsters are our decentralization reified; our structures of signification failing us and fleeing us.

A survey of the word "monster" through Woolf's writings shows that, excluding when characters sling it at each other as an insult, Woolf uses it with two primary meanings. The first is to illustrate something huge and undifferentiated, such as when she describes the public as "one monster, gross in body, feeble in mind" in Three Guineas (113) or the ocean in The Years.

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79 Here I am referring to Ernst Jentsch's 1906 definition of "uncanny": "Without a doubt, this word appears to express that someone to whom something 'uncanny' happens is not quite 'at home' or 'at ease' in the situation concerned, that the thing is or at least seems to be foreign to him. In brief, the word suggests that a lack of orientation is bound up with the impression of the uncanniness of a thing or incident" (217). Woolf asks us to notice that the physical bodies and literal meanings of literary form are not "at home" in the situation of signification.
as a "blue monster" (34). The Oxford English Dictionary notes that "monster," meaning a creature of unusual large size, was in use from 1450, with a figurative usage applied to anything out-sized occurring a couple of centuries later. However, the original meaning of "monster," illustrated by a first example from Chaucer in 1375, is "a mythical creature which is part animal and part human, or combines elements of two or more animal forms." Most frequently, Woolf uses "monster" in this original sense. We might think, for example, of the monster created in *The Years* when each character draws a different body part on a folded piece of paper. When opened up the creature created has a woman's head, a tiger's body and an elephant's legs (274). Or, we might remember the "worm winged like an eagle" that illustrates the contrast between women in history and women in literature in *A Room of One's Own* (44).

Woolf's monstrous splices are often to be found trespassing from place to place or from meaning to meaning. They act to thread together seemingly unconnected planes in both the storyworld and the formal structure, caring little for divisions of personal versus public. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, for instance, Septimus hallucinates a Skye terrier turning into a man: "He could not watch it happen! It was horrible, terrible to see a dog become a man!" (58). This canine-human mutation, far from staying put in Septimus's troubled mind, proceeds to resurface throughout the novel—often in connection to Richard Dalloway. The narrator repeatedly describes Richard as "dogged" and Peter Walsh pictures him standing "on his hind legs" to talk about Shakespeare (64). Richard even creates dog-men himself, at one point "talking to the dog as if it were a human being" (64). This continuum of canine personifications illustrates the typical manner in

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80 The mythological roots of this monster are vast. There is a chimera in Chinese folklore called "penghou" which has the face of a man but the body of a dog. Cynocephaly, conversely, is the condition of having the head of a dog (an example would be the ancient Egyptian god Anubis, a man with the head of a jackal) and reports of cynocephalic humans can be found in ancient Greek and early Christian writings. (See Bruce R. Burningham's "Bad Moon Rising"). On the theme of dogs as people, we cannot forget Woolf's own attempt to write a dog as subject in
which Woolf's chimeras not only draw threads between divergent characters but also bring into contact different semantic levels (literal, figurative), and even different narrative levels (characters, narrator). The monster, with its boundary-crossing abilities, enacts a kind of formal sympathy within (and thereby a meta-commentary upon) stratified fictional form. The novelistic convention of diegetic universalism, which inscribes the impossible fantasy of the omniscient point of view, is held up for examination.\textsuperscript{81} An all-knowing perspective—the position from which one can translate between these ontological and narratological planes in order to track these monsters—simultaneously asserts the sovereignty of the knowing subject and its irrelevance, necessarily placing the omniscient observer in an abstracted, impossible position both central yet tangential to the storyworld. Given this untenable, unplaced location, it is not surprising that the images whose movements we trace, themselves mimic an ontological instability: half-men half-beasts.

Far from understanding monstrosity as that which "we cannot describe […] without violating its essentially apophatic nature" (Williams 122), for Woolf the monstrous lurks in the workings of literature.\textsuperscript{82} Specifically, these creatures emerge through the generativeness of words that call to each other effortlessly across diegetic boundaries, or connote hordes of unnecessary meanings. Take for example, Mrs. Swithin in \textit{Between The Acts}, who is so engrossed in her history book that when her maid enters the room she is momentarily unable to distinguish her \textit{Flush}.

\textit{Flush}.
\textsuperscript{81} Universalism is what Eric Hayot calls "connectedness," which "indicates a general field of transcribability or exchange, the possibility of conversion or conversation across different 'levels' of the diegesis—whether these be spatial, social, or epistemological" (75).
\textsuperscript{82} Maria Beville writes that "there remains a difficult category of monster that defies all attempts to constrain it in naming and, as such, our utilitarian attempts to reduce it to some sense of functionality" (1). Woolf's monsters, although they are named, tend to disrupt the "functionality" of their prose. Beville avoids "the binary driven ideology" that tends to inform studies of monstrosity by attending to its unnameability. Woolf approaches that same goal from the opposite direction, by leaning-in to words.
from a prehistoric beast. "It took her five seconds in actual time, in mind time ever so much longer, to separate Grace herself, with blue china on a tray, from the leather-covered grunting monster who was about, as the door opened, to demolish a whole tree" (7). There is no clear division for Mrs. Swithin between the real world and a written world. The portal connecting the two is the sentence's central pivot: the phrase "leather-covered." This descriptor has connotations of furniture, books, and clothing, and it thereby pulls the momentum of the sentence backwards towards the domestic realm of tea-trays even as it simultaneously refers forward to the thick hide of the dinosaur. Its true object, the "grunting monster," is preceded, not succeeded, by this ambivalent phrase and so "leather-covered" clings, illicitly and tenuously, to Grace's homely world before the beast comes into view. Woolf thereby teases the forward drive of the prose and, in forcing it to hesitate, she creates a bodily ambiguity between Grace and the dinosaur within the sentence's construction as much as within Mrs. Swithin's imagination. The monstrous conflation of human and beast is lurking in the word order.

The same sense that monstrosity is always waiting in the inadequate patchworks of prose structures can be felt when Orlando doodles a strange chimera from an ink-blot during an attack of writer's block: "[s]he tried to go on with what she was saying; no words came. Next she began to decorate the blot with wings and whiskers, till it became a round-headed monster, something between a bat and a wombat" (Orlando 238). Orlando quickly transforms her word-defying ink-blot into a signifier in its own right: a little image of a monster. The creature she invents is an absurd illustration of the near identity between the nouns "bat" and "wombat." The shared

83 "Leather-covered" is a point of, to use Thomas Pavel's term, "ontological fusion" because it makes contact between two worlds. It is an entity "at the profane level [that] play[s] a role at the sacred level" (140).
84 There is no etymological overlap between the two words, the word wombat coming from Dharuk, a language used by the aboriginal people of Australia. The two earliest instances of "wombat" given by the OED in 1798 and 1827 respectively, use the forms "womat" and
sylable of these two words is re-imagined as a shared body with both wings and whiskers. The doodle takes advantage of the inadequacy and arbitrary nature of language—too few sounds and syllables stretched thin over too many diverse bodies. Woolf’s sentence, writing about Orlando's inability to write, nevertheless joins Orlando in her silence when it stutters to a halt in these repetitive syllables: "bat [...] bat." The inkblot animal vacillates between sign and silence, both preventing and overproducing representation.

In this murky mid-ground between meaning and meaninglessness live Woolf’s strange bodies. But Woolf’s monsters, for all that they manifest in the tension of her sentences, are not creatures of silence. They are figures given existence when language overworks not when it fails, when more meanings and images are generated than can be resolved or held separate, and when prose seems as if it is about to shrug off its denotative function for something more corporeal. Abundant bodies win out against categorical meaning.

*To The Lighthouse* is a novel particularly preoccupied by bodies. A typical scene finds Lily considering the Ramsays' position in the garden: "[d]irectly one looked up and saw them, what she called 'being in love' flooded them. They became part of that unreal but penetrating and exciting universe which is the world seen through the eyes of love. The sky stuck to them; the birds sang through them" (50). Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay's physical existence extends to intimacy with even intangible parts of the environment (the sounds, the sky) through a cosmic sympathy that Lily calls "being in love." But the novel, despite being solely constructed from a mosaic of subjective viewpoints like this one, is nevertheless dominated by Mr. Ramsay's pursuit of philosophical certainty about "the nature of reality" which he assumes—engaging in a tradition of dualism that runs from Plato, to Descartes, and through British empiricism—is bifurcated into "woomback."

Indeed, this tension continues as Orlando writes poetry seemingly against her will: "No sooner had she said 'Impossible' than, to her astonishment and alarm, the pen began to curve and caracole with the smoothest possible fluency. Her page was written in the neatest sloping Italian hand with the most insipid verse she had ever read in her life" (238).
"subject and object" (26). The "Time Passes" chapter, which forms the centre of the novel's triptych structure, responds to his philosophical work by staging an answer to the thought experiment Andrew proposes to Lily: "'Think of a kitchen table then,' he told her, 'when you're not there'" (26).

Rather than a single unseen table, Woolf writes a whole unseen house as the Ramsays' holiday home falls into gradual decay during its ten-year abandonment. But not only is the so-called empty house inhabited by a distinct narrating presence not found in the rest of the novel, it is also populated by many of Woolf's hybrid creatures. A large proportion of the house's illicit inhabitants are personifications: everything from breezes, to pools of light, to abstract qualities like "stillness" become humanoid. The narrator's claim that "[w]hat people had shed and left—a pair of shoes, a shooting cap, some faded skirts and coats in wardrobes—these alone kept the human shape" (133), becomes absurd amidst the rampant anthropomorphism of "Time Passes." The narrative categorically fails to imagine a lonely table or a lonely house. Indeed, it evokes an abundance and a particular physicality very much at odds with the Platonic form of "table" referenced by Andrew's thought experiment.86

In this chapter, I will explore how Woolf writes about a more-than-human world. In particular, I am interested in how "Time Passes" appears at first to acquiesce to Andrew's definition of reality as the "object" side of the subject/object binary by bestowing extended attention on an unpopulated domestic scene. Yet "Time Passes" also disregards that definition by filling the empty house with subjects and pseudo-subjects. Through its simultaneously seen and

86 In Plato's Republic, Socrates reduces all the world's furniture to singular ideas:
"[…] let's do it now, with any plurality you want. Take couches, if you like, or tables—I imagine there are many of both of these."
"Obviously."
"But as for forms, in relation to these products, I take it there are just two, one of couch and one of table" (340).
unseen house, *To The Lighthouse* refuses to consider human access to the world (either its failure or its success) relevant to the writing of the nonhuman. Formal and stylistic literary devices, which simultaneously reveal and obscure the world of the novel, are the tools with which Woolf inscribes this refusal.

Woolf writes in her diary entry of Sept. 3rd 1926 about her attempt to infuse simultaneity into *To The Lighthouse*. Considering the final section that juggles both Mr. Ramsay and Lily's scenes, Woolf ponders: "[…] if this intervenes between R. and the lighthouse, there's too much chop and change, I think. Could I do it in parenthesis? So that one had the sense of reading the two things at the same time?" (*Writer's* 98-9). That sense of "reading two things at the same time" is not confined to the ending, however. It actually saturates the novel, producing what I will call the "abstraction" of the prose. Woolf herself labeled "Time Passes" a "most difficult, abstract piece of writing" (88). When we call art or writing "abstract" we usually mean that it is in some way distanced from, or removed from, its referent. Yet if the prose of "Time Passes" is "abstract" it is not because it is severely non-representational. Indeed, its abstraction isn’t formed through estrangement, but through the proximity of sign and referent. Simultaneity takes the place of semiotics, and a pluralism is written that disrupts the binary structures of signification. Woolf’s abstraction therefore performs the important work of disavowing Mr. Ramsay's dichotomous division between "subject and object." Her style, precariously balancing between enacting violence and enacting intimacy, is a tool for empathy.
The liminality that defines Woolf's prose style, as well as facilitating bodily hybridity, also renders it reluctant to be divided up into conceptually useful categories. As a reader, it is difficult to point to either the narrator's presence, or its absence, for example. Sentences that appear to have come to a conclusion have also returned to their beginnings. Objects that seem to be active are also passive and vice versa. My approach to the over-working of Woolf's prose is to organise this chapter into a series of short sections which each consider the writing from a different angle. This vignette-methodology is both a response to, and itself expressive of, the problem Woolf was tackling. Namely, how prose might resist the ontological consequences of its linear and stratified form. (It is, to borrow Gertrude Stein's phrase, "Composition as Explanation.")

This mirroring and mimicking between the novel and my writing about it, illustrates the implication made in To The Lighthouse that there can be no criticism that is not entangled with its object, and that the symbolic and its referent are engaged not in a binary relationship but are thoroughly and messily co-extensive.

The first four sections of this chapter address Woolf's various disruptions of before and after. I begin with a consideration of what I describe as her belated metaphors, and the way in which they challenge our assumptions about what is significant and what is real in the fictional world. The tarrying temporality of Woolf's analogies appears to be one effect of the off-screen World War. The war's violences to human bodies (children killed and families broken) is disconcertingly explored as a kind of stasis that is fruitful for the nonhuman. In this non-linear, hesitating, temporality things can hold multiple values at once. They are re-used, re-cycled, over-productive. These over-working objects refuse discreteness, instead forming a kind of "scene" or "landscape" of activity by imitating each other and taking on each other's roles. In the context of

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87 Stein's essay was published by the Hogarth Press in 1926. In it Stein discusses beginning again and again (and indeed, composes her essay so that it, too, begins again and again) as a way of writing a continuous present tense.
the wider novel, this manipulation of momentum, which frequently assigns priority to bodies rather than meanings, complicates the dominant intellectualizing of Mr. Ramsay that was established at the opening.

In sections V and VI, I suggest that "Time Passes" grows out of the mistakes, fantasies, and intellectual failures of earlier characters. It is an environment that reifies misconceptions. The hypothetical, speculative tone and ambivalent pronouncements of the narrator, likewise, work to make strange bodies manifest. Counter-intuitively, the more overt the narrator's voice, the more independent the world it describes appears to be. Extrapolating from this reading of voice, in section VII, I identify how through Woolf's use of personification, the narrator and its world create and re-create each other; they interpolate each other simultaneously. By stripping away any possibility of an omniscient perspective on the world, Woolf proposes that perspective is the means by which we are intimately entangled in idiosyncratic, personal relationships with the things around us. Broadly speaking, sections V-VII explore how mistakes, speculations, and imaginings neither obscure the world nor endanger objectivity because the cosmos of To The Lighthouse appears radically disinterested in, or unaffected by, divisions of real and unreal.

In Section VIII, I look closely at Woolf's use of the lyric trope of apostrophe as a locus where these issues of community, work, voice, and non-linear temporality come together. I am interested in how Woolf distorts traditional apostrophe in order to highlight how its community of animals, plants, objects, forces, and humans nevertheless has alienation and isolation at its heart. Finally in section IX, I propose that the wider prose of "Time Passes," just like the questions strangely asked by voiceless objects in Woolf's apostrophe, indicate that there might be such a thing as a more-than-human language. I conclude this chapter by proposing that the abundance of the prose, although in various ways providing many images, bodies, and meanings
all jostling together, is in fact elegiac and funereal. It is a way in which to express, through style, the world's simultaneous intimacy with, yet alienation from, the human. This is exemplified by Lily's painting of Mrs. Ramsay (who stands in for something real or authentic that seems forever lost). Lily abstracts Mrs. Ramsay into a purple triangle on her canvas. Yet this geometric shape, more than anything else, achieves the intimacy with Mrs. Ramsay's private interiority that Lily has longed for. Woolf's prose suggests it is in the failures of signification—when signs abandon verisimilitude or accuracy, and when we flounder in illegibility—in which, like Lily's painting, we find a relationship with that which is not ourselves.

No sooner is a candidate for the real proffered, than it is transformed into something strange, unreal, and yet so insistently present one wonders whether its strangeness is its reality (Ann Banfield, *The Phantom Table* 60).

I. The Conspiracy of the Literal

A companion piece for *To The Lighthouse* in the Woolfian project to write the nonhuman is her short story "Solid Objects" written seven years earlier in 1920. The protagonist, John, finds a piece of weathered glass on a beach, and, enamored of this object, gradually becomes more and more consumed by the act of finding and collecting other strange, wasted things. He has not, however, discovered the "absolute good […] single, hard, bright, like a diamond in the sand, which would render the possessor secure" (*Lighthouse* 136). His glass, despite being discovered
in the sand like that diamond from *To The Lighthouse*, is not allegorical. In fact, it does not easily concede to being symbolized in any way, even described. John first finds it just after his fingers have burrowed deep enough into the sand on the beach that they reach pooling water. "He remembered that, after digging for a little, the water oozes round your finger-tips; the hole then becomes a moat; a well; a spring; a secret channel to the sea" (*Haunted* 80). His fingers then curl around something unidentified in the wet sand: "a full drop of solid matter" (80). The position of the word "drop" in this sentence (before, not after, the glass has been introduced to us) is important. It is, of course, indicative of the object's shape and size—a small, roundish, "full," shape, like a droplet. Yet so much narrative attention has been given to the watery environment up until this point that "drop" reads as a continuation of that preceding narrative concern about water. The glass, in its moment of discovery, is rendered an impossible substance: liquid and solid at once.

Woolf's writing characteristically bestows attention on the overlooked or insignificant, like a piece of weathered glass on a beach. In solidarity with this project, Woolf's sentence structures often engage in what I will call a conspiracy of the literal. Images seem to plot against the linear form of their sentences when, like the "full drop" above, Woolf permits semantic meanings of figurative phrases to overstay their welcome.\(^{88}\) This has ontological consequences. As Bill Brown writes: "things inevitably seem too late—belated, in fact, because we want things to come before ideas, before theory, before the word, whereas they seem to persist in coming after: as the alternative to ideas, the limit to theory, the victims of the word" (*Things* 16). As Brown characterizes it, things, when we divide them from language and ideas, can only ever be propelled into some inaccessible past or future space. But in Woolf's prose, the literal (which is

\(^{88}\) This is a kindred technique to what Bill Brown calls "the unconsummated metonym," the fragment that is not part of anything ("Secret" 22).
the "thing" that precedes the figurative "idea") is allowed to occupy the present, forcing the metaphorical meaning to be "belated" instead.

Take for another example a sentence from the opening paragraph of "Solid Objects."
There is a "black spot" moving across the semicircle of the beach in the distance, and we are told that as it "came nearer to the ribs and spine of the stranded pilchard boat, it became apparent from a certain tenuity in its blackness that this spot possessed four legs; and moment by moment it became more unmistakable that it was composed of the persons of two young men" (*Haunted* 79). The bones on the beach turn out to be merely the skeleton of a disintegrating boat. But the "ribs and spine" come early in the sentence before the "stranded pilchard boat" makes an appearance and, like the "full drop" above, are therefore given free reign to be literal for a beat before entering into the falsity of metaphor. Even then, the image of bones is not wholly transformed into the metaphor. The broken body lingers through the following sentences; it even becomes paradigmatic. It is present in the "tenuity" of the black spot, which appears to have a rather fragile relationship (described as "possession") towards its own legs. The fact of it "possessing" legs, as though it owns them but is not necessarily unified with them, seems to dismember, rather than affirm, its bodily coherence. Disintegration persists as this spot then actually splits like a multiplying cell, revealing two young men. And thus, although we finish with simply a human pair walking the beach, these now whole men have emerged, Frankenstein's monster-like, out of parts of bodies.89

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89 "We must recognize this seemingly paradoxical combination of universalism and multiplicity as central to the entire modern world-view. Its amalgamation of parts into a universal whole is in almost every case guaranteed by locating that wholeness somewhere at the bottom of an ever-increasing number of parts" (Hayot 108).
Indeed, in the next paragraph the pair will be described as "mouths, noses, chins, little
mustaches, tweed caps, rough boots, shooting coats, and check stockings" (79).\footnote{Bill Brown characterizes "Solid Objects" thus: "[…] a narrative of things accumulated but not
arranged, intimate but unassimilated, 'extimate' in their simultaneous proximity and distance,
accreted as vivacious fragments that belong to no whole. The ethics of the story thus reside in
Woolf's depiction of an experience—of experience—that activates for the fragment a life of its
own" ("Secret" 12).} We can understand the surprising violence wrought on the bodies of these men via the apparently
irrelevant background detail of a broken down boat by remembering that this story was written in
the shadow of World War I. The shipwreck was ubiquitous as "a potent international metaphor
during the Great War and its aftermath, in historiography, in literature, and in the visual arts"
because of the sheer number of boats, including fishing vessels, lost to mines and torpedoes
between 1914 and 1918 (Hoenselaars 246). The humble pilchard boat's disintegration, and the
way in which it bequeaths a similar disintegration on the young men as the paragraph continues,
recalls this recent bloodshed.

There is much to connect "Solid Objects," written in 1920, with "Time Passes" published
seven years later, not least its concern with the afterlives of once domestic objects when broken,
deformed or simply unused. Both pieces also reference the World War through the strange, often
violent, interrelations between these broken down objects and the people that surround them.
Such relations are fostered in Woolf's manipulation of temporality. Bill Brown shows that
temporality is fundamental to our binary conception of the human versus the nonhuman. We
uphold that distinction not so much spatially, as temporally. The linguistic and epistemological
realm appears present, he claims, whereas the ontological is dispatched perpetually before or
after it. Woolf writes using prose that rushes and lingers: images call forward to, and loop back
to, each other and this necessarily affects her depiction of humans and nonhumans. The literal
meaning of her metaphors, delaying or denying being transformed into figurative ideas, not only
allow their literal counter-factuality to occupy the prose, but community is fostered in this absurdity. The "drop" of glass becomes part of the seawater; the "skeleton" boat is co-present with other broken bodies.

What is happening, then, is a subtle rearrangement of relationships between humans and nonhumans not a destruction of them (as Andrew proposed with his kitchen table remark). Woolf's interruption of metaphor through distorted temporality certainly denies likeness as the form that this relation might take. This occurs on two levels. The comparative work of metaphor is forestalled, and consequently (as its semantic absurdity takes centre stage) the storyworld is no longer mimetic of the referential world. But as likeness collapses identity takes its place. The glass is the ocean, at least for a beat. The skeleton lives on through the dismembered human figures. And so there is a closeness, even amounting to a co-extensiveness, to be found in the failure of analogy. Environments, or habitats, are created. Instead of vertical comparison, there is a flattening of relationships between things, resulting in crowds of contiguous bodies and beings. Woolf's sentence structures can be disorientating for a reader. But I want to argue that Woolf does not just muddle meaning-making devices in order to decentralize logical and linguistic frameworks. This is not just about finding the nonhuman in the failure of meaning. Woolf's prose style suggests, more subtly, that the symbolic and the non-symbolic are each other's skins. Our signs work through a dissimilarity that can foster a closer relationship between disparate things than likeness can manage.

II. Aimlessness

These assemblages, as I began to outline in the previous section, are often reliant upon
distorted or interrupted temporality which is to be found throughout "Time Passes." The opening section of "Time Passes," for example, is a vignette of liminality. As a group of guests wander back into the Ramsays' house at the end of the evening they comment variously that it is "almost too dark to see" and that "One can hardly tell which is the sea and which is the land" (129). Someone asks whether they should "leave [a] light burning"—a question that, like the twilight outside, tarries between light and dark. The narrator informs us in the final sentence that not quite all the house has succumbed to darkness because somewhere in its rooms, Mr. Carmichael "kept his candle burning rather longer than the rest" (129). Thus, "Time Passes" begins preserved in perpetual dusk. The crepuscular hesitation suggests that here we will find that time not so much "passes" as pauses.

Indeed, upon reaching the penultimate paragraph of "Time Passes," it is as if no time has intervened at all: we discover that still "Mr. Carmichael read a book by candlelight" (146). The whole chapter, bookended by Mr. Carmichael's never-ending twilight, appears to have been the record of a single night, perhaps even a single moment, as much as a record of an entire decade. "Time Passes" is a self-proclaimed hesitant piece of prose. The first words of the chapter are, prophetically, "[w]ell, we must wait" (129). It is to be expected, then, that temporality stutters and stumbles throughout "Time Passes," unable to glide forward in an unimpeded stream. Family lineage, for example, is broken over and over. The death of the central maternal figure, Mrs. Ramsay, and the death of Prue in childbirth are accompanied by the loss of children like those of Mrs. McNab ("two had been base-born and one had deserted her," [135]) and those of Mrs.

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91 On May 14th 1925, Woolf wrote in her diary: "However I must refrain. I must write a few little stories first and let the Lighthouse simmer, adding to it between tea and dinner till it is complete for writing out (Writer's 77). A year later, on Feb 23rd 1926, "I think it is worth saying for my own interest that at last, at last, after that battle Jacob's Room, that agony—all agony but the end—Mrs. Dalloway, I am now writing as fast and freely as I have written in the whole of my life; more so—20 times more so—than any novel yet" (85). To The Lighthouse was, even in its construction, a loitering rushing thing.
Ramsay (Andrew is killed in the war). The reproductive anxiety that haunts "Time Passes" takes the form of both its absence, as in the lost mother figures and lost children, and, contrarily, its overabundance, the everywhere-present birthings and propagations. This becomes explicit when the decaying house finally defeats the cleaner, Mrs. McNab: "[w]hat power could now prevent the fertility, the insensibility of nature? Mrs. McNab's dream of a lady, of a child, of a plate of milk soup? It had wavered over the walls like a spot of sunlight and vanished" (142).

The evocation of lady, child, and milk is nothing if not maternal, but this image is powerless and vanquished in the face of the insensible fertility of nature which conforms to very different standards of reproduction: the poppy "seeds itself," in a kind of asexual cloning; the swallow nests in the drawing room in an aberration of species boundaries. Nature's reproductions highlight the abject. The "carnation mate[s] with the cabbage" (142) and books "breed pale mushrooms" (143). By disrupting paradigmatic images of reproduction (woman, child, milk) and replacing them with unexpected pairings that both exceed and impinge upon the human world, Woolf suggests that reproduction is open for reinterpretation. We can understand this preoccupation of the prose with altered and endangered offspring as an instance of what Guillaume de Syon calls "another modernism: the widespread involvement of children in war".

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92 Aimee Armande Wilson has written about the overlap between the rise of female birth control and modernist literature: "The symbolic possibilities of birth control unite major modernist concerns like linguistic uncertainty, rapid technological change, and distrust in traditional institutions and grand narratives. Through its ability to stop a family line, female-controlled contraceptives such as the diaphragm can represent a break in the connection with the future and with the nuclear family; because it disrupts the definition of 'woman' as inextricably also 'mother,' it uncouples signer and signified while also making the usual female life narrative (child-wife-mother) available for the analogous experimentation that modernists exerted in fiction" (441). Although it is not the rise of birth control that specifically interrupts family lines, nevertheless in "Time Passes" there is a similar overlap between biological reproductive anxiety and the undoing of narrative progression and referential certainty.

93 "It is not lack of cleanliness, or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (Kristeva 232).
The narrative acknowledges the unprecedented impact of the First World War on children and childhood. But it also twists that horror into a catalyst for formal experimentation. "Time Passes" is, after all, the moment when the novel begins to tell the story beyond the marriage plot, the prose continuing after the death of Mrs. Ramsay and going on to explore a different kind of female life and work through Lily who is unmarried, without children, and painting at the end of "The Lighthouse."

The word "aimless" is repeated five times in "Time Passes" and it aptly describes the sense of perpetual twilight—hesitation and momentum interrupted—that floods the prose. At its centre, the novel takes a turn away from narration as a deterministic record of the past (it is not titled "Time Passed" after all) towards narration as more speculative and conditional. Its prose is pock-marked with as ifs and seemed. At one point Mrs. McNab remembers how the family "expected to find things as they left them" (140) two pages before the family actually writes to tell her that they "might be coming for the summer" and "expected to find things as they had left them" (143). Causality is irreverently jumbled by the narrator. In this way, To The Lighthouse disagrees with Mrs. Ramsay's constant declarations that everyone must marry—on the level of style as much as in the fate of Lily, Minta or Prue. Narrative progression tarries in the centre of the novel and the onward march of which Mrs. Ramsay is so confident is stilled.

It is no surprise then that "Time Passes" takes a slow, boggy, pleasure in words—their phonetic sounds and the crowding, cloudy, imagery they evoke. The violence of the Great War, which appears to have stopped history and stalled time, is unsettlingly reincarnated as poetic luxuriance. The following sentence, for example, indulgently loops and retraces itself over and over: "So loveliness reigned and stillness, and together made the shape of loveliness itself, a

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94 The novel's concern with female life, work, and choice is evidenced by the first word, Mrs. Ramsay's "Yes," which seems to pick up and continue Molly Bloom's final affirmation in Ulysses.
form from which life had parted; solitary like a pool at evening, far distant, seen from a train window, vanishing so quickly that the pool, pale in the evening, is scarcely robbed of its solitude, though once seen" (133). This sentence is self-referential; its imagery will not be dispelled as its words recur and recur in repetitions and near repetitions: loveliness, loveliness; form, from; pool, pool; evening, evening; seen, seen; solitary, solitude. A self-sufficient, irrealist, and Edenic world is bounded within the sentence by that reassuring action of caressing re-iterateance. It provides the prose with an unusual gait that is recognizable from Woolf's reluctant metaphors—one that hurries ahead and tarries behind simultaneously.

What I want to identify here is the manner in which Woolf consistently folds symbol into scenery. In the above example, the personification of "loveliness" is quickly absorbed into the bucolic scene of a solitary pool whose image asserts its centrality and immoveable presence through that insistent repetition. We subsequently hear, to take another example, about the "swaying mantle of silence" (133) that folds around the empty house. In the following sentence we are then told that "one fold of the shawl loosened and swung to and fro" (134). The metaphorical shawl of silence re-conditions into the actual scarf that Mrs. Ramsay, years ago, had wrapped around James's boar skull to prevent Cam having nightmares, and which is now swinging loose. Both shawls are present, and they echo and reproduce each other; coextensive yet divergent. The result of this luxuriance of the prose, in which pools and evenings and shawls are reincarnated over and over, is—to borrow a phrase from Joseph Vogl—"a simultaneity of incompossible presents": a multitude of equal possibilities all as existent as each other (48).

95 It recalls Mr. Ramsay's experience earlier in the novel: "He […] looked once at his wife and son in the window, and as one raises one's eyes from a page in an express train and sees a farm, a tree, a cluster of cottages as an illustration, a confirmation of something on the printed page to which one returns, fortified, and satisfied, so without distinguishing either his son or his wife, the sight of them fortified him" (36). In "Time Passes" however, the autonomy of the view from the train window that was dismissed by Mr. Ramsay is returned to it.
"Incompossible presents" are inescapable in "Time Passes": "[s]o some random light directing [the airs] with its pale footfall upon stair and mat, from some uncovered star, or wandering ship, or the lighthouse even, the little airs mounted the staircase and nosed round bedroom doors" (130). Here, each subsequent "or" provides another possibility for to whom the "pale footfall" might belong. The stacking-up of parallel possible objects (the ship, star, and the lighthouse) ensures that they are all granted entry to the prose, all sharing a single, figurative foot. The linear direction of the sentence allows these possible objects to sequentially overwrite each other. But the repeated "or" insists we maintain all three possibilities at once. Tarrying, as Vogl writes, "inserts the existence of not-being into existence" (27). The representation of temporal multiplicity through spatial linearity produces an odd scene, wherein the world clamors and multiplies even as it absents itself—like a restless revenant that lingers between existence and non-existence.

Woolf approaches narrative temporality in a manner that is very similar to what Henri Bergson in *Time and Free Will* (1889) would call *durée*: the creation of one uninterrupted flux that cannot be divided. In *durée* there is multiplicity but there can be no juxtaposition (that being a spatial, not temporal, concept). Woolf's interruptions, resuscitations, and back trackings inscribe temporal heterogeneity into her prose. While her sentences progress linearly forward, their imagery suggests a less straightforward or singular momentum. As I have suggested, this has critical consequences for the relations of people and things within Woolf's worlds. Bergson explains that "seizing" the world can only happen through "the kind of intellectual sympathy by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible" (*Introduction* 5). When we attempt to grasp an object through

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96 Interestingly, in a midway draft of "Time Passes" there are no varying options for whence this light originated—this equivalence is something Woolf must have added as the manuscript was finally reworked for publication. (See Appendix A. in Susan Dick's *Original Holograph Draft*).
"expression, translation, or symbolic representation" we will find ourselves merely turning around it "to infinity" (6). The only way to "possess [...] a reality absolutely" is through an immediate intuition, not through the endless, deferring, temporality of the representation.

Bergson's remarks are reminiscent of the techniques of Woolf's prose, in which the deferring manner of the metaphor or the symbol is refused in favor of a crowded immediacy and co-presence. Indeed, Bergson's remarks suggest a way of reading Woolf's "incompossible presents": not (in Vogl’s words) that they insert "not-being" into the world, but rather that we must simply reconcile ourselves to a temporal heterogeneity that cannot adequately be imagined spatially.

Objects themselves, far from the insipid physical bulks that one imagines, are already aflame with ambiguity, torn by vibrations and insurgencies (Graham Harman, Tool Being 19).

III. Labour

In sections I and II, I have outlined the importance of non-linearity to Woolf's style. In particular, I suggest, it is notable for how it allows multiple bodies and beings to crowd into the prose. These bodies swing back and forth between the metaphorical and the literal, the realist and the fantastical, and the central and the peripheral. The temporal heterogeneity allows the entities of Woolf's prose to decline to be either legible or illegible: by allowing her things to obfuscate about what they signify, Woolf commits neither to the idea of a knowable, expressible world nor an incomprehensible, inexpressible world. Instead there are crowds, scenes, and assemblages
created as beings and things refuse to be deferred into symbol or translated away into meaning. The word "monster" has etymological roots in the concept of showing. It comes from the Latin "monstrum" meaning portent or omen. The monster, etymologically, is a symbol which gestures to the future. Woolf's monsters—her hybrid crowds—are notable, therefore, because far from being fortune-telling symbols they emerge as anchors of a relentless present-tense as the prioritization of the sign dissipates.

Early in childhood, Woolf recalls:

I was looking at the flower bed by the front door; "That is the whole," I said. I was looking at a plant with a spread of leaves; and it seemed suddenly plain that the flower itself was a part of the earth; that a ring enclosed what was the flower; and that was the real flower; part earth; part flower. It was a thought I put away as being likely to be very useful to me later. (*Moments* 71)

This part-plant, part-earth cross from "A Sketch of the Past" is an omen of sorts ("likely to be very useful to me later"). But young Virginia here finds monstrosity to be what is "real" and in "plain" sight, not something mysteriously symbolic. So while this horticultural hybrid is certainly connected to sight, its monstrosity is not a vision or a foreshadowing. It cannot be, because in this moment any opposition between the spectacle and the real is being dismantled. Such an idea also seems to underpin the following scene from "Time Passes":

It seemed now as if, touched by human penitence and all its toil, divine goodness had parted the curtain and displayed behind it, single, distinct, the hare erect; the wave
falling; the boat rocking; which, did we deserve them, should be ours always. But, alas, divine goodness, twitching the cord, draws the curtain. (132)⁹⁷

This scene recollects James cutting out pictures from the Army and Navy Stores catalogue, and "frowning slightly at the sight of human fragility" (7). It remembers Mrs. Ramsay's need to "pick out one particular thing; the thing that mattered; to detach it; separate it off; clean it of all the emotions and odds and ends of things, and so hold it before her" (114). But despite the ongoing attempts of the characters to separate one thing from another, the novel ultimately rejects the idea that anything could be viewed as "single" and "distinct."⁹⁸ The veil of perception is drawn aside here like a theatre curtain. There is a moral element (the question is whether we "deserve" access to a distinct world) which is ironically undermined by the fact that the allegorical "divine goodness" acts like a ringleader, parting the curtain on reality as though it were simply another show. Reminiscent of the personifications of loveliness and stillness we saw above, whose bodies pull apart and converge again like clouds or a flock of birds, and also like James's cut-out pictures of refrigerators and mowing machines, which far from being clean-cut or independent are "endowed […] with heavenly bliss" and "fringed with joy" (7), so this scene epitomizes the novel's distrust of the idea of that there is a sterile and separate reality somewhere else, if only we could see it clearly enough.

Woolf's bodies and things are rarely clear or distinct. The piece of glass which prompts

⁹⁷ The melancholy of this scene, which goes on to describe how the "calm" of such a "perfect whole" is broken and lost forever, must be read alongside similar moments, such as the walkers on the beach who find that "beauty outside [does not] mirror beauty within" because "the mirror was broken" (138). In "Time Passes" the destruction of an untroubled relationship between observer and observed is connected to the chaos of war.
⁹⁸ Although dismemberment is a running theme in To The Lighthouse (such as there being "scarcely anything left of body or mind by which one could say, 'This is he,'" those fractured people also quickly joined by the airs "detached from the body of the wind," at the opening of "Time Passes" 130) the parts are always grouped into collectives.
John's obsession in "Solid Objects," for example, is bizarrely unclassifiable, which, considering the importance of form and shape to John, is strange. There is no clear description of this thing, despite it apparently being "so definite an object compared with the vague sea and the hazy shore" (Haunted 81). Indeed, it is "impossible to say whether it had been bottle, tumbler or window-pane" (80). Yet the glass lump is "so thick as to be almost opaque," which would surely preclude any of those possibilities. The contradictory qualities of the glass go further than this, even: the glass might in fact be a precious stone. John thinks that "perhaps after all it was really a gem; something worn by a dark Princess trailing her finger in the water as she sat in the stern of the boat" (80-1). Yet in the end, "the lump of glass had its place upon the mantelpiece, where it stood heavy upon a little pile of bills and letters and served [...] as an excellent paper-weight" (82). How can a gem that could fit in a ring be heavy enough to serve as an "excellent" paper weight? How could glass, so thick that it is "opaque," have ever been a window-pane? Bill Brown claims that John's objects "have been released from any readiness-to-hand," referring to Martin Heidegger's terminology of the broken tool ("Secret" 7). But it seems to me that this is not quite the case. It is the glass's myriad functions as many different, contradictory, tools with many uses, not its "release" from usefulness, through which it manages to exceed instrumentalised object-hood. It gains a kind of autonomy through the multiplicity of its work, the fungibility of its form.

John actively gathers things that bear some resemblance—however faint or partial—to his original piece of glass. More than just a static collection therefore, his group of objects replace and reproduce each other in a strange economy of the incommensurate: "Anything so

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99 "Thingness is precipitated as a kind of misuse value [...] the aspects of an object—sensuous, aesthetic, semiotic—that become legible, audible, palpable when the object is experienced in whatever time it takes (in whatever time it is) for an object to become another" (Brown "Secret" 1-2).
long as it was an object of some kind, more or less round, perhaps with a dying flame deep sunk in its mass, anything—china, glass, amber, rock, marble—even the smooth oval egg of a prehistoric bird would do" (82, my italics). There is a community of diversity, an identity fostered through unlikeness here that is very reminiscent of Woolf's interrupted metaphors. A production line turned topsy-turvy, through these half-similarities John allows the original piece of glass to endlessly reproduce itself in, and as, waste. John's things succeed and supplant each other via the prevarications that link them: "more or less," "perhaps," "would do." They are both originals and also copies of one another, and although they are equivalents are neither bought nor sold, eventually arriving in the rubbish heap-cum-museum of John's house. They escape, even as they ape, the production and circulation of commodities.

As Kevin Trumpeter writes, a more "efficient" technological society, like that of the early twentieth century, while it cut down on one kind of waste resulted in more of another. "The scientific management of a factory decreases wasted effort and energy while dramatically increasing the production of short-lived commodities that will soon enough make their way from the assembly line to that other iconic locus of modernity, the landfill" (315). But as Tim Cooper reminds us, this was not just an era of increased waste production but also the birth of widespread and nationally organized recycling: "the interruption of trade after 1914, which increased prices for recovered waste materials" did create "a temporary boom in the waste recovery and scrap trades. With an eye on the profits to be made from waste, local authorities established collection and sorting regimes for the recovery of rags, ferrous and non-ferrous metals and organic matter from household refuse […] and encouraged the development of a wider culture of reuse" (716). This lead to the establishment of the National Salvage Council in 1918.
Just as John assigns value to everything, so that even waste is desired, possessed, exhibited, and reproduced, so Woolf's periscopic prose seems to engage in a "culture of reuse." "Recovery of the submerged proved crucial" to thinkers of the turn of the century. "The well-documented modernist interest in the subterranean and daily detritus precipitates a reversal of values whereby what was thrown away was newly esteemed" (Crangle 3-4). This occurs in Woolf's form as much as in her content. Take for example the opening scene of "Solid Objects" in which the two young men walking the beach appear to be the midst of "some violent argument": "[t]his was corroborated on closer view by the repeated lunging of a walking-stick on the right-hand side. 'You mean to tell me… You actually believe…' thus the walking-stick on the right-hand side next the waves seemed to be asserting as it cut long stripes upon the sand" (Haunted 79). Here, the accessory (in this case a walking stick) is allowed to move into center stage. Those phrases—"You mean to tell me… You actually believe…"—do double duty. At first they appear to be recording the actual words of the argument. Then they are revealed to be a figurative evocation of the walking stick's strident movements. The prose works on all fronts altogether: it is verbatim as much as it is figurative. It is an exact transcript of the men's argument and an imaginative description of the walking stick's gesticulations at the same time. Nothing in this scene is wasted, or sacrificed in the service of something more pertinent or central. Everything is allowed to exist.

Woolf is engaged in a project not so much to recuperate or re-value that which has been thrown away or is useless, rather she questions those very value systems by throwing them wide open. Brown writes that things become apparent when "when their flow within the circuits of production and distribution, consumption and exhibition, has been arrested, however

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100 But it doesn't totally obscure the human, unlike later when John holds out the piece of weathered glass in front of his sightline so that "its irregular mass blotted out the body […] of his friend" (81).
momentarily. The story of objects asserting themselves as things, then, is the story of a changed relation to the human subject" (*Things* 4). Marxism understands that the particularity of an object, its unique qualities and the story of its production, is abstracted into its exchange-value when it becomes commodified. When flowing within "circuits of … consumption and exhibition" the individuality of the thing is lost. Yet in "Solid Objects" John's things replace each other through their particularity, their incommensurability. They swap places with each other through unlikeness. We cannot simply say that his objects are not commodities and therefore that their thingness has not been endangered by the abstraction that inevitably blankets objects within capitalism. John's items do circulate, do replace one another, are desired, are exhibited. What is proposed in this story, instead, is that discreteness is not definitional of thingness. Woolf's prose suggests that the reality of the thing is not a supreme individuality, which could only lurk outside of, or in the cessation of, representation as Brown claims. Rather, like the absurd monsters that construct every meaningful metaphor, so an amalgamation of diversity underpins John's personal economy. The analogical work of equivalence and abstraction relies upon dissimilarity and incommensurability.

Analogy is nothing more than the deep love that assembles distant, seemingly diverse and hostile things (F. T. Marinetti, 'Destruction of Syntax' 99).

IV. Role-Playing

The granting of significance and visibility across the board is a definitive characteristic of
Woolf's writing. It is what creates the monstrosity of her style, and is well illustrated by the shape-shifting airs of "Time Passes." Maud Ellmann writes that "human supremacy over the animal is constantly sabotaged by metaphor, by the bestiary of figurative speech," and that perhaps therefore "the language of reason is obliged to banish metaphor in order to expel the ghosts of beasts" (720). Woolf's prose, far from banishing metaphor, relentlessly fails to decide upon a figurative body for the airs. At one moment they are almost downy with their "feather-light fingers and the light persistency of feathers," but the next they are less birdlike and more mammal-like as they go "nosing, rubbing." A human gesture emerges as they "tried the picture on the easel," yet when they "blanched the apples" or "blew a little sand along the floor" they return to being a pervasive draught (130-1). What emerges from the fog of analogies is a chimera: part breeze, part creature, and part person. The semantic meaning mutates too quickly to generate coherent figurative meaning. As words do too many things—work too many roles simultaneously—bodies proliferate.

Mary Lou Emery concludes that the similarly overwhelming amount of metaphorical roles borne by the cleaner, Mrs. McNab, represent the chaos and binary-erasing qualities of war:

Why all this metaphorical oscillation? Why does the figure of a cleaning woman inscribe so many contradictions in the coding of colonialist forces, gender, nature, and the human? Most obviously, she seems to embody the incredible chaos of the war, its annihilation of all distinctions previously thought essential to human civilization, including those between self and Other, masculine and feminine, public and private, culture and nature.

(222)
These crowds of metaphors allow the style to inscribe the chaos of the war that the content is studiously avoiding. Indeed, style is often where we find written that which is unwriteable. Yet for all that we can read these multifaceted figures beset by "metaphorical oscillation" as a kind of body politic, I argue that we should be sensitive to the way they deconstruct the efficacy of symbolism. Rather than trying to discover what the breakdown of symbolism symbolises, we might pay attention to what is left lingering behind it: a set of strange bodies.

The semantic meaning of metaphor—the counter-factual and impossible collections of bodies and things upon which it rests—is not often given much prominence in critical theories of metaphor. Donald Davidson, however, controversially claimed that metaphors mean nothing more than what they literally say (and that this literal absurdity "nudges" us to notice similarities). His theory denies speaker intentionalism, objecting to the notion that a metaphor's meaning is a code to be correctly interpreted by the audience. "A metaphor says only what shows on its face—usually a patent falsehood or an absurd truth" (214). This is sometimes referred to as the "image theory" of metaphor, where what is meant is dependent upon context—and it is placed in opposition to "proposition theories," which argue that metaphors communicate, assert, or intend "cognitive content." Whilst many have taken issue with Davidson's theories, his insistence that metaphor is an inscription of uncertainty and absurdity rather than a cognitive "code," is useful for understanding why "Time Passes" is so metaphorical.

101 The form of metaphor, for example, toys with physical and conceptual impossibilities that exceed literal inscription. As Marie-Laure Ryan writes: "The semantic domain created by the literal meaning of metaphor could be regarded as a conceptually remote type of possible world, put together according to very liberal principles. The metaphor world would break not only the laws of nature, but also logical, analytical, and basic taxonomic principles […] if one accepts this account, metaphor could be defined as an extreme form of fiction, leading to the most remote territories of the global universe of conceptual possibilities" (Possible 82).

102 Elisabeth Camp's article "Contextualism, Metaphor and What is Said" sums up the differences between and difficulties with the "contextualist" and "traditional" ways of interpreting metaphor. I am interested in the questions raised when "what is said" or the "direct expression" of a metaphor—its literal image—is made particularly visible.
To glean why such absurdity is useful, we can turn to Max Black. Whereas many theories of metaphor suggest that it is the elimination, expansion, or transfer of non-essential qualities of the target and source that create the resemblance, Black’s interaction theory asserts that metaphor deals in entire "systems" of characteristics—attributes that make up whole things—which he calls "commonplaces." Metaphor does not pick and choose the qualities which fit its analogy. For example, the metaphor "man is wolf," Black would claim, results in us seeing "man" as organised by "wolf" (39). The qualities of wolf which are not easily resolved with man, such as its furminess or four-leggedness, may be pushed back and dimmed but not eradicated, even as those which are more easily resolved like "sly" or "vicious" are brought forward. So in opposition to a substitution theory of metaphor, in which a metaphor is a replacement for a more everyday phrase, (e.g. in this case, "humans are ferocious") or comparison theory, where a metaphor is a way to state comparisons, (e.g. "humans are ferocious like wolves") something more chimerical and chaotic occurs in Black's interaction theory. It places importance on the way in which metaphor fuses together whole bodies not cherry-picked qualities. Because of this, he claims, metaphor cannot be paraphrased.

"Time Passes" has a metaphorical cadence because metaphor allows two things simultaneous existence—asserting an illogical and exuberant present in words. As I have argued previously, this indicates that the nonhuman world cannot be understood, in Woolf's works, as a forever inaccessible particularity or uniqueness. Woolf disrupts the comparative work of her prose not to find an atomised world, but to replace it with an even stronger, tighter, proximity. She usually doesn't use simple "x is y" formulations to inscribe this unparaphrasable intimacy, however. One of her main forms of analogy is a kind of role-playing. At times the very progression of the sentence is driven by an imitation of thing by thing: "So with the lamps all put
out, the moon sunk, and a thin rain drumming on the roof a downpouring of immense darkness began. Nothing, it seemed, could survive the flood [...]" (129-30). In this sentence, the sudden emergence of water imagery serves to retroactively reanimate the dead metaphor of the "sinking" moon. Other free-range verbs also flit from object to object as they careen between actual and metaphorical. The "drumming on the roof," for example, is incongruous with the gentle "thin rain" which causes it. This incompatibility seems to be explained by the appearance of "downpouring"—surely the noun which enacts the "drumming." Yet, "downpouring," only momentarily reunited with its characteristic "drumming," is immediately shown to be itself a metaphorical action attributed to the "immense darkness." The activity in these sentences is more like a surge in the environment as a whole, a rippling of an interconnected mesh, rather than a set of particular actions performed by particular actors. It is an example of what Spyros Papapetros calls the "landscape effect": "the horizontal plane of material effects—a thick tapestry of intertwined associations with no essential distinction between points of action and forces of motivation behind an event" (viii).

A similar effect of "intertwined associations" occurs when the narrator claims that night is "a short space, especially when the darkness dims so soon, and so soon a bird sings" (131). An allusion is made to Milton's "darkness visible" as darkness paradoxically "dims." Although we

103 In her book *Vital Matter*, Jane Bennett asks us to consider the forcefulness of the inanimate, but, focusing on more than just the individual activity of single "things," she borrows the term "assemblages" from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari to designate interrelated agential groups of both human and nonhuman beings. Her claim is that agency is not confined to sentience; rather it is encapsulated in assemblage—whether that assemblage contains only animate beings, only inanimate beings, or any combination of the two. She asks us to consider the ethical and political consequences and advantages of taking such an exploded view of the nature of agency: its reliance on integration, entanglement, dependence, and dispersed responsibility.

104 "At once as far as angels' ken he views The dismal situation waste and wild, A dungeon horrible, on all sides round As one great furnace flamed, yet from those flames
easily understand the conceptual content of this figure—that "darkness dims" means darkness diminishes in the face of dawn rather than becomes even darker—yet we can't escape the lurking semantic oxymoron: because it is "dimming," an action only light can perform, darkness is light. In this case, the chimerical darkness-light of the literal reading produces the image of dusk equally as much as the figurative use of "dims." Or take for another example the phrase "flies wove a web in the sunny rooms" (136). The web-weaving describes the back-and-forth crossing and re-crossing movements of the flies trapped in a sun-filled room. Yet it is impossible to ignore that the proximity of "web" with "fly" suggests spider webs. Just like the "fumbling" airs are successfully personified because "fumbling" is such a characteristically human action (131), so web-weaving is shadowed by the body of the spider. It is the uncomfortable predator-prey relationship between fly and spider that, in this instance, makes particularly visible the wasted or irrelevant bodies usually masked behind such metaphorical meaning-making. Woolf's particular treatment of metaphor not only makes bodies present in prose but also the interdependence and indivisibility of those bodies, which are disrupted and recuperated in a strange concatenation of violence and community.

Ladies and Gentlemen, be as proud of your intelligence as you please, but beware of that other—especially when you are together (Xavier de Maistre, Journey Around My Room 12).

No light, but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe," (Paradise Lost 5). Woolf's prose has a Miltonic rhythm to it, in which words orbit between passivity and activity, significance and insignificance.
V. Philosophical Failure

As I have argued, there is a resistance to likeness in Woolf's work.105 This has two important effects on the relationship between humans and nonhumans in her literary worlds. The first, which we have already explored, is that with these assemblages Woolf refuses to countenance the suggestion (perpetuated by Mr. Ramsay) that the reality of the nonhuman is some inaccessible elsewhere. Her "landscape effect[s]" engulf us all, together. The second is that these assemblages are forged through error. We will not reach this intimacy through understanding, we will reach it through misunderstanding. In Jacob's Room, for example, Jacob, as a young boy, mistakes a rock on the beach for his nanny: "The waves came round her. She was a rock. She was covered with the seaweed which pops when it is pressed" (5). The woman as rock lingers, well beyond its bounds: the nanny is partly woman, partly rock for two, arguably three, sentences. The split-second error is allowed to lazily spread across the narrative. Even the tangibility of "seaweed which pops when it is pressed" does nothing to dispel Jacob's trick of the eye. By lingering in Jacob's misperception, and touching it, Woolf validates sensory error. It is not a fleeting, ephemeral, thing. Rather, the mistake, the absurd, takes its place among the solid, material being of the world.

In To The Lighthouse Woolf grants the same metaphysical permission to the error. It would be possible to consider the inaccuracies of the intrusive narrative voice of "Time Passes" as an indication of its anthropocentricity. After all, one could argue, Woolf is the kind of novelist

105 Woolf's deployment of metaphor has much in common with F. T. Marinetti's proposal for an "imagination without strings": "Up to now writers have been restricted to immediate analogies. For instance, they have compared an animal with a man or with another animal … They have compared, for example, a fox terrier to a very small thoroughbred. Others, more advanced, might compare the same trembling fox terrier to a little Morse Code machine. I, on the other hand, compare it with gurgling water. In this there is an ever vaster gradation of analogies, there are ever deeper and more solid affinities, however remote" (99). As Marinetti goes on to claim, with these metaphors that make deep affinities through remoteness, "[i]instead of humanizing animals … we will be able to animalize, vegetize, mineralize, electrify, or liquefy our style" (100).
who "hold[s] that novels are in the first place about people, and only in the second about the houses they live in" (Essays Vol. III 432). Indeed, many of the concerns of "Time Passes" are traceable back to thoughts and conversations of characters earlier in the novel. The house materializes the words and ideas of the people that used to live in it. Yet the anthropocentricity of "Time Passes" is also a means by which it writes beyond and undoes the centrality of the human.

Lily's attempt to imagine a kitchen table when she is not there, for example, results in her picturing a wooden kitchen table in the branches of a pear tree: "[...] a scrubbed kitchen table. It lodged now in the fork of a pear tree [...] a phantom kitchen table, one of those scrubbed board tables, grained and knotted, whose virtue seems to have been laid bare by years of muscular integrity, which stuck there, its four legs in air" (27). Her answer to the philosophical thought experiment may seem to be a failure; she appears to be overly imaginative or literal about the problem. But in fact Lily's image is in accord with much of the novel's later depiction of the house when no-one is there. Her table—part-animal, part-thing, part-tree—will later find its kin in the many hybrid animate and inanimate crossbreeds that populate "Time Passes." Its human-like qualities (its "virtue" and "integrity") ensure that it would be at home amidst these personifications. It seems that it is not just Andrew's question that is the catalyst for "Time Passes," but also Lily's seemingly erroneous answer. "Time Passes," after all, begins as the household falls asleep but ends only when Lily awakes again in the house, suggesting that this dream-like chapter originates primarily from Lily's mind.106

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106 In this sense, the "twilight" of "Time Passes"—beginning with dusk and ending with Lily's dawn awakening—is a writing of what Woolf called the "dark country" of female life: "Often nothing tangible remains of a woman's day. The food that has been cooked is eaten; the children that have been nursed have gone out into the world. Where does the accent fall? What is the salient point for the novelist to seize upon? It is difficult to say. Her life has an anonymous character which is baffling and puzzling in the extreme. For the first time, this dark country is beginning to be explored in fiction" (Essays Vol. V 33). The so-called abandoned house is haunted by Mrs. Ramsay, imagined by Lily, and occupied by Mrs. McNab and Mrs. Bast. A
The liveliness of the abandoned house is also anticipated by a conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay. Mr. Ramsay, in a moment of intellectual self-doubt, needs to have "all the rooms of the house made full of life—the drawing room; behind the drawing room the kitchen; above the kitchen the bedrooms; and beyond them the nurseries; they must be furnished, they must be filled with life" (41). Strangely neither Mr. nor Mrs. Ramsay mentions the children as they discuss filling the house with "life." Whereas Woolf uses semicolons to separate out the individual rooms in this speech (the semicolons acting like walls of the house), she uses only a comma to separate "furnished" and "filled with life." Does the comma create a list, or indicate an elaboration? The grammatical confusion raises an absurd confusion—can furnishings be alive?—which we may dismiss as ridiculous at this early stage in the novel. But with the arrival of "Time Passes," its personified breezes caressing and questioning the furniture for all intents and purposes as though it were indeed "filled with life," suddenly the distinction doesn't seem so easy to draw.

Even Mrs. Ramsay's thoughts about self and otherness, although she does not engage with the academic philosophical terms of Mr. Ramsay, are resurrected in "Time Passes." At one point early in the novel Mrs. Ramsay meditates upon how, after her inner self has "shed its attachments [...] Her horizon seemed to her limitless. There were all the places she had not seen; the Indian plains; felt herself pushing aside the thick leather curtain of a church in Rome" (65). The imagery is remarkably similar to a later scene in "Time Passes": "The autumn trees, ravaged as they are, take on the flash of tattered flags kindling in the gloom of cool cathedral caves where gold letters on marble pages describe death in battle and how bones bleach and burn far away in Indian sands" (131). Mrs. Ramsay's apparently innocent suggestion of wanting to see the "Indian kinship is drawn between the anonymity, and un-writeable partial-presence of these women with the similarly dark and wild nonhuman world which is likewise "difficult for" the novelist.
 plains" has its unstated acceptance of British imperialism made visible as the narrator mutates her original imagery to now include "death in battle" and bones in the sand—making reference to the Indian Army's role in World War I.

Personal words and phrases are resuscitated in the empty house, and what were once local and subjective images suddenly bear the weight of global and even more-than-human existences. The unseen house is built out of reifications of, and elaborations of, human failures to complete philosophical work—diversions, imaginations, emotions—not successes. By taking its cues from the particular errors, idiosyncrasies, and blind-spots of the thinkers and not just the problem they think about, "Time Passes" presents a world that thrives in our misunderstandings.

VI. Ghost-Writing

As I have been arguing, Woolf consistently folds the symbolic into the nonsymbolic. Signs of all kinds are given literal existence in the world of the narrative. We have seen that this results in rather crowded worlds. What is fascinating about Woolf's prose is that through this abundance it rebukes any notion that the "thing" or the "nonhuman" is that which cannot exist within human systems of meaning and value, or that it is only present when the tool breaks, when the commodity stops circulating, when the symbol stops symbolizing. In Woolf's worlds, symbols both symbolize and don't simultaneously; objects are both exchanged and incommensurate; tools work, they even over-work, to the point where they seem both useful and useless. What is produced are sprawling scenes and tableaux. The prioritization of theory, word, or sign is undone by these assemblages.
This is in marked distinction to, say, Roland Barthes's concept of the "reality effect." Barthes attributed background details in fiction to "narrative luxury," a kind of "insignificant notation," which is "scandalous" because it has no function, and its inclusion cannot be justified (11-12). Nonhuman inhabitants and irrelevant details of literary worlds, signifying nothing else, signify "the real"—the irony being that the insignificant must signify its own insignificance. Barthes seems to de-clutter the palpable and detailed worlds we expect from realist narrative with his analysis, emphasizing that it is "the category of the real," and not its various contents, which is being signified; in other words the very "absence of the signified […] becomes the true signifier of realism" (16). The "real" is indicated by a gap. Like Barthes, Woolf gathers up normally "insignificant notion" and questions its apparent irrelevance. Unlike Barthes's l'effet de réel, Woolf's scandalous details do not indicate a loss of signification but its over-abundance.

It is in this way that the novel answers back to Mr. Ramsay. He imagines his rational philosophizing as an alphabet through which he progresses, and he is stuck on the letter "R". He cannot connect "R" to a theory; he cannot make "R" signify. Mr. Ramsay wants to place the sign before the thing. But as we have seen, Woolf's prose rarely capitulates to such neat linearity. Mr. Ramsay's rogue letter not only starts to look suspiciously like a nonsymbolic thing itself—perhaps exactly what Mr. Ramsay is chasing although he cannot see it—but it is also symptomatic of the rest of the novel, whose words, like this errant "R," dodge and dance between meanings. Indeed, it seems pertinent that he is stuck on the letter of his own initial—and so his repeated question "what is R?" (37) accidentally queries his own existence rather than facilitates his intellectual legacy.

The novel frolics with Mr. Ramsay's failures most noticeably in "Time Passes." For example, whereas early in the novel Mr. Ramsay, busy thinking, fails to admire his wife's garden
flowers "or even realise that they were there" (74)—in what we might call a radical failure to attend to both "subject and object"—later in "Time Passes" those flowers will return: "standing there, looking before them, looking up, yet beholding nothing, eyeless, and so terrible" (139). The garden flowers, abandoned during wartime, have become grand and fearsome now (impossible to ignore), and Mr. Ramsay's inattention to them is rehashed as the plant's own eyelessness as they seem to mock his earlier disregard. Their lack of eyes is unsettling: it is an obvious statement of fact that nevertheless reads like a gruesome deformity.

This casual mutation of bodies is characteristic of the tone of this spectral narration. Like the eyeless plants, where pointed description of their difference to sighted beings actually collapses the distinction between the two, there is repeated flattening of hierarchical categories of being, achieved by the over-expressiveness of Woolf's prose. For example, the process of eventually recuperating the falling down house after it has been abandoned for a decade at the end of "Time Passes," is described as being a "rusty laborious birth" (143). Air raids on residential areas and widespread civilian deaths were experienced for the first time during the Great War. The return of childbirth imagery here affirms the passing of the war, and also expresses a fantasy that a destroyed house could somehow be resurrected and the memory of bombing erased. But it is unclear whether the cleaners are midwives to a house in labour (oddly giving birth to itself), or, as is implied by their "stooping, rising, groaning," that the women are pregnant with the rejuvenated domestic space themselves. Likewise, as they work the women restore "to sun and air a brass fender and a set of steel fire irons" (143). Strangely, the fender and irons are not restored by the sun and air, like the damp books that needed to be laid out on the

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107 J. Hillis Miller claims that the narrator of To The Lighthouse is, at best, a ghost: "The narrator is without life, personality, opinions, feelings of its own, and yet is doomed to see all the lives, personalities, opinions and feelings which it relives from the perspective of that prospective death toward which they all move, and where the narrating mind already is" (157).
lawn to dry, nor restored like sun and air (if this is a metaphor about things being clean and bright again), but rather they are restored to sun and air, as if, comically, the furniture is being released into its natural environment. A single unexpected preposition bears the weight of this oddity.

In these cases of ambiguity there is blurring between animate and inanimate: is the house giving birth, the fender being returned to the wild? But at least as significantly for how "Time Passes" treats the nonhuman, is the fact that such offbeat sentences are resistant to paraphrase. This is a world in which the women, the house, and the end of the war, are one great monstrous pregnant being giving birth to order and peace; it is a world where the furniture can be both inside and outside simultaneously, animate and inert all at once. But Woolf writes in a way that (unlike my attempted paraphrases above) does not draw a distinction between people and house, inside and outside, animate and inanimate. Andrew's thought experiment about seeing an unseen table is something of a leading question. It suggests that the "object" world in itself is inaccessible to the "subject," and that the two define each other through mutual estrangement. That same estrangement is present when I try to paraphrase Woolf's oblique sentences, placing beings and ideas against each other in oppositional categories. Yet the original prose rejects the alienation at the heart of the table thought experiment.

The narrative voice achieves its contrary abundance through a number of stylistic methods, such as describing negatives ("eyeless") or using inappropriate prepositions. A final, important means by which Woolf collapses hierarchies of significance is through a tactic similar to what Gérard Genette identifies as "hypothetical objectivity" in the fiction of Gustave Flaubert. Genette finds "descriptions that do not belong either to the order of the subjective or to that of the objective" when particularly detailed, "objective" descriptions follow from "comparative-
conditional locution that is frankly unreal in suggestion." For example, in Madame Bovary the phrase "as if she had had" precedes a detailed fantasy of Emma's involving a footman carrying an ermine stole (Figures 189). Genette argues that although the vivid daydream exists in Emma's mind, in the slightly ironic use of "as if" we can hear Flaubert implying childish affectation on the part of Emma. "Thus Flaubert is not entirely absent from this sentence, and the vision of the footman with the ermine stole is as much his as Emma's" (189). The narrator of "Time Passes" creates similar ambiguity by persistently using phrases such as "it seemed now as if" or "almost one might imagine" before launching into figurative imagery. The ontological illogicality of metaphor is further intensified by this tactic. Like a double negative, the prose has its unreality asserted twice, at which point it seems to circle back to objectivity. Enclosed within its hypothetical cage, figurative language fails to "belong either to the order of the subjective or that of the objective" and exists in both registers at once.

What I do not want to argue here is that Woolf's refusal of the idea of an estranged object-world is achieved through the deliberate confusion of other oppositional or hierarchical categories (like narrative levels, or like figurative and literal). I am not claiming that a more-than-linguistic world is evoked through the muddying of linguistic structures. The real is not the "absence of the signified." Instead, through their over-signification, her sentences hold together a diversity that is inherently irreconcilable with Mr. Ramsay's bifurcated world.

VII. Incommensurability

Michael Levenson memorably claimed that "modernism begins in a room." Modernist domesticity, he argues, is concerned with finding the uncanny interior of the interior:
Centrally, recurrently, a motion of risk and experiment starts with transgression in the interior, scandal in the cupboard, vision in a closet, or something dirty in a dark place.

[...] it is a response, first of all, to the apotheosis of domesticity [...] The late-century fascination for "The House Beautiful" and the saturated interior display—decoration, wallpaper, photographs, statuettes—confirm the exhalation of pleasure that we recognise as the soft pant of middle-class comfort, the settlement of intimacy. A modernist response was to exaggerate inwardness to the point of trespass: an inwardness that completes and exceeds the confined world of domesticity, a recession beyond the cluttered drawing room, into the curtained alcove, the shuttered cabinet, the interior's own interior. ("Closed Room" 3-4)

The trespass into the "interior of the interior" in "Time Passes" occurs as domesticity and familiarity turns wild. The house—which is home to such an excess of lives both real and abstract—collapses under the weight of its homeliness into something fantastic, unrecognizable, and inhospitable. It becomes apparent that what is dwelling in the interior is a coterie of feral, mutated, beings.

Like this domesticity that is exaggerated until it becomes untamed, many of the chimera we find in "Time Passes" are personifications that, far from underlining anthropocentrism, reveal its precarious nature.

[S]econdary anthropomorphism (a bone of contention within animal studies as well as in the discourse of animal rights) serves to erase the primary act of anthropomorphic
appropriation. To make other animals "like us" entails forgetting that humans begin by
making themselves "like us." This primary anthropomorphism is neurotically betrayed
(repressed and revealed) in the book of Genesis, which, in its subconscious and
subtextual anxiety about the human form, resorts to molding man alone in the image of
God. (Pick 83)

As Anat Pick reminds us, the personification of the nonhuman masks the tenuousness of
personhood. Or, to look at the matter from an evolutionary point of view: "it is far safer to
automatically attribute agency to inanimate objects that behave like living things than it is to
mistake a living thing for a seemingly inanimate object" (Geary 41). In cognitive psychology this
concept is known as "physiognomic perception." The desire to anthropomorphize the inanimate
or inhuman arises from a place of anxiety and vulnerability about what "human" might be.

The relentless personifying perspective of the narrator of "Time Passes" betrays a covert
act of primary anthropomorphism. The voice that personifies is personified in turn. "Almost
one might imagine" begins the narrator, before she anthropomorphizes the airs: "[a]lmost one
might imagine them, as they entered the drawing room questioning and wondering" (130). Not
only does this "almost" destabilize the personification of the airs but it empties out the existence
of the narrator as well: there is almost one who might imagine, but not quite. The "almost" is

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108 As Diana Fuss writes, "[s]ameness, not difference, provokes our greatest anxiety (and our
greatest fascination) with the 'almost human.' Indeed, whenever we are called to become 'more
human' we are reminded that the human is never adequate to itself, and may be defined more by
its likeness to these alien others than by its unlikeness" (3).

109 Following Elaine Scarry's analysis of the manner in which production entails the "recreating"
of the human by the created object, Seo-Young Chu illustrates how, in science fiction,
anthropomorphism is always engaged in the making of the human, not just the humanoid: "If
corrective lenses exist for the purpose of 'remaking' the nearsighted person into someone capable
of seeing distant objects clearly, then a sentient humanoid robot would exist for the purpose of
'remaking' human beings into human beings" (238).
shared between the narrator and the airs and is implicated in their dual personification and dual debilitation—both exist only partially in their anthropomorphic existence, and they share and impose this partial qualification upon each other. Perhaps, as Louise Westling writes, Woolf's object in "Time Passes" is "the complete dismantling of the transcendental abstractions which lead to [...] separation. As an alternative, she celebrates human community and its continuity with all the world which sustains it" (862). The narrator and the airs certainly become human-ish subjects in the same instance; interpolate each other simultaneously. But this community is, however, based in a failure to be commensurate to themselves or others, they are only "almost" alike. For Woolf, whatever partial human continuity with the nonhuman is possible, is not to be found by "dismantling" abstractions as Westling suggests but by finding the fractured empathy made possible within them.\(^{110}\)

To find that fabled "reality" spoken of by Andrew, we do not need to look outside analogy, outside anthropomorphism, outside abstraction, but rather deep within it Woolf's prose suggests, in "the interior's own interior." Eric Auerbach claimed in "The Brown Stocking" that "there actually seems to be no viewpoint at all outside the novel [...] any more than there seems to be an objective reality apart from what is in the consciousness of the characters" (\textit{Mimesis}

\(^{110}\) A similar dis/community can be seen by tracking the word "wild" through this most domestic of novels. It crops up multiple times, and is almost always used to characterise the Ramsay family. Mrs. Ramsay's heritage from a "slightly mythical, Italian house," associates her with its "daughters, scattered about English drawing-rooms in the nineteenth century, [who] had lisped so charmingly, had stormed so wildly" (12). Mr. Ramsay, Lily finds, has a "distraught wild gaze" (150). With wildness inherited from both parents, it is unsurprising that the children (and honourary children) are also described as "wild." Prue, Nancy and Rose plan on "a wilder life; not always taking care of some man or other" (10); Mr. Bankes finds Cam to be "wild and fierce" (25) and Lily thinks her a "wild villain" (57); Nancy and Roger are "both wild creatures now, scampering about over the country all day long" (61); and even Minta has "something a little wild and harum-scarum" about her (101). So in one sense, the "wild" is what unites the family. Yet it brings undomesticated, nonfamilial, or unexpected things into the family, too: storms in drawing rooms, refusals of marriage or conventional gender roles, fierce villainy, creaturely outdoors existence, and recklessness. The Ramsays' wildness disrupts as a way of uniting.
A "close approach to objective reality" is achieved, he claims, "by means of numerous subjective impressions received by various individuals" (473). Maurice Merleau-Ponty is helpful here:

When I look at the lamp on my table, I attribute to it not only the qualities visible from where I am, but also those which the chimney, the walls, the table, can "see"; the back of my lamp is nothing but the face which it "shows" to the chimney. I can therefore see an object […] in so far as each one treats the others round it as spectators of its hidden aspects. (79)

According to Merleau-Ponty, sight is how we map what is unseen by us. Auerbach proposes that the realism of *To The Lighthouse* is constructed like the back of Merleau-Ponty's lamp: multiple perspectives guarantee all sides of things, even if there can be no single all-seeing point of view. However, this reading of the novel misses the fact that there is often mutual confirmation of fiction, not objectivity, from these multiple perceivers. Take for example Mrs. Ramsay and Augustus who both observe the dinner table centerpiece of fruit and shells. We find that their viewpoints, far from diverging and revealing the "hidden aspects" of each other's perspectives, actually converge in a surprising way. Augustus is "plunged in" to the arrangement of grapes and pears with his eyes, which justifies Mrs. Ramsay's vision of it as like a "world in which one could take one's staff and climb hills" (99). They seem to be engaging in the same fantasy about the fruit.

Laura Doyle borrows the term "intercorporeal" from Merleau-Ponty to describe the manner in which bodies survive "with and in language and narrative" (45) in Woolf's prose.
Or, similarly, Mr. Bankes and Lily, who both look at Mrs. Ramsay and think her god-like simultaneously. Her deification is assured by both viewers in differing ways (52). The collage of multiple perspectives upon which the novel is constructed guarantees the absent world not by seeing all sides of it, but by failing to see all sides of it. Mrs. Ramsay and Augustus find that "looking together united them," not because their eyes rest upon the same objective fruit bowl from differing angles. But because they converge on the same fantasy that the pears and grapes are a miniature Edenic landscape available to be entered. Likewise, Mrs. Ramsay seems really god-like thanks to Mr. Bankes's and Lily's parallel but separate tributes. This recalls the narrator and air's mutual "almost" personification. They arrive together in a shared daydream. Rather than an independently verified objective reality as Auerbach claimed, we have delved further into subjectivity, into "the interior's own interior."

VIII. Apostrophe

Diana Swanson suggests that literature has always been functional in this way. It allows us get close to that which is unlike: "[p]aradoxically, literature, a linguistic and cultural production, can help us get beyond the limits of our particular languages, cultures, and times. Similarly, literature can help us recognize and 'translate' the profound otherness and subjectivities of the nonhuman world" (56). Reminiscent of Merleau-Ponty's use of perspective to "get beyond" the constraints of perspective, Swanson suggests that that literature can be a tool by which to "get beyond" literature. However, for Woolf, as we should have come to expect, those terms do need to be tweaked. The external world searched for by Auerbach and Mr. Ramsay alike is not actually "beyond" the subject but exists within, and identical to, the
idiosyncratic images and signs produced by subjectivity. As if to back this up, Woolf herself claimed that "Time Passes" is "lyric" in form, while also calling it "eyeless," which is almost a contradiction in terms. How can the lyrical be the right form with which to write eyelessness? After all, lyric poetry has traditionally been used to present heightened forms of consciousness, told from deeply subjective and sometimes solipsistic viewpoints. We might agree with Jonathan Culler that lyric is invested in communication rather than the priority of the poet's mind, and that "postenlightenment poetry seeks to overcome the alienation of subject from object, [and] apostrophe takes the crucial step of constituting the object as another subject with whom the poetic subject might hope to strike up a harmonious relationship" (158). Yet we have to question whether a world of objects transformed into subjects is the same as the "impersonal thing" Woolf was aiming to write.

As Doug Mao has noted, in "Time Passes" Woolf actively disrupts literary convention:

112 Sept. 3rd 1926: "The lyric portions of To The Lighthouse are collected in the 10-year lapse" (Writer's 98-9).
113 April 30th 1926: "here is the most difficult abstract piece of writing—I have to give an empty house, no people’s characters, the passage of time, all eyeless and featureless with nothing to cling to" (Writer's 88).
114 July 20th 1925: "it might contain all characters boiled down; & childhood; & then this impersonal thing, which I'm dared to by my friends, the flight of time, & the consequent break of unity in my design. That passage (I conceive of the book in 3 parts. 1. At the drawing room window; 2. Seven years passed; 3. The voyage) interests me very much. A new problem like that breaks fresh ground in one's mind; prevents regular ruts" (Diary Vol. III 36).
115 Only three months after To The Lighthouse, an essay called "The Narrow Bridge of Art" was published in the New York Herald Tribune, in which Woolf considered the current state of literature: "...the lyric cry of ecstasy or despair, which is so intense, so personal, and so limited is not enough. The mind is full of monstrous, hybrid, unmanageable emotions [...] the fine fabric of lyric is no more fitted to contain this point of view than a rose leaf to envelop the rugged immensity of a rock" (Essays Vol. II 219). Yet the prose of "Time Passes" is clearly rife with "unmanageable" hybridity that stems from the personal and exceeds it. Rather than lyric's limitations, then, "Time Passes" explores lyric's potential to move beyond its traditional limits.
Nor was the difficulty of giving an empty house merely that of writing absence; it was also that of reversing the habit, common to both novelists and novel readers, of referring descriptions of the nonhuman world either to characters' psychology or to what Barthes would term l'effet du reel, […] in making a house of her own in "Time Passes" she was trying to disrupt rather than to deploy such readerly autohypnosis. (138)

The most prominent, and most haunting figure of the empty house—the animated draughts—reproduce what Barbara Johnson identifies as "a traditional romantic locus of lyric apostrophe—the voices of the wind" (189). But Woolf disrupts the "autohypnosis" threatening the use of this canonical trope, by repositioning the wind within apostrophe's framework in order to freshly consider the community it creates. Woolf's lyric figures ask us to attend to how the bodies and voices are arranged within them.116

Although her personified "airs" make obvious allusions to poems such as Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind," Woolf nonetheless disrupts traditional apostrophe in a critical manner: there is no "address." Apostrophe usually entails the inanimate, absent, or abstract other being addressed by the narrative voice as though it were a person. The expectation that it can respond (even though it does not) calls it into a state of partial personhood. Take for example Shelley's "O Wind / If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?" a question that is never answered, but which nevertheless establishes the wind in a position of silent, potential, responsiveness (224).

116 As Donna Haraway writes: "Figures help me grapple inside the flesh of mortal world-making entanglements that I call contact zones. The Oxford English Dictionary records the meaning of 'chimerical vision' for 'figuration' in an eighteenth-century source, and that meaning is still implicit in my sense of figure. Figures collect the people through their invitation to inhabit the corporeal story told in their lineaments. Figures are not representations or didactic illustrations, but rather material-semantic nodes or knots in which diverse bodies and meanings coshape one another. For me, figures have always been where the biological and literary or artistic come together with all the force of lived reality" (Species 4).
Johnson identifies a circular anxiety here:

If apostrophe is the giving of voice, the throwing of a voice, the giving of animation, then a poet using it is always in a sense saying to the addressee, "Be thou me." But this implies that a poet has animation to give [...] and that is what in this poem is not, or no longer, the case. Shelley's speaker's own sense of animation is precisely what is in doubt, so that he is in effect saying to the wind, "I will animate you so that you will animate, or reanimate, me." (188)

Shelley's apostrophe inherently reveals the tenuousness of personhood even as it seems to imperially spread it far and wide. Woolf's apostrophe, though it too deals in the fragility of the human, works very differently. Woolf's airs, unlike Shelley's, need not blow through a dead man's lips, like a "lyre" in order to make their "prophecy." It is not the human but mute, inanimate, flaps of wallpaper that draw the airs out of silence. Alienation and difference initiates their voice, not an assimilation into the society of other animated beings.

Crucially, as the airs ask the wallpaper "will it endure?" we recognize that the wind (which is usually asked questions in lyric poetry) is actually doing the asking.\[117\] What Johnson calls the "throwing of voice, the giving of animation" is enacted not by a person but by a personification. This is apostrophe which highlights that the community it creates is based not on Culler's "harmonious relationship" but on lack of communication and failures to respond. The language of Woolf's airs is not imposed upon them by the soliloquy of the narrator; it is not even a response to human speech but a response to object silence. Voice circulates amongst the

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\[117\] Interestingly, "the power to endure" (8) is what Mr. Ramsay claims is what is needed to get through the "difficult" and "uncompromising" nature of life. When the airs ask "will it endure?" later in the novel, they are essentially asking is it alive?
voiceless. Johnson observes that "apostrophe is said to involve language's capacity to give life and human form to something dead or inanimate" (189). Yet in this scene, voice springs from, or is the environment for, otherness and division. Language does not bring together a group of conversant, alike, beings. It is a location for difference. This is an idea that permeates Woolf's prose: that the symbolic will not mirror, will not facilitate, likeness. But it may create communities of incommensurability.

IX. More-Than-Human Language

The heart of the novel is preoccupied with persistence. The recurring cry of "Time Passes" ("will it endure?") is asked repeatedly by the personified breezes as they waft through the empty house and is even reiterated by Mrs. McNab. This query is pertinent not just for the house, but also for the form of the novel. "Will it endure?" asks not just ontological questions of physical matter but also formal questions of the literary matter—will this writing remain a narrative without collapsing into some other mode? When we move into the final section of the novel, "The Lighthouse," both house and novel appear to have survived and are resurrected. But during "Time Passes" they are held in a pause of uncertainty. Both the house and the novel balance in a precarious position.\textsuperscript{118}

The formal changes in the prose of "Time Passes"—its increased hesitancy and fantastic nature compared to the rest of the novel—seem to be demanded by the off-screen war. The new prose style encourages timelessness, uncertainty, and it casually deforms bodies and things. But that same inhumanity of the prose which (disrupting the temporal linearity, rationality, and

\textsuperscript{118} "The thirty-two chapters of a novel... are an attempt to make something as formed and controlled as a building" (Woolf \emph{Common} 283).
bodily autonomy that is constituent of human selfhood) also acts as a medium for some kind of
wider sympathetic feeling. As I have explored, in various ways the writing's disregard for the
singularity of any given body or voice is a consequence of its tendency to over-work. Woolf had
a particular interest in the way in which language exceeds the human. In 1937 the BBC broadcast
a radio series titled "Words Fail Me," as part of which, on April 29th, Woolf read her piece
"Craftsmanship." In this talk, Woolf claims that words are the "wildest, freest" of things and
describes the kinds of lives they live: their sex-lives (their "matings" and "marriages" and
promiscuity), their temperaments, and where they might reside (perhaps in a dictionary, or in the
mind). What is most stressed is the impossibility of singularity: "[…] there are no ranks or
titles in their society. Nor do they like being lifted out on the point of a pen and examined
separately. They hang together, in sentences, in paragraphs, sometimes for whole pages at a
time." No more can words exist outside of sentences and paragraphs than can any singular
meaning be extracted from a phrase before, in separation from its multitudinous crowd of
allusions and contiguous meanings, it becomes "unreal" (Essays Vol. VI 96). There is no way to
draw a line between herd and individual.

But the "strange, diabolical power" of words is not just their allusiveness. It is the way
they work beyond signification. Woolf claims that even non-autobiographical words have "the
power […] to suggest the writer; his character, his appearance, his wife, his family, his house—
even the cat on the hearthrug" (94). Phrases don't simply have layers of meaning, Woolf
speculates, but can reach out to that which should be far beyond their ken—like the author's cat.
Similar to the "promiscuous" words Woolf previously described, she appears to be proposing
here that humans, too, are not so much individual entities as assemblages. The author is not just

119 This talk contains echoes of "Street Haunting," in which Woolf writes: "Second-hand books
are wild books, homeless books; they have come together in vast flocks of variegated feather,
and have a charm which the domesticated volumes of the library lack" (Essays Vol. IV 487).
defined by "his character, his appearance" but (the list continues indiscriminately), "his wife, his family, his house," and so on, until we're left with a ghost of a suggestion that the writer is part-rug, part-man. The author's family, environment, even belongings, are part of him. This trespass of words from meaning to being is also visible in *To The Lighthouse* when, for example, Mr. Ramsay's inner determination "not to be routed utterly" is simultaneous with the flock of starlings that Lily notices "Jasper had routed with his gun" (29). The verb "routed" bounces between Mr. Ramsay and Lily's minds, describing both emotional and physical happenings, and, in doing both simultaneously, the word seems to be more of an environment or situation than a signifier.

Elizabeth L. Waller argues that "Woolf [...] revealed the more-than-human world as the very source of language—the starting point for conversation. Every being has been in conversation since the dawn of its time, protozoa conversing with plants, plants conversing with birds, with reptiles, with mammals" (154). Or as Woolf herself put it, words "have been out and about, on people's lips, in their houses, in the streets, in the fields, for so many centuries" (*Essays Vol. VI* 95). Walter Benjamin, in an early essay from 1916, expressed a similar sentiment: "[t]here is no event or thing in either animate or inanimate nature that does not in some way partake of language, for it is essential to each one to communicate its spiritual content" (*Early 251*). Woolf's nonhuman, physical, reality—houses, streets, fields—is not that which resists language, or punctures the symbolic. It, too, is a linguistic space. When she claims that words need and like the "pause" and the "silence" and that "our unconsciousness is their privacy" she implies that the limits of human language are not the limits of language (97). If words live in our unconsciousness, perhaps they can live in the unconsciousness of the chair or the housefly. Woolf's fiction certainly seems to suggest so. She cannot put into human words "protozoa
conversing with plants" or Benjamin's "language-lamp, the lamp in communication, the lamp in expression." But she can write in a style that suggests language's expansion beyond "mere signs" (253). Words, she assures us, "hate anything that stamps them with one meaning or confines them to one attitude, for it is their nature to change" and that if "words are pinned down they fold their wings and die" (97).

That phrase, "pinned down," returns us to the question of access suggested by the kitchen table thought experiment, and Mr. Ramsay's bifurcation of subject and object. Words, Woolf claims, cannot be "pinned" to a thing, they will not facilitate an easy correspondence between symbolic and physical realms. Indeed, this is what we learn from the prose style of "Time Passes": the non-representational (the inaccurate, the fantastic, the multiplicitous, the abstract), although on the one hand is rather cavalier with its objects, creating monstrous deformations, on the other refuses to work within a commensurate binary of subject and object, creating instead a kind of intimacy of assemblage through its over-work. What is so unique and unsettling about Woolf's prose style, therefore, is the way it places violences and aggressions to the discrete body or thing on the same sliding scale with connection and community.

"And the supreme mystery … was simply this: here was one room; there another"

(Mrs. Dalloway 114).

Conclusion: Resurrecting the Thing

To The Lighthouse pays rather nervous attention to the idea of the uninhabited, the lost, and the abandoned. It is in "Time Passes," that Woolf's comment that the book is not so much a
To The Lighthouse is an elegy for many things. The great loss of the novel is Mrs. Ramsay, certainly, and the prose is also a memorial for, and exorcism of Woolf's parents. There are smaller losses, too, like Minta's brooch and the "something else" (perhaps her childhood, perhaps her family) that it represents: "she wasn't crying only for that. She was crying for something else" (80). But this novel is also an elegy for the idea of the real: an original, unique, thing-in-itself. Self-contained particularity is found nowhere in "Time Passes." It is pertinent that Lily's imagined kitchen table is called a "phantom" (27) and an "effigy" (28). In trying to consider the authentic, unseen table Lily only comes up with shadows and copies (ghosts and funerary sculptures) that mark the place of something lost for ever. There is no such thing.

"Time Passes" is the critical heart of To The Lighthouse not only because it acts as a "corridor" linking the beginning and the ending but because it cracks open space in the midst of the novel to put loss and absence at its very centre. It is a place for ghosts. Quite literally, all the deaths of the novel are recorded here. Woolf wrote in her diary about its emptiness:

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120 June 27th 1925 "(But while I try to write, I am making up To The Lighthouse—the sea is to be heard all through it. I have an idea that I will invent a new name for my books to supplant 'novel.' A new ——— by Virginia Woolf. But what? Elegy?)" (Writer's 80).

121 Woolf claims that in writing the novel "I did for myself what psycho-analysts do for their patients. I expressed some very long felt and deeply felt emotion. In expressing it I explained it and laid it to rest" (Moments 81).

122 The ghost, as I argue in other chapters, tends to disrupt structures of representation by acting as both copy and original at once. The effigy, likewise, can be a dummy or a figure that stands in for (rather than simply is a likeness of) the person represented. It is interesting that the terms used to denote the loss of Lily's table also transgress boundaries of representation.

123 See the drawing of this corridor in Susan Dick's Holograph Draft edition.

124 It is expressive of what George M. Johnson calls "a culture of mourning, of large-scale loss and bereavement, such as in the aftermath of the Boer War, retreat of Empire and particularly during the First World War and the influenza epidemic that followed close on its heels […] Bereavement counseling had not developed as a field, psychotherapy was in its infancy and available only to the privileged few, and shell shock (now termed Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), despite being widespread, was only beginning to be understood as a psychological condition" (3).
Yesterday I finished the first part of To The Lighthouse, and today began the second. I cannot make it out—here is the most difficult abstract piece of writing—I have to give an empty house, no people's characters, the passage of time, all eyeless and featureless with nothing to cling to; well I rush at it, and at once scatter out two pages. Is it nonsense, is it brilliance? Why am I so flown with words and apparently free to do exactly what I like? [...] This is not made up; it is the literal fact." (Writer's 88)

Woolf explains here how the piece of writing seems to intellectually exceed her ("I cannot make it out," "is it nonsense [...]?") and even in the process of making it up affirms "[t]his is not made up; it is literal fact." As she expresses how confounding and hollow "Time Passes" is, she nevertheless fills her sentences with corporeal and sensual terms: "cling to," "rush at," "scatter out," "flown." This is the definitive characteristic of the novel's style: bodily intimacy fostered through unlikeness, alienation, and incomprehensibility.

I have explored in this chapter the various manifestations of the signification problem of Woolf's prose. The beach-walkers of "Time Passes" recognize WWI's impact on representation: "the mirror was broken" (138). Indeed, in Woolf's prose the mirror is broken on two levels. There is a multiplicity about what a phrase or sentence is signifying (a problem of semantics), and this fantastically heterogeneous world then seems unrealistic (a problem of mimeticism and referentiality). This two-tier incommensurability gives the sense of emptiness to the novel ("nothing to cling to," as Woolf put it). But where likeness fails, some tighter closeness takes its place. There is no clinging, there is co-existing. I propose that this is how To The Lighthouse writes World War I without writing it. The failure of stable mirroring on multiple levels
incorporates the destruction of the war as form not content. What is both intriguing and unsettling is that the violence of that non-mirroring (this insistence upon difference) is also an avenue for a non-semiotic, non-mimetic empathy.

For example, in Woolf's characteristic use of metaphor the impact of body upon body and their mutual deformation is not hidden but enshrined. Woolf's style relies upon mutable, fungible, penetrable bodies. What is notable about Woolf's prose is how this violence is written in "Time Passes" so tenderly, and how devastation can be folded into intimacy. To The Lighthouse provides an example of what Santanu Das identifies as the importance of touch and tactile intimacy in First World War literature. As Das argues, "touch dies with the person, impervious to […] preservation" and thereby "seems to break the chain of signification" (27). Similarly the "chain[s] of signification" in Woolf's prose are disrupted by the drawing close of bodies. It does not make sense to speak of "Time Passes" as "symbolizing" or "representing" the war. The relationship between the war and the house is not one of mimicry or indexing. They are two points on a spectrum. The heightened moments of corporeal contact catalyzed by the war, which erupted across a spectrum of "disgust, tenderness, pain" (Das 8) also ripple through the stylistic construction of Woolf's prose.

Lily's work epitomizes this tactile, non-representational, style. As she explains to Mr. Bankes, "[s]he had made no attempt at likeness" (55). Yet it is interesting that Lily's non-mimetic "triangular purple shape" that indicates Mrs. Ramsay reading to James sounds very similar to the "wedge-shaped core of darkness […] invisible to others" that Mrs. Ramsay considers "being oneself" (65). Lily unknowingly paints Mrs. Ramsay's idea of her private, inner, self. Her novel-long yearning to get inside Mrs. Ramsay, to find "the spirit in her, the essential thing, by which, had you found a crumpled glove in the corner of a sofa, you would have known it, from its
twisted finger, hers indisputably" (52), is fulfilled in this geometric shape. In her "triangular purple shape" Lily has, then, painted a ghost. The "purple shadow" (56) from the beginning of the novel reappears ten years later when Lily returns to her painting after Mrs. Ramsay is long dead. This time "an odd-shaped triangular shadow" appears on the step (204). Lily does not know who is sitting inside the house to cast this shadow, and we never find out who, if anyone, is actually there, but she imagines that it is Mrs. Ramsay: "there she sat" (205). The ghostly connotations of the word "shadow" become explicit now as the shadow functions as the indicator of the deceased Mrs. Ramsay's presence.

Lily's painted triangle is not precisely non-mimetic, despite what she explains to Mr. Bankes. Nor is it a lifelike representation, despite how accurately it mirrors Mrs. Ramsay's wedge-shaped inner-self. Rather, Lily's "triangular purple shape" is as much an image of an image—a copy of Mrs. Ramsay's visual metaphor about herself—as it is a miraculous reproduction of the private and unseen. It is both copy and not, and, like a ghost, this triangle lives in a limbo between original and mimicry. This (non)mimetic triangle seems to mock those elusive "angular essences" (27) that, early in the novel, Lily imagines Mr. Ramsay must walk around seeing all the time as he considers "the nature of reality." Mrs. Ramsay's private, inaccessible self, and the inaccessible world of objective things more generally, both of which are mourned by the novel, are resurrected in the non-representational.

I began this chapter with a discussion of Woolf's monsters. Lily's purple triangle is a quintessential Woolfian chimera: it is all at once a Platonic essence, a tangible smear of purple

125 She imagines "this seeing of angular essences" as being an act of "reducing lovely evenings, with all their flamingo clouds and blue and silver to a white deal four-legged table" (27). Even as she tries to conceptualize an ideal reality of universals behind the material world, Lily ends up perpetuating the physical, adding a particular table to her particular sunset. It is no surprise then, that her "angular essence" of Mrs. Ramsay is colorful and substantial.

126 Prue thinks of Mrs. Ramsay as "the thing itself," so both the lost woman and the lost world appear to be one and the same (118).
paint on canvas, a private subjectivity, and a cool shadow cast on the garden steps. It is a thing with many faces that surfaces in many different planes. To track Woolf's "monsters" and her "ghosts" through her prose is to attend to a practice of stylistic resuscitations. The over-signification of the prose is a radical act of empathy, which functions not by ameliorating difference or facilitating access to otherness, but in failing to do so. Woolf ties beings and things together in their failure to be similar to one another. Her worlds are not built by things that are alike or exchangeable, but by things that resist likeness. Yet that which does the work of resisting this equivalence is not particularity, or individuality, or autonomy. It comes not from stubborn uniqueness but a different kind of interrelation: a monstrosity, a community of diversity. Thus, we never find the "essential thing" that defines Mrs. Ramsay's glove. We instead find Mrs. Ramsay in a generic geometric shape that rather than having a particular location surfaces everywhere.

Despite describing it as "literal fact," Woolf's prose is sensual, metaphorical, and frequently more tangible than it is comprehensible. We can almost imagine a bemused Mr. Bankes tapping the bone handle of his penknife on a page from "Time Passes" to ask Woolf, like he asks Lily, "[w]hat did she wish to indicate" by the exuberant imagery of the phrase "amorphous bulks of leviathans" (138) or "the flash of tattered flags kindling in the gloom of cool cathedral caves" (131) or "the surface glassiness which forms in quiescence" (138)? The answer seems to be that "indication" is far from the point. Abstraction (by which I mean the failure of referentiality, often taking the form of fantastic, figurative, imagery) overcomes alienation. Or more precisely, abstraction, through its alienation, can create an intimacy of divergent bodies.127 German art critic Wilhelm Worringer claimed in his 1908 Abstraction and

127 In Realist Magic, Timothy Morton calls figuring others "tuning," and writes, "when you tune you are making another object. Tuning is the birth of another object: a tune, a reading, an
Empathy that empathy was expressed in realist art forms, and that "[w]hereas the precondition for the urge to empathy is a happy pantheistic relationship of confidence between man and the phenomena of the external world, the urge to abstraction is the outcome of a great inner unrest inspired in man by the phenomena of the outside world" (15).

Lily's triangle and the similarly opaque prose of "Time Passes" (which Woolf herself called "abstract") are certainly attributable to a precarious relationship between the human and the wider world. Yet both refute Worringer's notion of an "antithetic relation of empathy and abstraction" (4). Lily's painting insists that abstraction should not be understood as a mode of alienation, but simply of unlikeness. A kindred spirit to John in "Solid Objects," "Time Passes" too collects the excessive, incommensurate, or insignificant and revels in its unappreciated aesthetics and its strange powers. Rebelliously, the anti-representational is a means by which To The Lighthouse, unlike its characters, can refuse to placate or acquiesce to Mr. Ramsay's domineering philosophizing, reinserting a particularity not covered by his metaphysics of equivalence ("What is R?" 37). Most pertinently, however, this tangible abstraction refuses to try to make sense of, or symbolize, the Great War. That terror is not absent from the novel, however; the prose does not avert its eyes from the devastation. Rather, the violated bodies of the war form the fabric of the world of the novel. They are its philosophy and its form. What is so strikingly unsettling about this is how seamlessly death and violence becomes art and intimacy. "Time Passes," like everything else in the novel, over-works. It is both the writing of World War I and the answer to a philosophical thought experiment. It is both, simultaneously. The half-human bodies, broken objects, and collapse of signification is the war making itself felt, but it is also a...

interpretation [...] Every tune becomes an elegy for the disappearance, that is, the fundamental ontological secrecy, of an object or objects." Yet, he clarifies, "when you tune, real things happen. You are affecting causality. You are establishing a link with at least one other actually existing entity" (23).
metaphysics of intimacy being proposed. Woolf insists that we do not resolve the discomfort of that monstrous conflation.
"The strange thing for which there were no words": Sensation and Silence in Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*

Introduction: Hullo Ghost

In a letter to John Austen in 1946, Dorothy Richardson writes that she is currently reading a "remarkable" book: *Poltergeists Over England* by Harry Price. In it, Richardson says, Price "supplies, right up to date, a mass of authenticated evidence" of "instances of Poltergeist rollickings" (*Windows* 538). This prompts Richardson to recall a ghostly experience—complete with authenticated evidence—of her own. She tells Austen that one day she and her husband Alan Odle saw clearly from their window, "which was flush with the road," their "very elderly neighbour" Mr. Saunders walking down the lane with a young girl. What is surprising about this sight is that the old man was "completely transformed, walking easily & jauntily along, without overcoat & with a flower in his buttonhole & swinging a malacca cane." Mr. Saunders is "looking, in fact, at least twenty years less than his age" (538-9). Richardson and Odle later confirmed their sighting of the oddly sprightly old man when two neighbours also mention having seen him pass down the road with his granddaughter. However, a few days later Richardson and Odle meet Mr. Saunders—looking once more frail and ill as usual—whose wife mentions that "this was his first outing since the autumn" (539). Although "[f]or Alan it was quite new," Richardson takes this inexplicable experience in her stride, telling Austen that it was "a repetition of one I had many years ago in seeing someone who was not, physically, there; again a sick man restored to health & strength" (539).

Richardson explains that Mr. Saunders must have "projected his being as to appear to us solidly three-dimensional." The old man was, after all "an enthusiastic member of the P. R. S."
Society for Psychical Research] & himself definitely 'psychic'' (538). The "implications of such an experience are endless," Richardson notes (539). Given her personal, and apparently sincere, experience of psychical or spectral phenomena, it is not surprising that ghosts are a recurrent feature for the characters of Richardson's short stories and novels. For example, in "Journey to Paradise," a memoir of childhood summer holidays, Richardson recalls how "the sternest of [her] grandmothers" joined the family one year, but that, like the sea "ghostly in the fading light," this grandmother was "to the smaller of us little more than an apparition" (Journey 128-30). Both the ocean and the old woman are difficult to grasp and phantasmal to the young children. In "Christmas Eve" the narrator finds a companion addressing her with "'Hullo ghost; here's a ghost'' (33) as she enters a room full of mostly strangers. In a similar moment in Pilgrimage, Mr. Orly gives "a ghostly little chuckle" after an unexpected social invitation causes "delight and horror and astonishment" to "flow all over the table" (Vol. II 168). Consistently through Richardson's fiction, ghostliness is an expression of isolation and inequality—whether that means describing an incognizable grandmother or the experience of an awkward social moment.

In Richardson's short story "Sunday" this is particularly clear. The first-person narrator finds her "perfect Sunday happiness" ruined by a visit to her very deaf "Grannie" (Journey 26). The narrator twice refers to herself as a ghost. The first time she claims "I was a ghost meaning nothing, then and now" (27). This stands in contrast to Grannie's "tall figure" and "unconscious stare" which "all meant" (though what Grannie's body "meant" she does not say). The difficulty, and often failure, to communicate vocally with Grannie and access some of that personal and physical meaningfulness is variously sad, frustrating, and embarrassing. The narrator flounders attempting to make small talk through Grannie's proffered ear trumpet, and is instead the reluctant perpetuator of "sliding silence," and excruciatingly aware of her own "false face": "It
gets dark earlier now shouted my ghost" (27-8). The young girl's phantasmal existence is the result of her failure to communicate. Her desperately shouted words are still just "a bridge thrown towards nothing" (28). Death hangs heavily over this story, with our narrator at one point hoping Grannie would die, at another imagining the "hell waiting" for herself. Yet her spectrality is not the result of these thoughts of mortality. Rather, her ghost indicates the breakdown of meaning and language. This question of where the self exists, if it can be rooted neither epistemologically (she means nothing) nor communicatively (she fails to connect with Grannie) prompts the narrator's existential crisis: "I had had the thought […] Below the joys and wonders of my life was that. Me" (28).

 Richardson's ghosts, both actual and metaphorical, are not diaphanous. They might stride down a country lane with uncharacteristic vigour. They might shout, being distressingly aware of their faces and voices. What they have in common is a certain incommensurability to the wider world and to others. They express and enact a failure to communicate and to connect. The girl who accompanied Mr. Saunders's ghostly projection down the lane was, after all, unaware of his presence and walked "as if alone […] completely ignoring his remark" (Windows 539). Richardson's spectres do not lack "three-dimensional" presence—they are physical and sensual—but they are unable to make themselves intelligible. For Richardson the ghost is the figure that illustrates the impossibility of transcendence.

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In this chapter I explore those spectral communicative difficulties, and how they intersect with Richardson's interest in the sensual, material, stuff of the world, particularly in her life's
work, Pilgrimage. To begin, I establish the implications of Richardson's choice to confine the narrator's scope to the mind of the protagonist, Miriam. I suggest that a significant consequence of this choice is that the nonhuman world—the world beyond Miriam—is never represented "objectively." No attempt is made to write outside of consciousness and therefore the world beyond the self is posited by the form as a world beyond language. In section II, I attend to the fact that this world (filtered through Miriam's consciousness) is often experienced by her synaesthetically. The confusion between different types of sensory data establishes the irrelevance of epistemological "access" to the external world in this novel. In sections III and IV, I argue that Miriam is at heart a phenomenologist, her sensations seeming to be both personal to her and an external, alien, thing that is unreliant upon her ego. This leaves Miriam feeling, in her own words, "like a phantom," somewhat in thrall to the apparently more powerful presences that surround her—a sense that is deftly expressed through Richardson's distinctive use of punctuation. Sections V and VI, I explore how to conceptualize Miriam's mental relationship to her world, and to Pilgrimage, spatially. Contemporary critical reviews, which imagined Miriam's mind like a basket, or like a stream, establish an inside/outside relationship which isn't upheld by the novel. Miriam herself has a philosophical theory about the universe, in which she claims that the mind does not correspond to the cosmos, but rather that mind and universe engage in a wordless identity. In sections VIII and IX, I show that Miriam's proposal to experience the world non-linguistically is enacted in Richardson's prose where erroneous nomenclature is an important tool for indicating a more-than-human world.

There is a consistent thread through Pilgrimage of anti-correlationism, whether that is Miriam's synaesthetic or phenomenological experiences of sensory data, which disassociate sensual knowledge from accurate or truthful correspondence with their objects, or whether it is
an attempt to write a world that cannot be written by using error and obfuscation. This failure to uphold corresponding binaries extends even to the form of the novel. In section X, I explore how Miriam is both written and writer at once, the very framework of the novel seeming to disavow any transcendent possibility of connecting with, or moving beyond, individual identity. Miriam does have relationships with other people and things. But her closest interpersonal connections, similar to her intimacy with her environment and possessions, are reliant upon an unintelligible communication. In sections XI-XIII, I explore how Miriam's romantic relationships with other women are conducted through paradoxically wordless conversation. Miriam's intimacy, both with people and with the world, is therefore founded upon a kind of intellectual alienation. Throughout this chapter, I draw attention to the manner in which such a wordy novel is so interested in silence, and ask how such a personal novel can be so effective for writing beyond the self. To conclude, I argue that there are radical implications raised by Miriam's speechless communication with her female lovers. After all, it appears that Miriam's unintelligible speech, far from being a sort of underground reaction to, or resistance against, male bombastic self-expression, is, in Pilgrimage, given space to be the very fabric of the cosmos.

And memory proper, as distinct from a mere backward glance, as distinct even from prolonged contemplation of things regarded as past and done with, gathers, can gather, and pile up its wealth only round universals
I. Beyond Miriam

Dorothy Richardson's lifetime work was an epic modernist tome, Pilgrimage. It is an unfinished series of thirteen autobiographical novels, the first published in 1915 and the last published posthumously ten years after her death in 1967. The narrative's sole subject-matter in Pilgrimage is the mind of the protagonist (and Richardson's autobiographical persona) Miriam Henderson. The novel series begins by following Miriam as she ventures into the world of work and independent living in the late 19th century, after the collapse of her family's fortune. This "New Woman" narrative gradually morphs into a Künstlerroman as Miriam begins writing, and, eventually, embarks seriously upon authorship herself. Pilgrimage records Miriam's thoughts, emotions, and sense impressions without contributing any omniscient information about her world at all. Its verbosity and fidelity to a single mind might seem to indicate the novel's unwavering interest in subjectivity and the world of language and consciousness. Yet Miriam, although she is grounded by a "curious feeling of a real self that stayed the same through thing after thing" (Vol. II 101), nevertheless is concerned by the apparent irreality of her mind and has a deep lack of conviction regarding the reliability of communication.

On restricting herself to narrating only Miriam's thoughts and feelings, Richardson wrote that "It has been 'horrible' to refrain from objective descriptions of her family ([…]) Miriam rather dumpy & not tall—about 5'4"—it was a short person who called her tall—but she did not observe that, only that somebody called her tall,) & surroundings" (Windows 49-50). The form of Pilgrimage is solipsistic. Its entire world is one single mind. "Horrible" though it may have been for Richardson to restrict her narration only to what Miriam observes and thinks, Virginia
Woolf's 1923 review of the volume *Rovelling Lights* praised Richardson as an innovative creator of the "psychological sentence of the feminine gender" ("Romance" 229). But for all this authorial attention to and critical praise of a psyche captured in words, Miriam herself remains often suspicious of and irritated by her own mind. In various ways, the novel makes it a project to show the limitations of both consciousness and language—two things which Miriam neatly conflates into a single derogatory term: the "metaphorocrasy" (Vol. IV 607). She feels quite literally trapped or captured by words.

Miriam is more certain about the reality of, and is certainly more thrilled by, the idea of things existing beyond the metaphorocrasy. She describe this as "the astonishingness of doors opening when you push them. But what is much more astonishing than things behaving after their manner, is that there should be anything anywhere to behave. Why does this pass unnoticed?" (Vol. IV 455). As Deborah Longworth writes, despite the debates around perception and knowledge that accompanied the clash between British Idealism and New Realism in the first two decades of the twentieth century (ideas that travelled from Cambridge to Bloomsbury),

in *Pilgrimage* the problem of the relation of subject and object, or the nature of reality, is presented as a primarily ontological rather than epistemological project. For Miriam Henderson, the Tansley Street boarding-house where she lives, and objects within it such as her table and window, seem to possess identity […] she not only assumes that they persist when she is not there to look at them, but indeed they seem to her to possess their own mysterious life, observing her and journeying with her. (14)
Longworth's observation recalls Richardson's own characterization of Honoré de Balzac as the "father of realism" because of his "treatment of backgrounds, contemplated with an equally passionate interest" as his characters (Vol. I 9). Richardson's own novel, which she considers a "feminine equivalent" to the "current masculine realism" attends to background furnishings not just with as much interest as in people, but as if they were a community themselves. For example, in *The Tunnel*, Miriam's roses "understood, in detail, as clearly as she did, all the difficulties. They took her part. Standing there, waiting, they too felt that there was nothing now but lunch and Irving" (184). The novel is an "ontological" project, which takes seriously Miriam's "delight in the mere fact of existence" and sense of community with the more-than-human world. Richardson's difficult task is to write this "delight" in words and sentences—thereby having to fit the ontological project into an epistemological framework.

Part of the reason *Pilgrimage* had the reputation of being difficult at the time of publication (and still does) is because it is a novel that deliberately uses failures of language and knowledge: as readers we are blinded, frequently, finding the text impenetrable or self-contradictory. Richardson was aware of this, dryly including in her foreword her desire "to offer to all those readers who have persisted in spite of every obstacle, a heart-felt apology" (Vol. I 12). The novel has also "achieved a reputation of being 'obscure'" because "those readers who remain undeterred by the novel's formal innovations will nonetheless be unable to finish the book" (Bluemel 16). By remaining unfinished, *Pilgrimage* not only refuses to take the shape of a novel as we know it, but it also gives the slip to its own epistemological structure. Having no end, the novel (theoretically) remains contingent not deterministic. Without an ending there is no afterwards, no temporal location for the narrator to survey the novel with an organising eye and form it into patterns and meanings. This is not to say that the things of the novel aren't
meaningful. Miriam's furniture and possessions do seem "to possess their own mysterious life."
But the things of the novel are written as though they are yet to be catalogued and set into place:
more like companions than symbols or backdrops.

Much of the prose is dedicated to Miriam's affectation by sensory experiences and her
aesthetic delight in wayward and meaningless things. Her interactions with the world are not a
matter of knowing but of intimacy: exploring, for example, "what London can mean as a
companion" (Journey 137). An important question is how we understand the tension between the
importance and notice Miriam bestows on her physical surroundings, and the complete lack of
interest and lack of notice given to that same world by her narrator. In a letter of 1923
Richardson expressed the difficulty of this project. She is not attempting to write "direct
unmediated experience" (which, she claims, is the "titanic failure of Joyce") but attempting to
add to this unmediated experience the existence of the wider world: "[i]nformation there must be,
but the moment it's given directly as information, the sense of immediate experience is gone."
How to stay with Miriam and her immediate sensory experiences and also get a sense of what is
beyond her too, is the question. Or, as Richardson puts it: "It is the great & abiding problem of
all those who take the inward way, this business of getting something tremendously there as it
were unawares. I haven't solved it" (Windows 68).

Pilgrimage's narrator cannot move beyond Miriam because that ability would inevitably
result in the "giv[ing]" of "information," which Richardson studiously wants to abstain from
doing. The "inward way" avoids peddling knowledge. But it also helps the "ontological" project
in another way. Confining the text to Miriam's mind allows Miriam's belief in a world
autonomous from her to stand without contradiction. Were the narrator of Pilgrimage able to
step apart, and look down upon Miriam's world from some place beyond, that structure would

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describe a fictional universe in which language was universally capable. In third-person narrative structures, the narrator's voice floats both within and without consciousness, permeating not just speech and thought but all things. There is no space beyond voice. But the "inward way," conversely, implies that language reaches its limits in the mental sphere. The only way to write a novel about an infinite solid universe that exceeds human understanding, is to confine narrative to a human consciousness. To do otherwise always results in a story whose form, no matter its content, asserts the universe to be no greater than the limits of the human mind.

Places to them were nothing but people; there was something they missed out that could not be given up. Something goes if you lose yourself in humanity (Richardson Pilgrimage Vol. II 358).

II. Synaesthesia

The very form of the novel, therefore, alerts us to the fact that the world beyond consciousness must also be a world beyond words. "[C]ould not both of them see that the quiet sheen of the green-painted window-frame cast off their complacent speech? Did they not hear it tinkle emptily back from the twined leaves and tendrils […]?" (Vol. II 250). The presence of this independent world that "cast[s] off" words is evident likewise as the prose repeatedly misbehaves and slips away from its descriptive function. For example, in The Tunnel, Miriam listens to the church bells through her open window:
The bells climbed gently up, made a faint flat dab at the last top note, left it in the air aske
above the decorous little tune and rushed away down their scale as if to cover the in
propriety. They clamoured recklessly mingling with Miriam's shout of joy as they banged against the wooden walls of the window space. (23)

The personified bells of St. Pancras are experienced by Miriam as both sounds and touches; "dabbing" the air and "banging" the windowsill. The adverb in the phrase "[t]hey clamoured recklessly mingling with Miriam's shout of joy," intensifies the bells' insistent presence in two opposite ways. "Recklessly" simultaneously qualifies the bells' clamouring (in which reading, it is Miriam's description of the chaotic noise of the chimes) and describes their mingling with Miriam's voice (in which case the "recklessness" seems less a value judgment from Miriam, and more an attribute of the bells' activity). The difference can be illustrated by the addition of a clarifying comma in two different locations: "they clamoured recklessly, mingling" versus "they clamoured, recklessly mingling" The double-duty of "recklessly"—Richardson's lack of punctuation decides definitively on neither reading—allows the bells to be both passively described and actively interacting.

Whether active or passive, in both cases the bells are personified by the word "clamoured." Their anthropomorphism is bestowed by Miriam even as it facilitates the bells' invasion of her room and infiltration of her voice. There is a back-and-forth here. Miriam imposes her sense of self on the bells in order that they can infringe upon her room, her body, and her voice. It is the "synaesthetic" quality of Miriam's personifications in particular (which is characteristic of her thought-processes)\textsuperscript{128} that renders her animation of the inanimate something

\textsuperscript{128} A synaesthetic anthropomorphised world can be found in many of Richardson's works. Take for example the short story from 1924, "The Garden," in which the protagonist, apparently a very
more complicated than domineering anthropomorphism. In a similar scene from *Dimple Hill*, Miriam is sitting in a greenhouse among grapevines, and finds that "the vines now seemed conscious presences, breathing out a delicately penetrating incense [...] become, with the help of stillness and solitude, an almost audible emanation" (476). Like the church bells above, the vine leaves are experienced by Miriam as sentient presences that are synaesthetically confused. The verbs "mingling" and "penetrating" show Miriam being invaded by her sensations. The phenomena she experiences, although belonging to her, seem nevertheless to exist independently from her and subsequently they infringe upon her. As noise becomes physical or scents become audible, single qualities seem to expand into whole worlds or environments and Miriam is overwhelmed by sensory experience (and delight).

Richardson wrote that, persisting from childhood, she preferred such confused and self-annihilating union with "things" over true facts or knowledge:

what astonished, and still astonishes, me more than anything else was the existence, anywhere, of anything at all. But since things there were, I preferred to become one with them, in the child's way of direct apprehension which no subsequent "knowledge" can either rival or destroy, rather than to stand back and be told, in relation to any of the objects of my self-losing adoration, this and that. (*Journey* 132)

This "direct apprehension" of childhood is not the same as the "direct unmediated experience" Richardson took James Joyce to task for, but rather an anticipation of her own narrative method (the "inward way") in which remaining within the subject does not negate the discovery of young child, can "see the different smells going up into the sunshine" (*Journey* 21). This confusion of sensation seems to exist not inside but outside the self (when the child falls over the ground is "holding a pain against her nose").
something worldly "tremendously there" as well. Miriam's personification of bells or leaves, for example, avoids "knowledge" through synaesthetic confusion, whilst recasting personal sensory experience not as an internal state but an external environment in which to lose oneself.

Synaesthesia was a recognized neuropsychological condition by the early twentieth century. Jörg Jewanski et al. argue that the first "convincing case" should be attributed to Georg Sach's dissertation concerning his own albinism and synaesthesia in 1812. By the end of the century, the French symbolists were embracing the poetic possibilities of the condition, while a debate emerged regarding the condition's connection to degeneracy versus the possibility that it was a hopeful vision of "future sensibility" (Dann 36). It is nowhere suggested in Pilgrimage that Miriam actually has this condition. Rather, synaesthesia in the novel illustrates the palpable importance of sensory experience to Miriam and its centrality to her understanding of what is autonomous and real, while simultaneously decoupling reality from notions of accuracy and access. Therefore, contrary to what Kevin T. Dann identifies as a "feeling of dissipation and disintegration" in fin de siècle France that catalyzed the search for a "sense that the world is knit together, that some underlying unity exists" (36), for Miriam it is precisely the disunity of her sensations from both herself and their objects (exacerbated by her personification of synaesthetic phenomena, an act that grants them lives of their own) which is important.

Synaesthesia is commonly understood as being a true sense experience linked to or accompanied by an extra one—a true colour provokes a superfluous taste, for example. The additional colour or taste or sound, just as much as the original sense experience, appears to the experiencer be located externally to the subject. In other words, the synaesthetic sensation is not recognizably imaginary or subjective; it feels just as real, just as independent. In terms of Miriam's experiences, synaesthesia is used in the prose to trouble the very idea of "true" or

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129 See for instance Arthur Rimbaud's Voyelles (1884).
"false" knowledge of the world, rather than prove the existence of any "underlying unity."

Epistemological failure is central to Miriam's perceptual experience of the world, yet neither she, nor the church bells nor the vine leaves seem endangered by it. Incorrect or idiosyncratic perception opens a no-man's-land between individual and world in which their relation is not determined by information. To make contact with bells or leaves, Richardson seems to say, has very little to do with accurately knowing them.

III. Non-Transcendence

Miriam experiences the world perhaps not accurately, but certainly intimately. In Miriam's perceptual experience sensation is not necessarily a reliable bridge of knowledge between subject and object but is nevertheless a space of community with it. Miriam, in other words, is a phenomenologist. Attending a lecture about photography and light at the Royal Institution, Miriam is thrilled by the colour slides shown by the presenter:

There was something in this intense hard rich colour like something one sometimes saw when it wasn't there, a sudden brightening and brightening of all colours till you felt something must break if they grew any brighter—or in the dark, or in one's mind, suddenly, at any time, unearthly brilliance […] it was the real certain thing; the one real certain happy thing. (Vol. II 107)

In a letter of 1936 (Windows 318), Richardson clarifies that this was a lecture by the French physicist Gabriel Lippmann, who demonstrated his new colour photography process in 1896
This was the first colour photography technique to result solely from the "direct action of light," and Lippmann later won a Nobel prize for it in 1908 (Mitchell 319). Miriam jumps on Lippmann's process of "intaircepting-thee-light" imagining it less as a representative act and more as a trap: "waves of light that would get away into space without leaving any impression, were stopped by some special kind of film and went surging up and down in confinement" (Vol. II 106). No wonder she calls Lippmann's colour photography "the real certain thing." It is, as Miriam understands it, both a representation of the colours of light and that light itself. It is both "impression" and actual thing. It therefore exists "in one's mind" as well as being alienating and "unearthly." Throughout Pilgrimage Miriam takes issue with the notion of transcendence, and Lippmann’s photography seems, to her, to be that impossible thing, a non-representative image. There is something almost parapsychological about the way Miriam explains this oxymoron: seeing something that "wasn't there." Her phantasmal phenomenology understands sensory phenomena to be like these photographs: they are overwhelming and demanding ("you felt something must break if they grew any brighter") but despite their "intense," "hard," and "rich" tangibility they make present something that isn't there.

Just as Lippmann was receiving recognition for his colour photography process, so Edmund Husserl was introducing his phenomenology in a series of lectures at the University of Göttingen in 1907. Although there is no mention of Husserl or phenomenology in Richardson's letters, Jean Radford suggests she would have been familiar with his work "though T. E. Hulme's essay in The New Age and Husserl's lectures at University College in London 1922" ("Impersonality" 89). As Rebecca Rauve Davis writes, their projects were certainly similar: "both Richardson and Husserl set out to describe the capacity of consciousness to be in direct

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130 It even affects her religious sensibility: she likes Unitarianism for the "way it cleared up the trouble about Christ" (Vol. II 24), by which she means that Jesus is not considered by the Unitarians to be both human and divine.
contact with its immediate experience" (329). Whether or not Miriam knows it, she appears to be a phenomenologist. In *The Idea of Phenomenology* (which collates his 1907 lectures) Husserl claims that there is a problem with the way knowledge is treated in scientific investigation. This problem is both its assumed transcendence (how consciousness can move beyond itself) and its assumed commensurability (how we can know that our knowledge corresponds to the thing known). We may recall how Richardson understood the giving of information as detrimental to the sense of "immediate experience" (*Windows* 68). Husserl too, claims immanent experience as more fundamental than binary structure of "information."

Husserl neutralises the problems of transcendence and correspondence by first performing a Cartesian move and reducing certainty to phenomena: "[k]nowledge is the title for a highly ramified sphere of being that can be given to us absolutely, and must be absolutely given to us in its details at any particular time" (24). Our perceptions are "immanent" and "given." They do not exceed or exist beyond consciousness. He then performs what he calls the "phenomenological reduction" which ignores the particular perceiving subject to arrive at pure perception: "while I am perceiving I can […] regard this perception itself in an act of pure seeing, just as it is, ignoring its relation to the ego […] The perception thus grasped and delimited in 'seeing' is then an absolute perception, devoid of every transcendence, given as a pure phenomenon in the phenomenological sense" (34). He insists that in grasping pure perception nothing is "assumed concerning the existence or non-existence of reality" (34). We must bracket that real thing. Pure phenomena do, nevertheless, exist outside of an ego: "[f]or us it is not a matter of merely subjectively valid judgments, the validity of which is limited to the empirical subject, and objectively valid judgments in the sense of being valid for every subject in general. For we have excluded the empirical subject" (37).
*Pilgrimage* performs a Husserlian kind of trick. It restricts itself entirely to Miriam's consciousness, making the same kind of initial Cartesian compromise in which the only thing that is present and certain is Miriam's mind—her thoughts and her perceptions. But it also seems to be on a mission to un-write Miriam: to "reduce," "ignore," or "exclude" the ego of the subject, to use Husserl's terms. Miriam is frequently overcome by sensation, as though perception somehow exceeds her or blots her out. As Davis notes, there is a "strange materiality … [to] Miriam's mental life" (322). And the novel writes her in dissolving fashion: we cannot separate her from the text, from her author, or from her narrator. The novel is all and only Miriam, but to point to where she definitively resides turns out to be impossible. Thus it makes sense that the novel is in large part about stairwells and hard-boiled eggs and cigarettes and paving stones as well as about what Virginia Woolf called the "damned egotistical self." It is both at once.

*Pilgrimage* takes a deeply subjective route towards, if not the "real" or "objective" world, then at least the existence of objects outside the ego. According to Richardson, *Pilgrimage* allows for "contemplated reality having for the first time […] its own say" (Vol. I 10). Miriam's particular view of the world is allowed to have its "own"—apparently autonomous—say. This phrase sounds like a synonym for "pure seeing." It is what Miriam describes as perceiving

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131 Take this moment from *Interim*, for example: "She stood staring at the sheeny gaslit brown-yellow varnish of the wall-paper above the mantelpiece. There was no thought in the silence, no past or future nothing but the strange thing for which there were no words, something that was always there as if by appointment, waiting for one to get through to it away from everything in life. It was the thing that was nothing. Yet it seemed the only thing that came near and meant anything at all. It was happiness and realization. It was being suspended, in nothing. It came out of oneself because it came only when one had been a long time alone. It was not oneself. It could not be God. It did not mind what you were or what you had done. It would be there if you had just murdered someone. It was only there when you had murdered everybody and everything and torn yourself away. Perhaps it was evil. One's own evil genius. But how could it make you so blissful?" (322).

132 The full passage from Woolf's diary (January 26, 1920) reads: "the danger is the damned egotistical self; which ruins Joyce & Richardson to my mind: is one pliant & rich enough to provide a wall for the book from oneself without its becoming, as in Joyce & Richardson, narrow & restricting?" (Vol. II 14).
"perfect things around her, no beginning or ending" when she feels "outside life, untouched by anything, free" (Vol. II 213). There is no binary of inside versus outside Miriam's mind in *Pilgrimage*, and therefore there can be no difficulty about how her perceptions correspond, or fail to correspond, to their objects. Her perceptions are those existent objects. As she writes of a memory of being in a garden as a child: "the bright sun between the blazing flowers, the two banks linked by the slowly swinging bees, nothing else in the world, no house behind the little path, no garden beyond it" (Vol. II 213). Like the Husserlian phenomenology it seems to find kinship with, *Pilgrimage* reaches for a non-transcendent understanding of "what exists"—one not reliant upon "intelligibility" as we tend to understand it (*Idea* 34). "The blazing alley came first without thought or effort or memory. The flowers all shining separate and distinct and all together, indistinct in a blaze" (Vol. II 214).

Its beauty and wonder were imperious demands, overwhelming (*Close Up* 183).

IV. Spectral Phenomenology

Miriam does not claim to be able to move beyond her own mind. But her sensory experiences are "unearthly" and have a Husserlian independence from her. Indeed, they even exert power over her. In *Dimple Hill*, for example, Miriam feels like a "phantom" in comparison to the hedged lane she walks down (414). She is aware of "the inner twilight of her being" (413). The use of these crepuscular, spectral images imply that her selfhood is murky and somehow less-than-real. Of the hedgerow that prompts these phantasmic feelings, we learn that the "indefinite length of the tame corridor asserted its strangeness and independence, bringing self-
consciousness, embarrassing her gait by drawing attention to its surprising weakness." Miriam finds that her inability to get to grips with this lane, either mentally or physically, leaves her "feeling like a phantom, needing all her strength to keep upright and progressing amongst the gentle, powerful presences all about her" (414). She recognises herself as a limited being, ghostly in comparison to the world around her which she cannot grasp.

Indeed, it is the world that grasps her. A couple of pages earlier at breakfast time Miriam had noticed that a line of trees in the distance were "looking across at her from their far distance so intently that she was moved to set down the thin little old spoon raised to crack the shell of an egg whose surface, in the unimpeded light, wore so soft a bloom" (Vol. IV 412). The trees are not only looking at her rather than her looking at them but they even compel her to put down her spoon. Under their gaze, Miriam, as an agential being, seems to disappear. Even Miriam as an observational viewpoint for the novel disappears. She is returning the gaze of those trees that are looking at her, whereas her prose lingers in a loving description of the bloom on the shell of her hardboiled egg. We can understand Miriam's sense of self-loss in moments like this through the terms of the philosopher Alphonso Lingis. Sensory pleasure, Lingis suggests, is a response to imperatives. "Sensuality is awakened from the outside […] There is not mastery but obedience in pleasure" (21). Or, in other words, "[t]ouching, seeing, hearing, savoring, and feeling are not reactions and not spontaneous initiatives, but are conducted moves" (31). Sensory pleasure, according to Lingis, comes from following the imperatives of the world, not mastering it. It is an obedience not a domination. Phenomena shape and direct us.

Just as the exact overlap between narrator and protagonist is the only possible structure of the novel that allows Miriam's belief in a universe beyond language to stand without contradiction, so Lingis makes an argument in The Imperative for how a limited subjective
perspective does not cast doubt upon but acts as proof for a world beyond subjectivity. He playfully upends Cartesian doubt, understanding it not as leaving nothing sure but the self, but rather leaving nothing sure but the world: "the doubt that works in perception is not a subjective operation that maintains the perceiving act certain and demotes the perceived to a succession of images all immanent of a transcendental reality that is only conjectural. To doubt [...] is to replace the present perception with one that reveals the thing more clearly" (55). Lingis claims that sensory doubt is indicative of a misapprehension trying to come into better alignment with its object, not the supremacy of a self that renders everything else mere conjecture. In sensory doubt it is the perceiving self whose existential integrity is at risk. If consciousness is only consciousness of something, to doubt you are sensing is to doubt you are at all. Or as Miriam says in Deadlock: "Descartes should have said, 'I am aware that there is something, therefore I am'" (Vol. III 171). Miriam, by her own standards, is never at risk of not being. But her existence is so tied to her sensations that, as we have seen, even as they guarantee her selfhood they also overwhelm and overshadow it.

In The Tunnel nearly two full pages are dedicated to a description of a "dusty and rusty" window in Miriam's new attic boarding room. The neglected room is surprisingly active for something inanimate. It "asserted its chilliness," its bed "showed an expanse of greyish white counterpane," and its silence "came in from the landing" (13-4). The domestic environment acts upon Miriam. Meanwhile she is mostly passive. She finds that "the sight of her luggage [...] drew her forward into dimness" (14). As she opens the window, "her hands went through the bars and lifted the little rod" as though they were acting of their own accord, unconnected to her. When lifting the window frame, she does not push it up and up but rather "it came up and up until her arms were straight" (15)—the window frame appearing to raise her arms, instead of her
arms raising the window frame. The world acts and Miriam is acted upon: she is choreographed by rods and frames, her limbs pulled to and fro.

Only a couple of times do Miriam's thoughts arise amidst her lengthy, obedient, experience of exploring the room and opening the attic window. At one moment, seeing a window blind behind the bars of the window she concludes, "[t]hen the bars must move." Later, observing the rooftop outside and seeing that "a soft wash of madder lay along the grey tiles," Miriam thinks that "[t]here must be an afterglow somewhere, just out of sight" (14). Both of Miriam's thoughts contain the word "must." Like an investigator, she follows clues; just as it is only after her arms are "straight above her head" holding up the window bars that she looks up and sees "a stout iron ring in a little trapdoor in the wooden ceiling" by which to fasten it (15). Miriam seems to be in a domestic detective story—her movements and thoughts directed by following the hints and clues of some reality of which she nevertheless has only the most fragmented access.

The power imbalance that demands Miriam's obedience to her environmental imperatives is evident in the very construction of Richardson's sentences. Characteristic of the novel are lists of adjectives and adverbs unseparated by commas. Take as a typical example, a description of Michael Shatov, Miriam's Russian lover (and, at one time, nearly-husband): "He came forward with his bearded courteous emphatically sweeping foreign bow" (Vol. III 40). The lack of commas in lists such as these has a strange effect on the qualities of the things described. The absence of punctuation suggests to the reader as they move through the sentence that each subsequent word will be a noun. But the crowding adjectives usurp their object's position in the sentence structure over and over, and in doing so they become object-like themselves. The deferral of the noun—in this case, we don't know what is bearded and courteous for quite some
time, until finally "bow" appears—means its qualities seem to float free in the world. What else can they do, with no object on which to anchor themselves? In the following phrase, for example, "compact" reads at first very much like a noun rather than an adjective, wedged as it is between another adjective and adverb: "his flat compact slightly wrinkled and square-toed patent leather shoes" (70). Thus Richardson's prose posits a world in which qualities—attributes, actions, adjectives—loom large, peeling almost free of their objects. Miriam does not reach forth, grasping and mastering the world. Rather she is nearly overwhelmed as things and people, fragmented and therefore at best only partially knowable, press upon her with myriad sensory qualities which threaten to obscure nouns and categories.

In her essay "About Punctuation" Richardson addresses this erasure of the comma "from sequences of adjectives," claiming that "this exclusion suggests an awareness of the power of the comma as a holder-up, a desire to allow adjectives to converge, in the mind of the reader, as swiftly as possible." She suggests that "the use of the comma, whether between phrases or in sequences of adjectives, is best regulated by the consideration of its time-value" (417).

Richardson's thoughts here, expressed in 1924, predate by a decade Gertrude Stein's similar assertions in her 1934 lecture "Poetry and Grammar": "When I first began writing, I felt that writing should go on, I still do feel that it should go on but when I first began writing I was completely possessed by the necessity that writing should go on and on and if writing should go on what had colons and commas to do with it" (318). Stein insists that while periods have "a life of their own" commas are "purely servile" by which she means useful but enervating: "[a] comma by helping you along holding your coat for you and putting on your shoes keeps you from living your life as actively as you should" (320). She clarifies:

Richardson expressed approval of Stein a year earlier in 1933: "Stein is a delight […] I know one should be shocked, but up to a point she is right with her meaning when meaning a meaning a meaning is a meaning is a meaning is a meaning" (Windows 250).
a comma does nothing but make easy a thing that if you like it enough is easy enough without the comma. A long complicated sentence should force itself upon you, make you know yourself knowing it and the comma, well at the most a comma is a poor period that lets you stop and take a breath but if you want to take a breath you ought to know yourself that you want to take a breath. (320)

Stein's comments recall Richardson's similar sentiment that the comma is somehow an impediment to vitality. The exclusion of the comma, Richardson insists, ensures that as readers "we are brought sensibly nearer to sharing the incident," thanks to the immediacy lent by a speedy prose (417). There is, Richardson seems to agree, something almost stampede-like about adjectives un-corralled by commas.

In a similar vein Lingis writes that, "[t]he elements are sensuous realities; they are not perceptible frameworks, dimensions, or intelligible structures […] They are not terms, not nouns, but free-floating adjectives" (14). His comment two paragraphs later that "[t]he elements manifest adverbially, qualifying our movements and our composure" (15) clarifies that these qualities, these free-floating adjectives and adverbs, qualify us. Or to put that thought another way: we do not describe the world, the world describes, or characterises, us. Richardson's commas (or lack thereof) write such a world. We remember that Richardson sought a self-annihilating union with things. Miriam's experience of colours, smells, and textures, are likewise not empirical data but phenomenological imperatives through which she is qualified and conducted by the world. She does not "know" things, but she is in "union" with them. For both
Lingis and Richardson, a rising up of descriptive terms freed from their object-shackles illustrates that these sensations qualify not the thing observed, but the observer.

V. Oceans

Katherine Mansfield in her review of The Tunnel complained about the ruthlessly fast and chaotic tumble of things that form Richardson's narrative:

There is Miss Richardson, holding out her mind, as it were, and there is Life hurling objects into it as fast as she can throw. And at the appointed time Miss Richardson dives into its recesses and reproduces a certain number of these treasures—a pair of button boots, a night in spring, some cycling knickers, some large, round biscuits—as many as she can pack into a book, in fact. But the pace kills. (6)

Mansfield's disdain can be heard particularly in the phrases "holding out her mind" and "as many as she can pack into a book." Her equation of Richardson's mind with a kind of basket that accumulates random objects seems to have arisen from a mistaken expectation of a psychological or epistemological novel—a narrative about knowledge—in which those objects would be more carefully selected, organized, and made meaningful. Likewise, as she pointedly remarks that Richardson has included "as many as she can pack" in, Mansfield implies that novels should leave room for things beside objects. She seems to resent that The Tunnel does not contain fewer, more meaningful, things. Yet we've seen that Miriam's existence is brought about by, guaranteed by, and conducted by her perception of things. To write about Miriam therefore necessitates writing about boots, knickers, and biscuits. In a memoir sketch titled "Beginnings,"
Richardson describes an early childhood full of "flowers, bees and sunlight" that seemed to enact "a benevolent conspiracy of awareness turned towards a small being to whom they first, and they alone, brought the sense of existing" (Journey 110-1). Young Dorothy found her sense of her own existence handed to her, conspiratorially, by her environment. We hear echoes of Miriam's cry: "I am aware that there is something, therefore I am" (Vol. III 171).

In what appears to be a similar attempt to understand what Mansfield referred to as "Life hurling objects," May Sinclair famously referred to Richardson's prose style as "stream of consciousness," the first use of that phrase (taken from William James's Principles of Psychology from 1890) in a literary context. Richardson perhaps snidely writes in her own foreword to the novel that it was a phrase "gladly welcomed by all who could persuade themselves of the possibility of comparing consciousness to a stream" (Vol. I 11). Certainly Richardson could not persuade herself. "Stream of consciousness is a muddle-headed phrase. It's not a stream, it's a pool, a sea, an ocean," she retorted (Brome 29). Richardson replaces Sinclair's rushing imagery with a more placid, static, analogy. Claire Drewery understands that "a key term of Richardson's objections to the stream of consciousness metaphor was its epistemological basis" ("failure" 129). Indeed, Richardson refers to it as "the death-dealing metaphor" (Windows 597) and "The Shroud (!) of Consciousness" (600) noting in the same breath that Sinclair "borrowed it from the epistemologists," and therefore suggesting a link between its deadening qualities and its connection to the philosophy of knowledge. Certainly Sinclair's stream image—a narrow trajectory of information flowing through a different medium—seems at odds with the "benevolent conspiracy of awareness" wherein a young Dorothy's self-consciousness is quickened by an enveloping world of sensory pleasure. The offending "stream" image is replaced by Richardson with a series of increasingly massive bodies of water, giving the impression of an
infinitely expanding reservoir. As each pool erases the last by enlarging it (pool, sea, ocean), Richardson undoes the notion implicit in the "stream" image of there being an "edge" to thought, a boundary between the mind and the world.

VI. Parallel Universes

Mansfield and Sinclair characterized Pilgrimage as a novel in which information about the world was thrown into, or flowed through, a consciousness. But Miriam's own view, presumably taking her own mind as a case study, is that "[t]he knowledge of women is larger, bigger, deeper, less wordy and clever than that of men" (Vol. II 188). The narrowness of Mansfield and Sinclair's images of mind does not match up well with Miriam's own thoughts about the expanse of her mind (her tumble of adjectives—"larger, bigger, deeper"—very reminiscent of Richardson's own ocean-of-consciousness). The passivity of the stream and basket analogies also seem to miss Miriam's belief in the co-extensiveness of her mind with the wider world. Take for example Miriam's theory about the endlessness of the cosmos. In a conversation with her friends Mag and Jan she claims: "[I]f it's true […] that everything that can possibly happen does happen, then there must be, somewhere in the universe, every possible kind of variation of us and this room" (Vol. II 92). For Miriam, the universe must at the very least equal anything that can be imagined. "Infinitude can hold anything—of course I can see the impossibility of a single world holding all the possible variations of everything at once—but what I mean is that I can think it, and there must be something corresponding to it in life—anything that the mind can conceive is realized somehow" (93).

There is not a huge amount of immediate literary precedent for Miriam's speculations
about the size of the universe here. Victorian science fiction, when it did address space travel, tended to stay within the bounds of the solar system by imagining strange beings and societies on the moon, on Mars, or the Sun. These fantasies about local planets and their inhabitants served well as a vehicle for social or political satire, but are a very different beast to the infinite, exuberant, endless universe Miriam imagines. Indeed her thoughts are not dissimilar to speculations from physicists about the nature of parallel universes even a whole century later.

What Miriam is suggesting is akin to what Max Tegmark classified in 2003 as either a "Level I" multiverse or a "Level II" multiverse. In what Tegmark calls the "least controversial" Level I type, the cosmos is infinite in size and therefore if one travels far enough, everything, including one's own doppelgängers, will eventually be met (42). In a Level II multiverse each universe is a distinct "bubble" permanently estranged from all the others by an intervening space that is expanding faster than could be traversed "even if you traveled at the speed of light forever" (44).

These spatial understandings of infinity coincide with Miriam's use of "somewhere" and the idea of "holding." However, her ideas are also suggestive of, say, the "many worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics" (Level III) in which the universe branches into multiple copies to accommodate all possible outcomes. Or as Miriam puts it: "everything that can possibly happen does happen" (46).

Miriam appears to be ahead of her time when she proposes "all the possible variations of everything at once." Although *The Tunnel* describes her life in 1896, Richardson published the novel in 1919. Miriam's comments should therefore be read in the context of the widespread Victorian view of the cosmos that persisted into the 1920s, in which the universe was thought to

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134 For example, Jules Verne's *From the Earth to the Moon* (1865), Percy Greg's *Across the Zodiac* (1880), or Arthur Penrice's *Skyward and Earthward* (1875).
be eternal.  

"On the largest cosmological scales, then, the twentieth century began more or less where Aristotle had left off: with a single, static world that had existed forever" (Rubenstein 143). This explains what Miriam means by "infinitude." The universe has no beginning. Its temporal infinity allows for this infinity of possibilities. But her sense of the expansive, spatial, solidity of the infinite universe is less readily reconcilable with those prevailing cosmological views. It was not until 1924, five years after the publication of *The Tunnel*, that there was confirmation of anything significant existing beyond the Milky Way, when Edwin Hubble discovered that its nebulae were in fact other galaxies in their own right. "Hubble's discovery immediately increased the size of the known universe and the number of worlds within it by a factor of half a million, give or take a few hundred thousand" (Rubenstein 143).

A decade later in 1935 Erwin Schrödinger would formulate his famous feline thought experiment in order to illustrate the problem of the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum superposition. Schrödinger's cat exists in two possible states at once, illustrating the idea that quantum superposition, only when observed, collapses into a single state. The origin of the theory of the multiverse is usually attributed to Hugh Everett's first positing of a many-worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics in 1957. Thus Hubble's exponential expansion of the spatial abundance of the universe was joined, a decade later, by a similar (albeit theoretical) quantum and (later) temporal abundance. The notion of an infinite universe of infinite possible worlds was of course not a new one and is by no means confined to the developments of physics in the

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135 George H. Thomson proposes that in this scene "Miriam is struggling to express the doctrine of possibles associated with Occam, Duns Scotus and Wyclif" (83). Much of what Miriam says is reminiscent of this doctrine. Yet these theologies locate all possible realities within the mind of God. Miriam on the other hand discusses possible worlds in deeply physical terms. She does not mention the mind of God but only her own mind. Indeed, religion only enters the conversation when Jan says "To me it is a fearful idea. Like eternal punishment" (93). As well as reading the theological precedents for Miriam's thoughts, we should also situate her theories within the context of the contemporary scientific climate.
twentieth century. The idea has a long history in philosophy, mythology, and literature. Roman philosopher Lucretius (99-55 BC), for example, had made much the same claim.\footnote{"[...] there must be other conglomerations of matter in other places—floating, just like ours, in airy emptiness [...] Seeing that there are at this moment so great a number of atoms that they could never be counted in the whole span of existence, and seeing that all the conditions are present to enable atoms to be assembled anywhere, just as they are here, you must admit that there must be other worlds in other places, inhabited by different races of men and different animals" (82).} Miriam certainly may be drawing on any number of cultural precedents. Yet her sense of the unthinkable plenitude of the universe does seem eerily prophetic of the scientific progress that will take place in her near future.

Mag's objection to Miriam's theory of the universe is that "[y]ou can't grasp space with your mind." For Miriam, however, this is the whole point. "You don't GRASP it," she says, "[y]ou go through it." Miriam's multiverse cannot be intellectually understood; the only way to come close to experiencing the endliness of the material world is "not to think in words." Miriam proposes "imagining yourself going on and on through it, endless space" (93). Her theory of the infinity of the cosmos, although suggested by the fertility of her imagination ("anything that the mind can conceive is realized somehow") nevertheless has at its heart the failure or fallibility of epistemology and language. To gain this substantial cosmos (which Miriam claims is "more solid than a wall [...] yes… more solid than a diamond—girls, I'm sure" [93]) requires giving up on the notion of "grasping" it in language. Miriam draws an overlap between the expansiveness of her mind and the expansiveness of the universe. They are not linked by a grasping referentiality, but rather appear to be basically one and the same thing: "Infinitude can hold anything … [and] I can think it."
"[T]he wordless, exultant, beating [...] of life itself" (Richardson, *Journey* 127).

VII. Unnameable

Miriam's cosmological and phenomenological theories both rely upon a non-representative, non-transcendental union between herself and her world. In the prose, this manifests as words indicating their objects by obscuring, rather than describing, them. The first time Miriam meets Hypo Wilson (based on H. G. Wells) he encourages the writing of a book "about a lamp-post" (Vol. II 115), claiming that "[t]here will be books— with all of that cut out— him and her—all that sort of thing. The books of the future will be clear of all that" (118). With her "inward way," Richardson does the exact opposite, presenting a world that is nothing if not full of "him and her" (or more accurately, just "her"). This is not to deny that *Pilgrimage* is also a book about things like lamp-posts. After all, Richardson refuses to write as though enclosed, as "all great novelists seem to be, in a world of people. People related only to each other. Human drama, in a resounding box. Or under a silent sky" (Vol. IV 416). But neither does she take the other extreme of him and her "cut out." Instead her narrative is a conflation of voiced and voiceless. We should recall that delightfully incongruous phrase: "contemplated reality having for the first time [...] its own say." "Reality" is apparently both the thing contemplated and the thing speaking; balancing delicately within and without the self.

As if to underline that this novel will not attempt the impossible, if normative, project of writing about "human drama [...] under a silent sky," in *Dimple Hill* there is a rare moment of the universe quite literally "having its own say": "'Thunder. Rumbledumbledumble,'" the sky says, during the silence of a Quaker Sunday service (503). The enclosure of the storm's sounds in speech marks encourages us to understand these sky-sounds as a kind of speech, and to
understand this speech as an equal contribution to the Quaker service as comes from any other member of the congregation who chooses to break the silence. What is interesting is that the noun "thunder" sits next to "rumbledumbledumble" within, not outside, those speech-marks. The English noun "thunder" is not spoken by the narrator, it comes out of the mouth of the storm. On the one hand, this makes visible how both words are onomatopoeic to varying degrees and the childlike "rumbledumble" fares no better than the noun "thunder" in coming close to the actual noise. On the other hand, when the sky says the noun "thunder" it is as though that act of self-naming is also an act of hiding. The thunder becomes a part of the church community, speaking up during the service, precisely by remaining obscured. It asserts its existence even as it is safely absented by the absurd arbitrariness and failed mimeticism of its name.

Erroneous nomenclature is a means by which to preserve the companionship of the world. The abundance of the cosmos and its co-extensiveness with mind does, as Miriam has taught us, require a moratorium on thinking "in words." Her sensory experiences, likewise, consist of phenomena (in their textual guise as adjectives and adverbs) which fail to provide coherent information about the world, instead seeming to either physically overpower her or amiably enlist her into some kind of non-empirical communion. This wordless community is facilitated by the failure of both real ("thunder") and made-up ("rumbledumbledumble") names. In "Journey to Paradise" Richardson remembers her childhood holidays to a seaside location "in South Devon, [which] had a rich and lovely name, a name that my father, with a touch of jocular patronage, used to speak in the West Country fashion." She considers that her "childhood condemnation of his pose was in reality a resentment of any naming of my heaven," and continues: "I know now… [he] took refuge in the local speech because he, too, was shy of naming the unnameable" (Journey 122). Whereas her father is "shy" of this bucolic place, young
Dorothy possessively claims it as "my heaven." Both in their own way treat it more as a companion than a location, and thus, are anxious about naming it. The village's "rich and lovely name," despite its similarity to the rich and lovely place itself, remains a failure to Dorothy. Like the onomatopoeic "thunder," even commendable attempts at mimeticism through phonetic notation will fail in the face of the unnameable world. Nouns must be exposed as mere noises and comedic accents employed to avoid any too serious suggestion that language might actually grasp its object.

Sometimes names don't just fail but are elided completely. In *Dimple Hill* a paragraph begins with the baffling sentence: "Again the shock of their loveliness" (484). What is shockingly lovely (a bed of flowers—delphiniums, particularly) is not made clear until several lines later. Even then, Miriam's location in a garden is legible only because of her thoughts about another garden: "they stood for leisure and elegance, and called up a long-lost world whose gardens, taken for granted, never realized as exceptional, were full of lovely growth." That "they" are flowers is unclear until this reference to ancient gardens; the current garden in which Miriam stands remains lost behind her fantasy of historical horticulture. The flowers are both present and absent in the paragraph—there, but unnamed.  

A similar erasure is achieved by typographical disobedience: as John Mepham notes, in *The Tunnel* reported speech is not set conventionally. Each new speech does not begin on a new line as we would expect. Instead, it is

An almost identical moment can be found in Richardson's short story "Nook on Parnassus," in which a young woman spots five new and interesting objects in a stationer's window display. What these "magnetic newcomers" actually are, however, is not made clear for over four paragraphs. Eventually, with mention of envelopes and that they are "comfortably larger than postcards," we comprehend that these mysterious objects are greetings cards (*Journey* 48). Like the delphiniums, the cards dominate the prose but are unnamed and unreadable—our inability to know them, frustrating though it may be, does little to undermine their existence and importance. It seems to be things that are powerfully affecting to their observers which have the ability to slip beyond nouns, as though the more a character is convinced of their alluring otherness, the less they are able to pinpoint them in language.
nestled within long paragraphs. It is as though the gulf between voice and world is being reduced by Richardson on the level of formatting. In the following volume, *Interim*, even speech marks disappear. Richardson's suspicion of voice, her predilection towards leaving the unnameable safely unnamed, here takes the form of hiding dialogue within description.

Jean Radford interprets these various stylistic manifestations of the "unsaid" and "unsayable" as the unconscious making itself felt:

> while the narrator is allowed to present only the consciousness of the protagonist, the text represents the unconscious forces working within and through that consciousness. The words on the page (the representation of consciousness) are supplemented by a range of typographical devices: ellipses, italics, segmented passages, gaps and spaces in the text. These devices represent the repressions and gaps in consciousness, or that which is left unsaid or is unsayable. (*Dorothy* 69-70)

But the typographical devices and incomprehensible confusions that plague the text do not necessarily require a psychoanalytical reading. Richardson herself demonstrated little interest in Sigmund Freud's theories, although she appeared to feel affectionately towards him as a man. By far the longest mention of him in her letters is from 1938 and recalls an anecdote about how Freud's "beloved chow" was "languishing in quarantine" and how Freud ("naughty papa") despite being "[v]ery frail" nevertheless "somehow managed to charter a taxi" to visit this lonely dog (*Windows* 348). Indeed, by 1924 Richardson had declared herself "through with P. A. [psychoanalysis]" stating "I was not surprised to read in the *Origins of Myth & Religion* that F. is wrong about the universality of symbols—that pulls down the main pillar of his building" (103).
Radford suggests that the "repressions" and "gaps" in the prose "represent" the "unsayable" (a contradiction that Richardson would probably have enjoyed). But her phrasing recalls the foreword to Pilgrimage in which Richardson speaks, in the same breath, of both an "independently assertive reality" and its "failure [...] adequately to appear within the text" (Vol. I 10), suggesting that, far from the subconscious, it is actually the nonhuman world that is unwritable, consequently enacting this warping of the prose. The question, then, is what to make of a piece of prose that seems inordinately hospitable and accommodating to its antitheses.

VIII. The Ghost Story

A curious and abrupt change in tone occurs in chapter XI of Dimple Hill, the twelfth volume of Pilgrimage. The past tense narration, which has been the standard for the eleven previous volumes of the novel with only very momentary breaks, suddenly switches to present tense for six paragraphs. The tone is spooky, and the meaning difficult to follow. For example, one sentence reads: "Awake, deep down in the heart of tranquility, drinking its freshness like water from a spring brimming up amongst dark green leaves in a deep shadow heightening the colour of the dark leaves and the silver glint on the bubbling water" (538-9). Just a fragment technically, this sentence never reveals who or what is "awake" and "drinking," nor what the metaphorical spring water is an analogy for, before its abrupt, untimely ending. Just as the tense has switched to the present, so even individual sentences appear to be abandoning the notion of an ending. This passage goes on to describe a stormy night and the eerie progression of the wind across the marshes towards a lonely house. A sense of predation manifests as the "shrill and

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138 See for example the final few lines of chapter VII in which Miriam switches to first person present tense to illustrate the sense of "eternity" provoked by a moment of eye-contact with Richard.
"querulous" thing moves closer and closer: "[i]t has come out of the sea, is wandering along the distant, desolate shore" (539). The atmosphere of exposure in this passage is also due to the lack of sheltering subjectivity found elsewhere in the larger novel. Although we assume that phrases such as "[n]othing between us but the fields and the width of the marshes" belong to Miriam, nevertheless without the reportage inherent to past tense, Miriam's point of view is no longer readily available to ground us. Where are we, or Miriam, for example, in the following sentence fragment: "The hiss of strong rain on the full leafage of the wood" (538)? Our sudden immediate omniscience, pressed up closely to hissing rain and wet leaves, no longer filtered through the history of Miriam's mind, renders us somewhat adrift. There is perception here, but no immediately identifiable perceiver.

Until the very final line the threatening wind is left unidentified, only referred to as "a sound" and later as "a voice," "[m]any voices," "singing," and "a yell." We are left to wonder whose voice exactly is creeping across the marsh: "[t]here it is again, leaving the shore, roaming along the margin of the marsh, in and out amongst the sedges, plaintive" (539). There is a voice, but no speaker. The lack of clarity in this haunting passage is true to form, given that the ghost story as a genre tends to undermine epistemological certainty.139 When the wind is finally explicitly identified it is through a sentence which anthropomorphises it: "[t]he wind, is the best lover" (539). Even when the analogy is finally allowed to complete and meaning-making seems to be a possibility again, the wind remains ghostly: half-hidden, half-human, and named but still obscured.140

139 Numerous critics have noted this characteristic of the genre. For example: Smith, The Ghost Story 1840-1920: A Cultural History: "It is important to acknowledge that ghosts have close associations with deconstruction" (4). Also Katherine J. Weese, Feminist Narrative and the Supernatural: "The presence of the supernatural disrupts conventional narrative practice and forces the reader to confront alternative realities to official histories" (14).

140 The ghostly wind recalls a moment from Interim in which Miriam thinks: "One would move
Ironically, the wind is imagined as a speech or a song in order for the narrative to avoid voicing its name. This wind is therefore a paradigmatic figure for the novel: a voice that is not a voice; an unnameable thing yoked into language in order to escape from it. *Pilgrimage*, in ways such as this, undermines itself, un-writes itself. The novel is in some senses one long ghost story. For all its length and loquaciousness, *Pilgrimage* is concerned with the escape from language. What this six paragraph "ghost story" in *Dimple Hill* makes clear is that the "lover" relationship between person and wind, exemplified by the deep sensuality of the prose, is reliant upon the expulsion from (or at least obscurity of) both subject and object in the writing. Intimacy flourishes as discourse is undermined.

IX. The Writer Written

Despite Richardson's assertion that "I think on the whole I agree with those who feel it is a mistake to meet writers whose work one likes. There is so rarely any apparent correspondence" (*Windows* 171), the autobiographical nature of her novel means that there must be a "correspondence" (perhaps even amounting to something close to an identity) between herself and it. As Bluemel writes: "it does not make sense to talk about a 'narrator'; there is only the voice of the character. Nor does it make any sense to speak of an 'author,' an effect that would have pleased Miriam and was obviously orchestrated by Richardson" (37). As if to parody the narratological construction of the novel, at times Miriam appears to be conscious of her life simultaneously as a character with limited-view and a narrator with access to the whole arc of the like the wind always, a steady human south-west wind, alive, without personality or speech" (321).
narrative.\textsuperscript{141} For example, as she first takes her boarding room in Mrs. Bailey's house she finds that "[s]he was surprised now at her familiarity with the detail of the room" (Vol. II 13).\textsuperscript{142} This sensation is befitting of the experience of being a narrator to the story of which one is also a character. "Coming events cast light. It is like dropping everything and walking backwards to something you know is there," she says. What is pertinent about this moment is not just the manner in which her identification with her narrator seems to affect her experience of her world, giving her the déjà vu sensation of narrative foresight. But also her insistence that, from such a viewpoint, fiction and truth cannot be estranged.\textsuperscript{143} "All the real part of your life has a real dream in it" (13).

Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson claim that "when one is both the narrator and the protagonist of the narrative, as in life writing, the truth of the narrative becomes undecidable; it can be neither fully verified nor fully discredited" (15). As the volumes of Pilgrimage progress, the narrator's third-person perspective and Miriam's first-person voice begin to become interchangeable. Sometimes the switch from third- to first-person even happens mid-paragraph; often it occurs at deeply felt moments, such as when Miriam thinks of her dead sister, Eve, and suddenly begins using "I" (Vol. IV 489). Indeed, the very first use of "I" occurs in the third

\textsuperscript{141} The novel is a good example of what Susanna Egan terms "mirror talk," which "begins as the encounter of two lives in which the biographer is also an autobiographer" (7). It is an "exploratory process that depends not only on double or multiple voicing but also on oppositionality and the improvisations that emerge in dynamic and reciprocal relations" (228). What is interesting is that Richardson's "mirror talk" seems to incline more to a single voice than a polyphonic one.

\textsuperscript{142} Deborah Longworth writes that Miriam experiences a "sudden sense of self-illumination as she surveys her lodgings […] The apparent familiarity of the room is something more than the mental trick of déjà vu, and the walls, the window lattice, the table and bed instead seem to Miriam to recognise and confirm her sense of her 'real' self" (23). I would add that phrases such as "walking backwards" ensure that a sense of alienation and the unknown is maintained even within the familiarity. This room does not solely "recognise and confirm" Miriam.

\textsuperscript{143} "When it comes to autobiography, narrative and identity are so intimately linked that each constantly and properly gravitates into the conceptual field of the other" (Eakin 100).
volume *Honeycomb* (1917), "at the event of her mother's suicide, a moment of great psychic pain. At this moment, Richardson gives Miriam (or herself?) the autonomy to articulate this pain" (Winning 30). But the shift from third- to first-person, must also trouble the notion of "articulat[ion]" because, as Smith and Watson say, the autobiographical confusion between "I" and "she," even as it allows space for personal testimony, also makes "the truth of the narrative […] undecidable."\(^{144}\) Like *Pilgrimage* as a whole, which is both thirteen novels and one, Miriam is both divided and whole. This is true both linguistically and physically. At one moment in *The Tunnel* Miriam considers (but swiftly decides against) praying: "the bones behind the softness of her hands meeting the funny familiar round shape of her face, the dusty smell of the counterpane coming up, her face praying to her hands, her hands praying to her face, both throbbing separately with their secret" (98). As is evident from her imagining of her hands and face both "praying" separately, as well as both keeping "secret[s]," Miriam's narratological fragmentation is rooted in physical form.

In *Dimple Hill* a particularly interesting transition from "she" to "I" occurs during a paragraph dealing with the uncanny nature of reading and writing. Miriam is reading a local Swiss newspaper and is struck by the "miracle of intelligibility" (454). The paragraph begins in the third person: "[t]he sacred little newspaper lay forever beneath her eyes against the morning-lit, shabby green paint of the little iron-legged table." The prose then moves to record Miriam's thoughts in a more verbatim manner, but as there is no indication that we have abandoned the third-person narrator, this appears to be free indirect discourse: "[n]o odour of culture, no rich flavour of well-earned decadence anywhere since leaving Paris behind. Did it exist, even down in the lake towns?" Finally, it becomes clear (half way through a sentence, indeed) that Miriam

\(^{144}\) *Pilgrimage* is therefore a good example of what Barbara Will calls "queer autobiographical masquerade," which "positions this genre against itself, using its expectation of a singular authorial self-exposure to enact a performance of doubled authorial concealment" (86).
has usurped her narrator, and what we are reading is not free indirect discourse but first person narration: "[t]his doubt gave a strangeness to the discovery of intelligibility in the text, drew my attention for the first time to the miracle of intelligibility" (454).

The first-person perspective ambushes the reader with the sudden, unexpected, "my" midway through the sentence. The ease by which this unannounced transition takes place is a reminder of the miraculous, invasive nature of narration. It is particularly interesting that this switch from "her" to "my" occurs during a consideration of what Miriam calls "the taken-for-granted, unconsidered revelation lying behind the mere possibility of so arranging words that meaning emerges from their relationship" (454). On reading the newspaper, Miriam is struck by the fact that physical words in their spatial relationship to each other can spawn something abstract like intelligible meaning. Miriam's sudden attention to the "strangeness" of this utterly "taken-for-granted" relationship between physical and abstract is echoed by the transition from third- to first-person narration which, likewise, makes strange and shows the miraculous nature of the usually taken-for-granted relationship between extra-diegetic narrator and intra-diegetic character. The "unconsidered revelation" Miriam is so struck by appears to be that worlds can be bridged, that the relation of one thing to another can be not just meaningful but transcendent.

This touching of different planes—simply called "intelligibility" by Miriam—promises a connection between the inner, mental realm and a world beyond. Yet in the words of Richardson's biographer, Gloria Fromm, on Miriam: "No one else was there to describe her" (Biography 66). Description is impossible in Pilgrimage because there is no one there, no narrator set apart, to do the job. The very binary structure needed for referentiality is non-existent. The seamless transition from "her" to "my," and the ease of the switch from narrator to character that at first seems to give support to Miriam's "miracle" of reading by demonstrating an
easy connection between writer and written, isn't perhaps as transcendent as it first appears. Miriam and her narrator, we must remember, are one and the same. Therefore, despite the radical, surprising, change in perspective from third- to first-person, there is no transcendent bridge between "outside" and "inside" Miriam. The pronouns have changed, but the position has not. *Pilgrimage*, which Richardson understood to be a product of a 19th century realist legacy, may adhere to naturalism's disavowal of Romantic transcendence, but it does so precisely by revealing the little miracles and magic tricks of realist narration. In other words, the romanticism of realism's desire for coherent, legible, and meaningful representation is laid bare and undone.

As Bluemel identifies, Richardson's prose, even in the midst of using representational techniques, pushes back against the structures of representation:

> The very fact that *Pilgrimage*’s various assertions about language enact the linguistic contradiction they adopt as their subject demonstrates the sophistication of the text's theoretical work […] to use language is to take up a "masculine" habit; the feminine alternative is a utopia of silence […] To approach this utopia in *Pilgrimage*, Richardson attempts to use language as a nonrepresentational medium in order to get around the destructive logic she is describing so persuasively. (57)

The narrow purview of *Pilgrimage*, by undermining structures of inside and outside, is part of this nonrepresentational, non-transcendent, project. It is a step towards what Bluemel calls "a utopia of silence" (57).

Thus there is no possibility of reading these trespasses between the third- and first-person voice, between the narrative levels of the novel's form, as metaphorical for the potential contact
to be made by Miriam with the external world beyond her mind. Metaleptic movement across narrative levels always renders worlds that appear incompatible, compatible. But it does not permit transcendence. When a character is able to "climb" up out of their world into the world of their author, that real authorial world is either posited as a kind of fiction itself or alternatively the fictional world is re-assessed as real. As a literary device, metalepsis first facilitates and then denies movement between fiction and reality. Likewise, Pilgrimage, by collapsing author, narrator, and character into a single woman offers no hope for transcendent moves of any kind. The narrative framework of the novel recalls Miriam's multiverse cosmology—a parallel rather than nested structure. These variations upon a single woman—Dorothy Richardson, the third-person narrator of Pilgrimage, and first-person Miriam Henderson—are like doppelgängers separated across narrative space.

Marie-Laure Ryan suggests that the narratological counterpart of the scientific theory of parallel universes is "possible worlds theory," which is "based on a fundamental difference between the actual world and the merely possible ones" ("Parallel" 645). A reader's "actual" world is surrounded by many fictional "possible" worlds. Those fictional worlds are "actual" worlds for their characters, whose thoughts, wishes, dreams, and stories form their own "possible" worlds, and so on to infinite recursion. However, the particular autobiographical structure of Pilgrimage renders problematic the reliance of possible worlds theory upon bifurcations of "possible" and "actual." The novel is a kind of "new biography" that "exploit[s] the boundaries drawn between biography and fiction" (Smith and Watson 9). Miriam is narrating herself as much as Richardson is narrating herself—everyone, and no-one, seems to be narrating at once. It seems too simplistic to say that Miriam is a fictional "possible" version of Richardson when the hierarchy of actual and possible is itself disrupted. It makes more sense to think of
Pilgrimage in terms of a narrative multiverse: these women are variations—parallel rather than recursive—upon one another. But if slippages in the novel between writer and written are not contacts between worlds, and do not form that illicit movement between fictional and factual so necessary for meaning-making, then all manner of representation seems potentially useless in the world of the novel—at least so far as acting as a bridge to something other.

But how could anybody do anything with people coming and going, confusing everything by perpetually saying things?

(Richardson, Pilgrimage Vol. II 368).

X. Façade

To say that Pilgrimage is verbose would be an understatement; it is a grand avalanche of words and sentences. More often than not, these words and sentences trace the deep tangibility of Miriam's experiential world. A page of Interim chosen at random yields the sensations of "a broad gold-rose shaft [that] glowed out across the room;" of "holding the warm air in her nostrils;" of a "soft-toned, softly carpeted and curtained effect;" of "the powdery fragrance of a clear warm midsummer evening, like petal-dust; pollen dust;" and of being "lit up as if by a suddenly switched on electric light" by "one's own real realization going back and back; in pictures that grew clearer;" to pick just five phrases out of many on that page (351). The garrulous novel stands in strange contrast to Miriam's continual assertions that expressive language is flawed and always failing. In The Tunnel, Miriam attempts to describe an evening at the theatre in writing but fails: "The afternoon had been wasted trying to express her evening,"
and nothing had been expressed […] She had spoiled it in some way" (180). In *Interim* she wonders "[w]hy would people insist upon talking about things—when nothing can ever be communicated?" (306). In *Dimple Hill*, she asks: "Are all the blind alleys and insufficiencies of masculine thought created by their way of thinking in propositions, using inapplicable metaphors? […] Are all coherent words, in varying measure, evidence of failure?" (427).

If language is used in an attempt to assert or communicate truth or meaning, Miriam claims, then it is being used wrongly, and even runs the risk of spoiling its object. Philippe Lejeune, in his foundational—but now widely critiqued—essay "The Autobiographical Contract," argued that we understand the prose of autobiography as making truth claims in a way that we do not expect from other narratives. In giving her autobiographical "I" a different name to herself, Richardson automatically breaks Lejeune's pact. Furthermore, in allowing Miriam to constantly question the efficacy and accuracy of language, Richardson implicitly breaks the epistemological guarantee of autobiography: this is life-writing broadly historically accurate yet untethered from claims of truthfulness. *Pilgrimage* is a true(ish) story, but does not capitulate to frameworks of linguistic intelligibility.

When critics like David Stamm claim that Richardson's "great literary attempt at the representation of consciousness at work thus distinguishes her as an innovative naturalist" and that "her presentation of Miriam's extremely subjective experiences […] achieves an impressively profound form of realism" (3), they overlook Miriam's mistrust of the very notion of "representation." Hugh Walpole, in support of Richardson's application for the Royal Literary Fund, wrote in a letter of 1920 that "[w]hether one likes her work or not… [i]t is important work, and honest and brave in its determination to be true." These claims of truth and mimesis ignore Miriam's belief that expression might damage that which is expressed. They miss, therefore, that
Richardson's detailed record of the permutations of Miriam's inner life is an interesting kind of failure not an uncomplicated success. Miriam despairs of coherent representation even as she is nothing but a convincingly thorough, naturalist, literary representation. Her mind is the entire novel. Walpole and Stamm appear to have overlooked not just that this is a work self-aware of its failure to be "true," but also that Richardson, by virtue of this so-called naturalism, actually allows Miriam the kind of privacy also granted to thunderstorms and winds and delphiniums and villages in Devon: the freedom to remain un-grasped by words. Miriam slips away from the prose. As the narrative makes detailed record of her consciousness it utterly fails to be mimetic of her distrust of mimeticism. The "realism" of Pilgrimage is therefore a kind of screen which, as much as it reveals Miriam, also allows her an escape.

To further understand this wordless privacy we can turn to Richardson's remarks on the speech of women:

[…] though they may talk incessantly from the cradle onwards, [they] are, save when driven by calamitous necessity, as silent as the grave. Listen to their outpouring torrents of speech. Listen to village women at pump or fireside, to villa women, to unemployed service-flat women, to chatelaines, to all kinds of women anywhere and everywhere. Chatter, chatter, chatter, as men say. And say also that only one in a thousand can talk. Quite. For all these women use speech, with individual differences, alike: in the manner of a façade. Their awareness of being, as distinct from man's awareness of becoming, is so strong that when they are confronted, they must, in most circumstances, snatch at words to cover either their own palpitating spiritual nakedness or that of another. (Close Up 206)
Wordiness can be a tool not for representation but diversion, and not for knowing but to shield "being" from knowledge. The screen or "façade" of words creates community not by revealing the world of other beings and things, but by covering it. This is a community of anti-egotism facilitated by anti-intelligibility. To return to that random page from Interim: this is a scene where Miriam suddenly smells mimosa in an empty waiting-room. But her words appear to protect, more than they reveal, these flowers. Not only are the flowers never visible (the word "yellow" never appears, and the closest we get to a visual description is the very vague "clusters of winter flowers") but even the quite specific descriptions of the scent ("dryly fragrant… like petal-dust") are outnumbered by Miriam's other thoughts about winter nights, about wealth, about Eve, about firelight, about "the secret black spaces of her mind." "Being" seems to cover, to hide, other being.

This anti-egotism, reliant as it is upon an impossible talking-without-talking, can be seen for example when Miriam loses her voice in a kind of ventriloquism with Jean:

And always our contemplations discovered a truth that left us united, so much one person that in the talk following the arrival of an outsider it seemed, when either spoke, as if it were the other, and I would hear, in Jean's voice addressing someone else, myself speaking […] and when, in fact, I spoke, would be aware of Jean controlling. (Vol. IV 570)

Both women speak without speaking. They have been "united" into "one person," an intimacy that while it does not exist entirely outside words, is nevertheless achieved by both of them
relinquishing their own voices. Similarly, when Miriam is reading *Villette* aloud to Miss Dear she realizes that "[s]omething was passing to and fro between them, behind the text; a conversation between them that the text, the calm quiet grey that was the outer layer of the tumult, brought into being. If they should read on, the conversation would deepen" (Vol. II 260-1). *Villette* is not being read aloud in the way a man would read aloud ("always an assertion of himself [...] as if they were telling you what to think") but in the manner of Richardson's "façade." Indeed Miriam is barely aware of the novel ("she wondered as she read on almost by heart, at the rare freedom of her thoughts") and Miss Dear likewise seems to have heard "little" of it. "They had both been absent from the room nearly all the time" (261). But the façade of Charlotte Brontë's words allows for this silent conversation between the two women.

Miriam frequently denounces (male) authors for only being interested in transmitting their own egos through words. "Bang, bang, bang, on they go, these men's books, like an L.C.C. Tram, yet unable to make you forget them, the authors, for a moment" (Vol. IV 239). It is an odd declaration, given that she exists in an autobiographical novel. But Miriam's desire for a fiction without an overbearing author is actually written into the very form of her novel, as Ellen G. Friedman notes: "The intention of Richardson's innovative techniques was to subvert the major constituents of the canonical novel—plot, characterization, central conflict, climax, resolution, the stance of moral authority—the elements through which the author exercised control and which Richardson interpreted as manifestations of the author's ego" (356). Richardson cannot be heard—bang, bang, bang—controlling the prose, because no overarching plot structure or moral position is imposed. Bluemel suggests that the verbosity of the novel demands a kind of anti-egotism even from its audience: "[t]hose readers who want to enjoy *Pilgrimage* must suspend their desire to know and master the subject of the text. Instead they must look forward to
uncertainty and luxuriate in the sheer unsanctioned abundance of *Pilgrimage's* words" (14).

Every person involved in the narrative structure—reader, author, narrator, character—find that *Pilgrimage's* "façade" of words demands a kind of self-loss from them; an abandonment of the desire to use the text to know or control.

Vocal sound, always a barrier to intimacy, is destructive of the balance between what is seen and the silently perceiving, co-operating onlooker (*Close Up* 167).

XI. Non-expressive Language

In *March Moonlight*, Miriam ponders the tendency of village women to draw out "the utmost possible elaboration of a narrative." She concludes that there is a pleasure to be found in these women's "inability to summarise" (569), but that this particular pleasure is not gained by actually attending to these lengthy, impromptu, narratives. While such garrulous women are taking joy in reporting the mundane details of their life, one can ignore their meaning in order to take similar joy in the particular experiences of one's own life. In Miriam's words: "if one set oneself to realise the deep delight of the dancer of the interminable *pas seul* in honour of the joy of life at first hand, and executed, wordlessly, while it lasted, a similar *pas seul* of one's own, the trial might be supported" (569). Miriam's "wordless" echo of the woman's dance-like meandering narrative allows for a kind of shared joy in life. The pointlessness of the spoken narrative is far less important than the communion it fosters. It is tempting to read this moment as a wryly inserted survival guide for readers of *Pilgrimage*. Readers can wordlessly commune with
Miriam's own "utmost possible elaboration of a narrative," by taking joy in our own "life at first hand" as we follow hers.

Wordless conversation is something of a recurring fantasy for Miriam. She imagines a meal conducted "apart from the necessary small courtesies, in silence" as the "perfection of social intercourse" (Vol. IV 456). Of course, much of her life revolves around spoken conversation: in her boarding house, at social gatherings, and at her job. But in her most intimate relationships Miriam chases this paradoxical silent conversation. A moment with Amabel in *Dawn's Left Hand*, for example, sees the two women wish to abandon the "drama" of a social gathering where "one person after another 'took the floor' and expressed views," to instead "lie side by side in the darkness describing and talking it all over until sleep should come without any interval of going off into the seclusion of our separate minds" (242). "Describing and talking" is not only posited as an alternative to "expressed views"—as though the two women are somehow able to talk in a manner that doesn't rely on outward expression—but also, thanks to the phrase "lie side by side in darkness," which references the romantic nature of their relationship, "describing and talking" appears to be more akin to sexual intercourse than conversational intercourse. The two women break the solitary confinement of their individual minds by moving away from the self-aggrandizement of "express[ing] views" towards something more communal, more physical, and less concerned with the transmission of knowledge. Their "describing and talking" therefore recalls the parallel *pas seul* of the loquacious village women, where talking is not so much about legibility but instead is a cover for some more physical, sympathetic, and wordless comradeship. Indeed, when Miriam tries to tell Hypo about her communion with Amabel, she finds it would be impossible without some "wordless magic." If she cannot use words to describe "describing and talking," if language cannot even be mimetic of language
itself, then the two women's intimate "talking" does not seem to be talking as we know it. Miriam's phrase for Quaker wordlessness gives a name to these silent or quietened intimacies: "vital silences" (Vol. IV 456).

The most deeply felt relationships of Miriam's life (Amabel, Rachel Mary, Jean) turn upon companionship made possible not through expression but outside it: "our intermittent silences, rather than tension-creating searches for fresh material, were fragments of a shared eternity" (Vol. IV 567). Joanne Winning argues that "Richardson performs a kind of parody of the 'silence' [Radclyffe] Hall's obscenity trial imposes on the lesbian author, by constructing 'silence' as the signifier that inscribes love and desire between Miriam and Amabel" (12). As Winning argues, silence is recuperated by Richardson. It is not that which eradicates homosexual relationships, but is the very space in which they thrive. However, Winning's terms are a little problematic. Silence, in Pilgrimage, cannot easily be understood as just another "signifier" that "inscribes" meaning. That would cast it as another kind of "expression" or "assertion"—which Miriam associates with (generally male) egotism and is particularly keen to avoid. Rather, I argue, silence allows communion outside of signifying structures. In a piece for the film journal Close Up, Richardson writes about the "co-operation" of spectacle and audience that can only take place if "the audience is first stilled to forgetfulness of itself as an audience" (161). Co-operation requires "forgetfulness" of the divisive gulfs of representation. Rather than proposing that "silence undergoes reification" in the novel (Winning 137), I suggest that it is precisely its annulment of the binary structure of representation that makes it the only possible space for intimacy.145

145 Richardson's short story "Summer" shows voice in this impossible space of existence and non-existence at once. The protagonist is watching a funeral procession, and hearing the "terrible cries" coming from a grieving woman. Even after the procession moves inside and the cries "died away into the little church" (the grieving woman's voice, through the term "died,"
Miriam's "wordless communion" with Amabel finds them "holding each pose with their eyes wide on each other, expressionless, like birds in a thicket intently watching and listening" (Vol. IV 245). Her intercourse with Amabel and others is not completely voiceless but it is frequently unintelligible, a weird concatenation of silence and speech more akin to the communications of birds than comprehensible human symbols or signifiers. To borrow a phrase from March Moonlight, Richardson depicts many variations upon "silent eloquent company" through the novel, many, if not most, with nonhumans (601). Companionship for Miriam, perhaps because it is always an attempt to make contact with something or someone strange and ultimately unknowable, often undermines meaning-making. The trespassing inherent to intimacy necessitates linguistic and epistemic breakdown.

\[D\]istance is enchantment (Close Up 201).

XII. Truancy

Kristin Bluemel writes that "[t]he novelty of our extended, unauthorized journey through the interior spaces of a female character's consciousness is matched only by the novelty of Miriam's unauthorized journey through the public spaces of male-dominated culture" (2). Bluemel's choice of word for Miriam's (and the reader's) trespasses, "unauthorized," deftly captures the necessity of the novel's strange structure to Miriam's truancies. Miriam after all, as mirroring the fate of the corpse) the cries nevertheless seem to have an afterlife and to "resound and fill the sunlit landscape" (Journey 47). This ghostly grieving voice remains in the world even after it has "died." The cries, human but already on their way to incoherence, then "went out over the mountains explaining the songs of the birds and the happiness and beauty everywhere" (47). This disembodied, rogue, voice "explains" the world in human values (happiness, beauty) even as it is divorced from its speaker and is moving into incomprehensible systems of meaning like the "songs of birds." Recalling the ghostly voice traveling across the marshland, it both vociferates and does not.
the subject of autobiographical fiction, is both author-ised and her own author (therefore un-authored) at once. Trespass and truancy (unauthorised presence and unauthorised absence) are defining themes of both the novel's form and subject matter. As Winning argues, *Pilgrimage*'s importance lies in its bold and experimental writing of the unwritten (or unwriteable) experiences of both being and also loving women. What is perhaps particularly radical is the way Richardson does not achieve this voyeuristically: Miriam's consciousness is not just a hidden world into which we can peep, but, given that she is both character and author, her mind is both public and private, both looked at and looker.

In her tense existence between authority and powerlessness Miriam is very similar to Berry, the child protagonist of Richardson's short story "Visit." Berry switches frequently between first person narration and third person, sometimes talking about herself as though from the outside and sometimes using "I." Deeply aware of the need to be polite as she visits her great aunts and uncles, and aware of (yet confused, embarrassed, and often disgusted by) the fact that social interaction is often a performance, Berry's oscillation between "I" and "she" echoes her dual and often warring constructions of self—the private and the public. But like Miriam, Berry's narrative fluidity also speaks to her sensual experience of her world. There is an ongoing tension between the private and deeply felt sense-experiences of the child, and her recognition that those experiences originate "out" in the world. For example during tea time, Berry "wishes nobody would look or speak to her. The cake won't go on tasting so good if she must think of people too" (*Journey* 16). Her private sensual pleasure cannot be maintained if it clashes with the public, social world. Yet Berry takes comfort in the idea that objects, especially beautiful, pleasurable

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146 "Richardson writes against this erasure by constructing *Pilgrimage* as a kind of archive of the self, laying down successive depositions which inscribe by either literal or encrypted means, the 'unspeakable' (or perhaps unlivable) terms of desire both to be and to love 'woman.' In this way, she writes against submersion, against the loss of self and language" (Winning 11).
objects, go on existing beyond her, even when she is not there. "But all the things here will be the same when we're not seeing them" (19). Berry stoically manages to kiss her blind great-aunt precisely because just before she does so she sees a patch of sunlight on the wall behind, and "while she gives her kiss […] thinks of how she will be able to look at it again presently" (14). Likewise of the household objects (clocks, pictures, flowers, bowls) Berry thinks to herself: "I am on a visit to all of them, and not to the uncles and aunts. They are always there, whatever happens" (15). The persistence of these things in the outside world means they can be cast as social agents in place of the aged aunts and uncles; they can be kissed or visited as part of a public, social world, but one that remains, simultaneously, private and sensual for Berry. Casting her intimate and private experiences of objects as social, Berry ameliorates the upsetting clash between inner, personally determined self and outer, publicly determined self.

Like Berry, Miriam experiences the world in the kind of limbo fitting for a character-narrator. It is her alienation from the world, so necessary for the removed, observational, stance of third-person narration, which allows for her miraculous intimacy with it. Miriam, for example, describes Rachel Mary as "unreal and yet intimate, a part of her own being," almost like a narrator describing one of their characters (Vol. IV 543). Remembering her childhood, Miriam recalls standing in the garden after church and seeing "the whole garden in a single eyeful and from all angles at once, because the part one was in, belonging to itself and seeming to throw one off, sent one's mind gliding over the whole, alighting nowhere" (Vol. IV 490). It is precisely the way in which the garden seems to shrug her off, resist her as something alien, and deny intellectual understanding of itself, that allows young Miriam to miraculously move beyond her local viewpoint and see the scene from all perspectives at once. The bird's eye view of a narrator,
which allows such super-human access to the world, necessarily requires an amount of estrangement.

Like her formative garden experience, during a Quaker meditation Miriam once again escapes beyond her own limited perspective into a bucolic scene. During the hour-long silent service, Miriam experiences not an increasingly narrow contemplation but an exploded one.

Truant in the open, she saw, closing her eyes [...] the corner of an unlocated meadow, rain-drenched and so near that she could perceive, as if she were some small field-beast in their midst, a forest of grass-blades, coarse, rank, July grass, the ribs and filaments of each blade clearly visible [...] In every nerve she felt their chill touch. And now the whole of the unknown field lay clear, hedged and sloping, and she was above it, looking down upon a wide stretch of open country, sunlit. (500)

As Miriam's imagination moves from a very low perspective of the field to a very high one, seeing it in great detail and then looking down upon its entirety, the meadow nonetheless remains "unlocated [...] unknown." This escape into birds-eye and beasts-eye views comes from not omniscience but unintelligibility. We can understand this moment as the achievement of her previous behest in The Tunnel that "you don't GRASP [the universe], you go through it."

Miriam's "truancy" here is truancy from the very project of the novel: truancy from her conscious perspective on the world, truancy (at least partially) from language, and knowledge. Miriam is "in the open" of her mind, finding the voiceless, alien, world not beyond herself but within herself.
Conclusion

Earlier we considered what I christened the "ghost story" of *Pilgrimage*: a strange six paragraphs in *Dimple Hill* which tell of a threatening wind making its way across the marshes towards a lonely house. Although this "ghost story" remains noticeably different from the rest of the novel, the intertwined failure of epistemology and language with intimacy and love are topics of consideration of *Pilgrimage* throughout—a novel that seems to constantly attempt to unwrite itself and play truant from the novelistic conventions by which it is bound. It is in *March Moonlight*, the following, and final, volume of the novel, that this "ghost story" is explained. A friend of Miriam's chooses it as her favourite of Miriam's writings, and in doing so reveals that this little vignette about the wind haunting the marshes was actually a narrative written by Miriam for publication. Its appearance in *Dimple Hill* is a covert story-within-a-story. But it should not seem odd that we are unable to distinguish between when we are reading the narrator's depiction of Miriam, and when we are reading Miriam's own fiction, because Miriam is—in some sense—the author of them both. The inescapable circularity, the identity between writer and written, which fittingly turns Miriam into a ghost-like figure herself hovering somewhere mirage-like between "I" and "she," is a key concept for the novel. Even as this narrative ouroboros forbids writing from feinting access a more-than-human world, coming instead to a standstill inside Miriam's mind, the prose also seems to consume itself. As both narrator and narrated, Miriam has to be both vocal and silent simultaneously.

It is therefore tempting to read *Pilgrimage* within a tradition of self-loss. For example, we could argue that the novel is paradigmatic of a wider legacy of female autobiography. In Estelle Jelinek's words, "[d]isjunctive narratives and discontinuous forms are more adequate for
mirroring the fragmentation and multidimensionality of women's lives" (188). The formal choices could be representative, perhaps, of the unauthorized lives of women oppressed, unnoticed or considered inconsequential by a patriarchal society. Or we could read Miriam as emblematic of the poststructuralist self drowned in its own writing, a signifier slipping endlessly away. Yet the novel, despite its oblique, elliptical prose, does not concede that the self is incoherent, inconsequential, or lost if unexpressed. An alternative approach, therefore, which does not rely on reading female autobiography as a shadowy, shattered version of male autobiography, nor equates failure to write a unified self with failure to be a unified self, is to attend to how Miriam herself characterizes her relationship to her autobiography. It is evident that she engages in what is a more interpersonal, and less indexical, relationship to the writing of her life.

*Pilgrimage*, after all, revels in the writing of the unwritten but is less respectful of prose's denotative or expressive function. In the first place, by "unwritten" I mean the novel's resurrection of that which has traditionally been excluded by canonical literature. Miriam has imagined that a "lifetime" might be spent "annotating" the "vast oblivions" of male novelists. *Pilgrimage* writes some of those unwritten things: the day to day life of a dental secretary without even a marriage plot to enliven it; meditations on bars of soap and peeling paint; romantic love between women. Both the scandalous and the mundane are granted unusual entry to the novel. The unwritten for Richardson is also the language used by and between women who are excluded from and dissatisfied with dominant masculine discourse. Additionally, the unwritten is that ontological realm unreachable by human signs. These three planes dovetail in *Pilgrimage*. To undertake the difficult task of narrating "a pair of button boots, a night in spring, some cycling knickers, some large, round biscuits" (to recall Mansfield's words) and the many
other novelistic "oblivion[s]" of Pilgrimage, Richardson enlists autobiography. The genre can make a success of writing the unwritten because it is such a self-referential form.

Autobiography's circularity renders it a deeply private genre: it generates a helpful illusion that there is no description, record-keeping, or mimeticism, because both symbol and symbolized share an identity.

Miriam's prose, she thinks, is "part of me, yet now independent" (Vol. IV 611). This phrase indicates her synecdochal rather than indexical relationship towards her writing, and it also echoes her earlier description of Rachel Mary as "unreal and yet intimate, a part of her own being" (Vol. IV 543). It is telling that Miriam thinks about her writing in much the same way as she thinks about her female companions. The "wordless magic" she uses to communicate with her female lovers and confidantes is similar to the way she writes Pilgrimage—with a loquaciousness that almost erases itself. But it would be unfair to read Pilgrimage as perpetuating the tradition of writing about the lesbian woman as an "apparition" who is "in the shadows, in the margins, hidden from history, out of sight, out of mind, a wanderer in the dusk, a lost soul, a tragic mistake, a pale denizen of the night" (Castle 2). The ghostly communicative techniques of these women, and of the novel as a whole, far from being a process of erasure, has a "demanding, importuning aspect" because "the ghostly figure … [is] inevitably a notion of reembodiment: of uncanny return to the flesh" (63). Indeed, Richardson's central insight to the autobiographical medium seems to be her understanding of its apparitional qualities: how fitting it is as means to resurrect others through their negation. It is characteristic of Miriam that she loves widely and with abandon, disregarding propriety, convention, and morality. She has all manner of bold and surprising relationships and intimacies both lesbian and otherwise, for her

147 Winning identifies in the novel "an equivalence between lesbianism and writing," reading the fact that Jean disappears as Miriam starts to write as an indication that "as the lesbian becomes writing, so writing itself becomes lesbian" (170-1).
time: with foreigners that others look upon as suspicious, and with Jews although she is not Jewish, and with married men—indeed with a man now married to her childhood friend—and she even loves and finds companionship with objects like window frames, light beams, and bowls. It makes sense therefore to read Richardson in the mystical tradition of Margery Kempe and Julian of Norwich who "reveal themselves in discovering and revealing the Other" (Mason 210), even though Miriam's "other" is rather more secular than theirs.

The idea of "relationality" is now widely understood to be central to autobiographical theory. We expect to read autobiographical works with the understanding that "the self is defined by—and lives in the terms of—its relations with others" (Eakin 43). Miriam certainly engages in the "evolution and delineation of an identity by way of alterity" that Mason identifies as "more or less constant in women's lifewriting" (231). But what remains particular about Pilgrimage is that Miriam's relationality is not dependent on "a polyphonic site of indeterminacy rather than a single, stable truth" (Smith and Watson 16). Pilgrimage is far closer to being silent than "polyphonic," far more attached to the idea of a "stable truth" than indeterminacy. We can see this, for example, when Miriam sits down to write, calling it a journey into "oblivion": "I forget the price; eagerly face the strange journey down and down to the centre of being […] Just one evening's oblivion gave me everlasting possession of the little white table standing under the brilliant light of my Vaud bedroom" (Vol. IV 609). This is insular, introspective, writing—mining down into the centre of her mind, not attempting to move beyond it—and it yields both a silence and a single, stable, truth. Nevertheless, it is still a relational act; it renders to Miriam the definition of her identity through alterity. We have seen that for Richardson a metaphorical ghost

148 For an overview see "A History of Autobiography Criticism, Part II" in Smith and Watson.
149 As Eakin points out, it can be reductive to understand relationality as an essential gendered characteristic: "I keep encountering women's autobiographies that strike me as individualistic and narrative in character; I keep finding important evidence of relationality in men's autobiographies" (50).
tends to indicate a lack of communication or transcendence. "Spirits meet and converse and understand each other only in silence," she writes, typically (Vol. IV 621). So it is no wonder Miriam characterizes writing as a spectral act, given that through it she finds otherness—in the form of a piece of furniture—not communicatively but lurking within her "centre of being."

Authorship means spending "hours in oblivion from which I awake to find a piece of my life gone by unheeded," she claims (609). This inattention is a necessary characteristic of her writing, because she wants to avoid the kind of "knowledge-burdened" indexical language whose "phrases were a series of hammer-blows neatly striking dead everything to which [they] called attention" (610). However, she must then be resigned to being momentarily struck dead herself. "To write is to forsake life" (609).

The little white table Miriam finds in her journey into oblivion is indeed a thing not normally found in fiction. This lonely table, unused for anything, backdrop to nothing, signifying nothing, recalls Lily's kitchen table stuck in a pear tree in Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse*. Like Woolf's table, Miriam's little white table offered up by the narrational abyss wryly hints at the philosophical search for the real thing-in-itself that has so often, since Plato, been indicated by a table. It is fascinating that Richardson places this little table—this objective holy grail—not just within Miriam but within her writing self. For all that Miriam has warned against words, it is writing that eventually gives her "everlasting possession" of this real thing. Earlier I characterized the ghosts of Richardson's fiction as indicating a "failure to communicate and to connect." *Pilgrimage* takes that failure and recasts it as positive: the spectrality of writing fosters an intimacy with the other that needs no communication or connection.

We have seen that Miriam writes with the same self-abandon, and enacting the same paradoxical silence, with which she conducts her female relationships. The radical act
Richardson performs with her novel is not simply to annotate the silences of male-dominated realism—adding back all that has been cast aside as insignificant—and not just to recuperate the enforced silence surrounding female homosexual and social relationships, but also to allow this unspokenness to expand into a metaphysical power through Miriam's narration. Beyond her fearless and generous relationships with all manner of people and things it is, in particular, the way in which Miriam conducts relationships with other women that forms the cosmic fabric of the novel. Uniquely, Richardson presents this woman-to-woman mode of communication not as a tactic used under duress nor a poor imitation of the dominant discourse, but as the home of the sought-after table of the Western epistemological tradition. That silent privacy of female relations is blown wide, and becomes a philosophy. The social and literary embargo on speaking of lesbian relationships is reformulated as a sensual world in which that other unwritable thing—the unsignifiable world—is likewise given existence. The "wordless communion" of female lovers, their non transcendent language, is transformed from a secretive act of hidden meaning into a tool used by Miriam to write a whole world, a whole ontology, and in which can be discovered "everlasting possession" of the real thing, that "real certain thing; the one real certain happy thing" (Vol. II 107).
Conclusion: Radical Realism

The narratives considered in this project all attend to a mutually constitutive relationship between the more-than-human world and the representational structures of fiction. In the following conclusion, I will note some of the specificities of the intersections of mimeticism, abstraction, and the nonhuman in these works, and propose some frameworks or contexts for how we may understand them. As I have shown, none of these novels and stories allow us to easily accept the idea that narrative necessarily mirrors the human. We saw this in the ghost stories where it was impossible for a character caught in narrative to retain privacy or independence; and we saw it in the depiction of times and spaces that are paradoxical or fantastic from an experiential viewpoint (like a house that is empty and full at the same time) in To The Lighthouse; and it was again apparent simply in the acknowledgment that narrative (even when thirteen volumes long like Pilgrimage) is unable to capture a single person, which Miriam adequately demonstrated as she constantly fled her own autobiography. Indeed, whatever quality or activity each story considers definitional of personhood is also what is undermined, or even destroyed, by that same narrative by the end.

But more fundamental than the idea that there is just some perpetual mismatch between the story and the human (that they can, in various ways, never be fully commensurate with each other) is the sense, propagated by all these works, that the very concept of matching and mirroring is an inadequate understanding of the relationship between literature and its objects. As I will go on to discuss here, it has been curious to trace the way in which the collapse of mirroring between documents and referents spawns a new kind of proximity between that now collusive world of things and texts, and the human individual. The ghost stories we read, for
example, showcased symbols that refused to represent or signify. They became bodies instead. But even as they exited their role in human aesthetics and knowledge, becoming alien to, and quite often even threatening to, people in the process, so they also became more subject-like—lively and agential. Likewise in Richardson's and Woolf's prose, nonhuman things and beings, and their words and images, declined to be instrumentalised as copies or signs of human meaning and affect. Yet in their refusal they became pseudo-subjects in their own right.

The things that populate these tales are almost always family heirlooms, or second-hand items, or waste and detritus. Formally, as well as economically, these old and worn objects have a malleable value, segueing from figurative to literal and back again, or balancing between significant and irrelevant all at once. But I am not aiming to conclude here with a postmodern argument about endless slippage. In fact, what has struck me about these narratives is that, far from being defined by deferral and *différance*, they are distinctly concerned with the present, the tangible, and the intimate. In these tales, alterity is always close, never absent. The things and beings that populate these stories might be old, worn, cracked, forgotten, unused, or vermin. But it is precisely their excessiveness that allows them to draw close to people. This is realism taken to radical ends. When the document is the world, connection with otherness is made not through similarity (which requires distance) but strangely through difference.

I. Phantom Tables

In each of the previous chapters, the humble table has made a pivotal, if somewhat supernatural, appearance. Mr. Humphreys' desk resurrected a long-dead ancestor. Lily's table appeared as a mirage stuck in a pear tree. Miriam's table demanded her oblivion. In the history of philosophical writing since Plato evoked the form of the table as an illustration of his idealism,
the table has been "the paradigmatic object of knowledge" (Banfield *Phantom* 66). The tables in the works considered in this project each engage with, and remind us of, that philosophical legacy and each forms a locus of tension between the sign and the referent in its own unique fashion.\(^{150}\)

For example, we remember that Mr. Humphreys' desk opens up a tunnel to some kind of netherworld after what appeared to be an inkblot on his hand-drawn map turns out to be a hole. This hole passes through the paper, but also through Mr. Humphreys' desk and on through the floor. The apparent solidity of the house and its furnishings gives way. A different kind of legacy is handed down through the family lineage when a long-dead demonic forebear wriggles up through the hole. This seems to be best understood in terms of the necessary temporal collapse when copy is indistinguishable from original. Without the buffer of his documents, Mr. Humphreys comes face to face with his own past. And as he discovers, his past only confers security to his person (in the form of a social and economic inheritance) when it remains absent.

Lily's imagined table stuck in a pear tree is her idiosyncratic response to the idea of the object divided from the subject. She tries to imagine the table when she is not there, but succeeds in imagining only a table utterly reliant upon her viewpoint: wedged into the tree at which she is currently looking. Lily's apparent failure to grasp any separation between self and world is taken up, and elaborated upon, by the novel at large which presents a whole unseen house (not just a single table) at its heart. Through the many personifications and narrative intrusions of "Time Passes" the prose over-signifies, generating a monstrous abundance, that suggests (as Woolf puts it) that "words hate being useful" (*Essays* 96-7) and that signs always exceed our representative

\(^{150}\) These tables must also remind us of the lively table, standing on its head and thinking with its wooden brain, that Marx used to illustrate the commodity, and which, as Bill Brown notes appears "deranged" and "unruly," unwilling to give up its sensuality, and so, "violate[ing] the very dynamic it is meant to illustrate" (*Sense* 28).
uses for them. Lily's sense that the "real" objective table could never be separated from other things like humans and pear trees is vindicated, and narrative prose, far from serving person-centric stories, is shown to be a place in which this hybrid, anti-hierarchical world can dwell.

Miriam writes about her table, and her literary description is so successful that she believes she has gained "everlasting possession" of the thing itself. But authorship demands self-loss from her. Throughout the novel, Miriam has found intimacy through façades, misnaming, ventriloquism, and other linguistic failures. Likewise, the literary table's indistinguishability from the real table is both the ultimate communicative failure (because language appears to have dissolved) yet also its ultimate success. The dissolution of representative structures, which, for Mr. Humphreys lead to his near-death, for Miriam likewise requires her "oblivion," but the loss of her individual person is replaced, more optimistically, by its expansion into a whole world.

In each case, a different position is taken towards the collusion of representation and reality, and the consequences for personhood and voice diverge in each formulation. But what yokes these various narratives together appears to be an anti-correlationist stance towards the sign. Each tale proposes a fantasy, daydream, or perhaps nightmare about the unification of document and world. This is what Elizabeth Outka calls the "commodified authentic": "At the turn of the century, particularly in Britain, what began to arise was the half-hidden but pervasive desire to unite Wildean ideas of artifice and performance and continual self-fashioning with the contrary but appealing ideas of authenticity, stability, and continuity" (3).

The appearance of counter-intuitively purchasable authenticity "allowed an enticing manipulation of time—fracturing it, disrupting it, expanding it, condensing it," a marketing approach which "anticipated the modernist novel and the modern cinema" (9).

Likewise, David Trotter understands the commodity at this time to be "at once image (mirror to the soul) and object" (34).
This desire for a fantastic thing that manages to be both copy and original is the subject of Henry James's 1893 short story "The Real Thing" in which a married couple of "gentlefolks" ask an artist to take them on as paid models, due to their having fallen on hard times. "The real thing" of the title refers to the couple's sense of being truly genteel. But it also refers to the problem of perception versus originality. The artist notes that "do what I would with it my drawing looked like a photograph or a copy of a photograph" (21). The woman model, although "the real thing" in class terms, is nevertheless quite the opposite of the real thing in semiological terms—being, as she is, "capable of remaining for an hour almost as motionless as if she were before a photographer's lens" (21). Appearing as both original (person) and document (photograph of a person) at once, the gentlewoman in James's tale finds that her class "reality" is not synonymous with other definitions of "reality." The clash between these competing hierarchies of significance, which starts to unravel both, is indicative of the wider interest in modernist era literature with, to use Outka's terms, "construct[ed] authenticity."

The search for accessible and possessable originality might be a reaction to what Georg Simmel identified in 1903 as the levelling effect of commodification:

[Things] appear to the blasé person in a homogeneous, flat and grey colour with no one of them worthy of being preferred to another. This psychic mood is the correct subjective reflection of a complete money economy to the extent that money takes the place of all the manifoldness of things and expresses all qualitative distinctions between them in the distinction of how much … [Money] becomes the frightful leveller—it hollows out the core of things, their peculiarities, their specific values and their uniqueness and incomparability in a way which is beyond repair. (28)
The attention paid to things in the narratives I have considered, in all their "manifold" and "qualitative" presence, could be read as an attempt to recuperate a non-human world, independent of our valuation and instrumentalisation of it. It is an interest in incommensurability (when words and things refuse to be made equivalent to, or useful for, other values and meanings) written through style that makes these stories a place to find the "incomparability" that is definitional of the "thing" for Simmel. But pertinently, these works are not seeking only uniqueness and particularity in and of itself. They are not searching for some hermetic, unknowable, individuality. They are instead investigations of how incomparability sustains (as well as destabilises) mimeticism; how the representational gives way to and emerges out of the abstract.

II. Nonhumanism

The "nonhuman" has garnered much critical attention in recent years. There is a growing body of work on speculative realism, new materialism and related fields that is "engaged in decentering the human in favor of a turn toward and concern for the nonhuman, understood variously in terms of animals, affectivity, bodies, organic and geophysical systems, materiality, or technologies" (Grusin vii). Although there are a wide variety of approaches to this task, Richard Grusin suggests that all these "theoretical movements" in the humanities and social sciences "argue (in one way or another) against human exceptionalism, expressed most often in the form of conceptual or rhetorical dualisms that separate the human from the nonhuman" (x). In other words, nonhumanist criticism takes as its methodology a dismantling of the implicitly
hierarchical binary structures that assume a gulf between a human realm and all that is beyond it.\footnote{Such a methodology recalls the modern interest in "impersonal" art most famously espoused by T. S. Eliot when he claimed that poetry "is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality" \cite{Eliot}, suggesting the possibility of objective artwork that is both created by and yet independent of personhood. Rochelle Rives claims that modernist impersonality should be understood as oppositional to the "notion of 'psychology" which is based on the concept "that humans have depths to be plumbed or expressed." This "allows us to understand impersonality as a profoundly phenomenological reorientation of space" \cite{Rives}. Ella Ophir sees similarly impersonal abstractions in the fiction of Wyndham Lewis and Laura Riding, in characters that are "approximations of the flattened human forms of postimpressionist painting." She understands these forms as attempts to correct "what they saw as exaggerated human self-valuation" \cite{Ophir}. Impersonality epitomizes the modernist "desire to equalize, albeit in a sometimes limited way, specific hierarchical social relationships" \cite{Rives}.}

But as Bruno Latour reminds us in \textit{We Have Never Been Modern}, simply deconstructing such binaries is not enough. To do so, would be to fail to take into account the fact that such dichotomies are the very prerequisite for hybrids and monsters and networks and translations in the first place. In what he defines as the "modern" condition, Latour explains that modern subjects both attempt to separate nonhuman nature from human culture (which he calls the work of purification), and also attempt to mediate between these two realms (which he calls the work of translation), but that they cannot speak of both these processes in the same breath, cannot acknowledge how they constitute one another.\footnote{For an example of such difficulty, see Caitlin DeSilvey's account of sorting through the material culture of a derelict homestead in Montana, and discovering a box of half rotten, vermin-infested volumes: "Faced with a decision about what to do with this curious mess, I baulked. The curator in me said I should just pull the remaining books out of the box, brush off the worst of the offending matter, and display them to the public as a damaged but interesting record of obsolete knowledge. Another instinct told me to leave the mice to their own devices and write off the contents of the box as lost to rodent infestation. I could understand the mess as the residue of a system of human memory storage, or I could see an impressive display of animal adaptation to available resources. It was difficult to hold both of these interpretations in my head at once, though" \cite{DeSilvey}.} As Latour writes, "[w]hat link is there between the work of translation or mediation and that of purification? [...] My hypothesis [...] is that the..."
second has made the first possible: the more we forbid ourselves to conceive of hybrids, the more possible their interbreeding becomes" (12).

If we accept Latour's premise that it is precisely the "denial" of mediation between human and nonhuman spheres that actually makes it possible, it would appear that it cannot be enough for nonhumanist criticism simply to push back against the dualisms that sustain "human exceptionalism." We cannot simply note the imbrication of human and nonhuman without also acknowledging that the separation of the two is the prerequisite for such imbrication. Hybridity is not a solution to or a development beyond dualism but a constituent (albeit repressed) part of it. Michael Levenson describes how during the modernist period mimeticism came under fire from two sides: "On the one side … the real collapsed into the perceived, and the artist began to usurp the place of the world … [on the other] the word [was] freed from the need to signify at all" (Genealogy 132). To put that another way, words take on an aura of thingliness and perceptions take the place of objectivity. Levenson's proposal that these collapses signal the end of mimeticism fails to understand that the binaries of mimeticism always rely upon their own transgression—on thing-like words and biased objectivity. As I have argued in this project, the urge to abstraction (the "desire for an immediate world, emptied of its mediators," to use Latour's words [143]) is not what exorcises but what requires Latour's "monsters."

There has been one particular monster that has held court in every chapter of this project: the ghost. Its presence in these tales of alterity should perhaps not be unexpected. Julian Wolfreys is by no means unique in using phrases such as "undecidable" to describe the ghost (73), speaking of it as that which "appears […] at the very limit to which interpretation can go" (71). Colin Davis, likewise, writes that "[a]ttending to the ghost is an ethical injunction insofar as it occupies the place of the Levinasian Other: a wholly irreducible intrusion in our world,
which is not comprehensible within our available intellectual frameworks" (54). But although much use of the ghost as a critical tool since Jacques Derrida evoked "hauntology" in *Spectres of Marx* has focused on deploying it as a secret, a trace, or a gap that is representative of the slippage of signification, the ghost in the writings I have considered appears as something fleshy, something solid, something present. What is important about the modernist-era phantoms I have read is how little our contemporary post-structural use of haunting is useful for discussion of them. These are narratives that suggest that our "decid[ing]," our "interpretation," is rather beside the point.

This is a particularly intriguing state of affairs, because although the debate about what makes narrative narrative is ongoing, most theorists agree that it is either, essentially, an exploration of the meaning-making functions of sequentiality, or a representation of anthropomorphic experientiality. Narrative is usually understood to be a fundamentally interpretive act, not just mimetic of human temporal experience but of the very way in which we think and make meaning. The works I have read suggest that in fact narrative holds a mimetic relationship to the nonhuman world (I use this term, as it is defined by Michael Taussig, to mean not just copying but something more akin to identity). This is not a new critical idea. But when we speak things as possessing or existing in narrativity, we are usually discussing them in terms of commodification, particularly that narrative might restore a lost identity to an object. We remember Georg Simmel's sense that the uniqueness and distinctiveness of things was lost in a "money economy" that levels everything.

That word, "levelling," reminds us that Georg Lukács advocated for narrative as a means to escape the levelling effect of description (*Writer* 131). Whereas description renders all details equally significant, narrative can capture the wider processes of capitalism and offer us a means
by which to critique its structures not just experience its effects (146-7). The discussion of things in narrative usually takes place in these terms: a conflation of particularity and inviolability with "thingness," coupled with an argument that narrative can restore the anti-equivalence, the aura, the unique power of the thing that is lost in consumerism (and would, if recovered, reveal some wider order). But what is interesting about the works I have considered in this project is that they firstly reject the equation of the reality of the thing with its discreteness (instead understanding the nonhuman as a kind of monstrosity), and secondly that they do not depict the nonhuman realm as that which we (through narrative or other means) can restore to significance and unique power from its exiled existence in a flattened world of equivalence, proposing instead that diversity and difference is always folded into commensurability. The mythical unique, auratic, object will not be the key to our philosophy.

In this project I have argued that the spectrality of a distinct strain of turn-of-the-century narrative indicates not just the insufficiencies and gaps of representative frameworks but also their strange successes and abundance. Earlier I characterized these works as all taking an "anti-correlationist" stance towards representation. Certainly they all exhibit suspicion about verisimilitude. A disruption of temporality and a disruption of representation are irrevocably intertwined, which is why the ghost (that which cannot be cast away into past or future) is a constant figure in these tales, a reification of persistent presence. But to be more precise, these are narratives that all understand that an anti-correlationist position is only made possible by the

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154 This is what Douglas Mao calls "a larger effort to read through objects to the truth of the social totality that produced them [...] the attempt to gain insight into some underlying order by way of discrete objects" (6).

155 Michael Levenson identifies presence, which he calls "immediacy," as a fundamental concern of modernism: "the same principle of experiential immediacy which leads to the dismissal of spiritual reality in favour of 'this world,' leads from 'this world' to 'my world' ... [The] logic to that movement, [is] the logic of immediacy which commits the artist to a directly present reality" (116-7).
very separation of symbol and world it appears to oppose. They must uphold that division in order to dismantle it.\textsuperscript{156} This is an intimacy forged in alienation. The ghost stories make this most visible, the simultaneity of both accurate documentation and the failure of documentation being the cause of the horror. "[A]lterity is every inch a relationship, not a thing in itself" (Taussig 130).

III. The Second-Hand

Both Outka and Latour have identified and explored the collapse between the real and the constructed that defines modern thought. Both unpack the peculiar stance of modernity which partially represses, or ignores, the already present hybridity that underpins this yearning for a (purportedly) lost alterity. In this project, I have laid out how this manifests within narrative form. In the works I have considered, there is relentless confusion between signs and things, and this extends even to narrative form itself, which appears both natural and manipulated, signifying and meaningless, mimetic and alienating. It is tempting, therefore, to consider these novels and stories, in which human characters and narrative voices are endangered by, silenced by, and outnumbered by nonhuman beings and things, through the lens of commodity culture. It would be possible to discuss these stories as indicative of a rising consumerist society in which desired objects seem to have a life of their own and human buyers and producers alike grow ever more objectified. Yet there is a problem with this argument, and that is that although all the narratives

\textsuperscript{156} As Papapetros reminds us, the "communication [of objects and subjects] is stalled in the same typified roles of artifacts and users, images and spectators, or buildings and occupants. Without inventing new terms [...] our renewed deployment of older ones [...] may have in fact created new communicative possibilities that essentially undermine the subject-object divide" (viii).
I have read have been filled with lively objects and things, those objects are almost all second-hand.

From the passion for collecting in the late nineteenth century epitomized by figures like rare book hunters (and huntresses), to the rise of the church jumble sale as a new and necessary form of philanthropy at the turn of the century, to the importance of recycling and re-using during the Great War, it is clearly too simplistic to discuss the early modernist era purely as a time of production, commodification, and consumerism without recognizing the parallel second-hand economies which both supported and diverged from it. These worn and old things are surprisingly prominent in both the fiction and the criticism of the era. In "Modern Fiction," Woolf, criticizing Arnold Bennett, wrote that "[h]e can make a book so well constructed and solid in its craftsmanship that it is difficult for even the most exacting critics to see through what chink or crevice decay can creep in. There is not so much as a draught between the frames of the windows, or a crack in the boards. And yet—if life should refuse to live there?" (Reader 285). It is the cracks, the decay, that makes animation, Woolf argues. The draughty house here is another incarnation of the Ramsays' Hebrides home, but it also sounds like Miriam's chilly boarding house attic, or the neglected buildings of the ghost stories. The old provides a meeting place for animate and inanimate.

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157 See Heidi Eggerton's "Book-Hunters and Book-Huntresses: Gender and Cultures of Antiquarian Book Collecting in Britain, C. 1880–1900."
159 See Tim Cooper's "Challenging the 'Refuse Revolution': War, Waste and the Rediscovery of Recycling, 1900–50."
160 Indeed, perhaps by moving away from the commodity as a central idea and towards "the cracks, the decay," we would be able to discuss modernist nonhumans more broadly, and more interconnectedly, not necessarily always bifurcating our criticism into discussions of either objects or animals.
In every narrative I have read, the second-hand, old, rediscovered, or repurposed thing has taken a central role. In each work these re-used things carry a different weight. In Pilgrimage, the shabby or worn furnishings are the result of Miriam's straitened circumstances. They are the constant physical reminder of her decision to live unmarried and remain reliant—both emotionally and economically—upon herself. In To The Lighthouse the "crazy ghosts of chairs and tables" (30) that furnish the house on the Hebrides had their first life in the Ramsays' London home. These deteriorating objects in their after-life in the family's second-home are focal points for Mrs. Ramsay's class-consciousness, as well being later interestingly redeployed as a synecdoche for wartime austerity and violence. In the ghost stories, second-hand objects are almost always antiquities, rarities, forgotten items, or original artworks, and they epitomize secrecy and heritage, acting as a locus for questions of both economic and moral value.

While the re-used or re-discovered object fulfills a different function in each of these narratives, it remains in each one an uncannily lively thing. It appears to think, feel, move, speak, and in many ways displace human characters and human voices. What is it about the second-hand object in particular that would cause it to come to life in so many different ways? Perhaps it is simply that, to use Arjun Appadurai's terms, the second-hand object has more of a "biography" than a new object, having circulated for longer. "[C]ommodities, like persons, have social lives" (3). A commodity is not a fixed type of thing, all things (have the potential to) move in and out of the "commodity state." The second-hand object has a rich biography of its own, having moved in and out of various social roles. But usually this life story is inaccessible to its current owner, which gives it an almost subject-like, private, history. In other words, the old or second-hand
thing is more narratively rich.\textsuperscript{161} Stories are perhaps more easily hijacked by the kinds of nonhuman things that are themselves storied.

Yet more pertinent than the fact that the re-used object possesses more of a history (or at least a less repressed history) than the newly-minted mass-produced object is the fact that the second-hand thing has no clear value. Moving through bartering, fundraising sales, inheritance, salvage, or restoration, the circulation of the second-hand object can be "read as being about a temporary suspension of conventional social relations of exchange, as a form of carnival," and, I would argue, they perform the same carnivalesque role narratologically (Gregson and Crewe 4). Over the last three chapters we have encountered many examples of broken-down or re-used objects slipping up and down narrative levels, jumping back and forth between figurative and literal, both expressible through language and illegible or unspeakable. These things are both tied into and yet escape from narrative significance and visibility. "Acquiring their defining characteristics through their prior circulation and social entanglement, [second-hand things] form a hybrid category, combining elements of both the commodity form and the gift form. Whereas 'pure' commodities are contingent on techniques of social forgetting and veiling (commodity fetishism), second-hand objects, like gifts, are dependent on energies of social remembering and disclosure" (Appelgren and Bohlin 156).

The shipwrecks, and holey towels, and creaking floorboards, and soot-covered paintings of these stories are therefore a kindred group of things to Outka's "commodified authentic," because they too, not just in their economic status but in their formal work query the manner in

\textsuperscript{161} "[B]esides being motivated by pragmatic needs or economic necessity, this form of consumption often involves particular enjoyment and pleasures, such as the thrill of the hunt, and the joy of unexpected finds ... [often] involving verbal or written exchanges regarding the quality and history of the thing being sold, sometimes involving personal anecdotes as well as meetings between buyer and seller ... Such qualities lend themselves particularly well to stories and recounting" (Appelgren and Bohlin 151).
which the binary of the "disclos[ed]" and the "veil[ed]" is deployed in narrative structure. In order to understand why these modern fictions are so interested in nonhumans, we could consider them an attempt to recuperate something lost: the sensual particularity unfeasible in Simmel's "money economy," or, perhaps, the yearned for comfort and sustenance impossible in wartime austerity ("If you see a plum, it is invariably a decoy plum," [Woolf Diary Vol. I 112]). But that would miss the authenticity these works grant to both plum and decoy plum. What is so fascinating is that these stories recognise narrative to be driven by a momentum wherein things and beings orbit between "plum" and "decoy," and wherein both states are real. A question raised by the writings I have considered is how our methods of understanding modernist literary "experimentation" would change, were we to relinquish our focus on consumerism as a critical paradigm. If we recognized those other culturally and historically specific modes of human-nonhuman relations beyond the objectifying work of commodification, would we be better equipped to avoid re-inscribing a framework of authentic reality versus disruption, interference, and artificiality in our approach to modernist era narrative?

IV. Animation

The novels and stories considered in this project are overrun by hybrid things that are almost recognizable as animate or human-like; from Miriam's shabby domestic furniture that seems to think and feel with her (and even command her), to the lively community of shawls, wallpaper, grains of sand, and teapots that live in the house of "Time Passes," to the books, paintings, and documents of turn of the century ghost stories that turn into bodies. Yet these things never fully commit to speaking, moving, intending, or meaning. They are never
completely voiced, personified, embodied, agential, or meaningful. In his 2012 *On the Animation of the Inorganic*, Spyros Papapetros proposes that "empathy, the ability to identify with the objects of the external world, was not erased but repressed by modernist subjects; thus, it had to return metamorphically projected, objectified, and finally reified in the inorganic form of the animistic artifacts of twentieth-century modernity" (vii). It is such "animistic artifacts" that we find monopolizing these narratives. According to Papapetros, they are an expression of the modern subject's inability to empathize with a hostile world. Aborted empathy returns, mutated, in the form of uncannily lively things. He clarifies that "while empathy pertains to subjects doing things to inanimate objects, animation is about objects doing things to human subjects" (5).

The animation of alterity appears to turn upon unlikeness (an inability to recognise the other as like the self). What is so striking here is how complicit likeness and unlikeness are with each other. Walter Benjamin, in his discussion of mimeticism, identified it as the urge to become other.\(^\text{162}\) Michael Taussig's ethnographic explorations of mimeticism likewise understand it as a process of what he calls "active-yielding" in which the human attempts to enter the artifact. Yet what is particularly intriguing about the novels and stories I have considered is that, contrary to what critics like Benjamin and Taussig have identified, the mimetic urge—the drawing close of like and unlike—is shown to be driven by the world not the human individual. All these narratives suggest that the proximity of bodies and signs has very little to do with accuracy, or access, or knowledge. The painting comes to life; the peripheral usurps the meaningful; silence splinters into an avalanche of words. These are not depictions of the human trying to reach the other, but rather of the other becoming human-like, often to the detriment, or at least the

\(^{162}\) "[Man's] gift of seeing resemblances is nothing other than a rudiment of the powerful compulsion in former times to become and behave like something else" ("Mimetic" 160). Benjamin goes on to suggest that this imitation of otherness, this "non-sensuous similarity," is at the root of language.
sidelining, of the characters and narrators. Just as Papapetros identifies in his examples from art history and architecture, so too in the literary examples I have gathered, this animism of early twentieth century objects tends to effect a temporary moratorium on semiotic work: "[a]nimation is experienced as an epistemological and spatiotemporal seizure" and "the very idea of knowledge becomes obsolete the moment animation occurs" (3). There are political claims being made here. The ethical project of the Victorian novel, which explored how to know the other, is reconfigured in these modern tales. Ethics is not yoked to epistemology as it is in the realist novel. The question, instead, is one of how knowledge-driven sympathy is an exercise of power. The notable occurrence is the willing relinquishing of those linguistic and representational structures for use by the other upon the self.

I recall the words with which I began this project: "to grasp the shadowy and fantasmal form of a book […] that is the effort of a critic of books, and it is perpetually defeated" (Lubbock 1). According to this characterization of fictional prose, we are rendered strangely passive and confounded in the face of a medium that seemed so closely to match or even constitute our own experiential and cognitive linearity. Indeed, in these novels and stories narrative is recognized as an animated (and perhaps animose) artifact. It catches us off-guard, appearing as though alive—"telling itself"—even though we know it is not. To engage in the act of narration, these works seem to suggest, is more like being something other imitating personhood than it is the act of reaching out to otherness from a secure, central, position of the self.\textsuperscript{163} But imitation is central. Narrative form cannot write a resistant, inaccessible, thing. This is not to say that it cannot write thingness, but that it demands a conception of the nonhuman not reliant upon a forever retreating

\textsuperscript{163} Helen Sword compares the modernist author to the spiritualist: "In particular, the figure of the spirit medium—with her multiple perspectives, fragmented discourse, and simultaneous claims to authority and passivity—offered a fertile model for the kinds of cultural and linguistic subversions that many authors were seeking to accomplish through their own poetics" (x).
particularity. Narrative refuses to allow us that centrality. Michael Taussig might claim that "the fundamental move of the mimetic faculty taking us bodily into alterity is very much the task of the storyteller too" (40), and that the audience of a story "is plunged forward into and beyond itself" (41). Yet the novels and stories we have read here have all resisted the spatial metaphors that show representations gesturing "beyond" themselves or narratives transporting us to other worlds, phrases which imply that the individual is always epistemologically present and the world always exists elsewhere. Instead, the proposal that we can hear echoing across each of these very different novels and stories is that the aesthetic and formal is not the means by which we master and understand the world, but the means by which the world encroaches upon us. Style is alterity creeping close. In particular, the "animation" of narrative, these writings disconcertingly suggest, is act of the nonhuman empathizing with us.


